



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

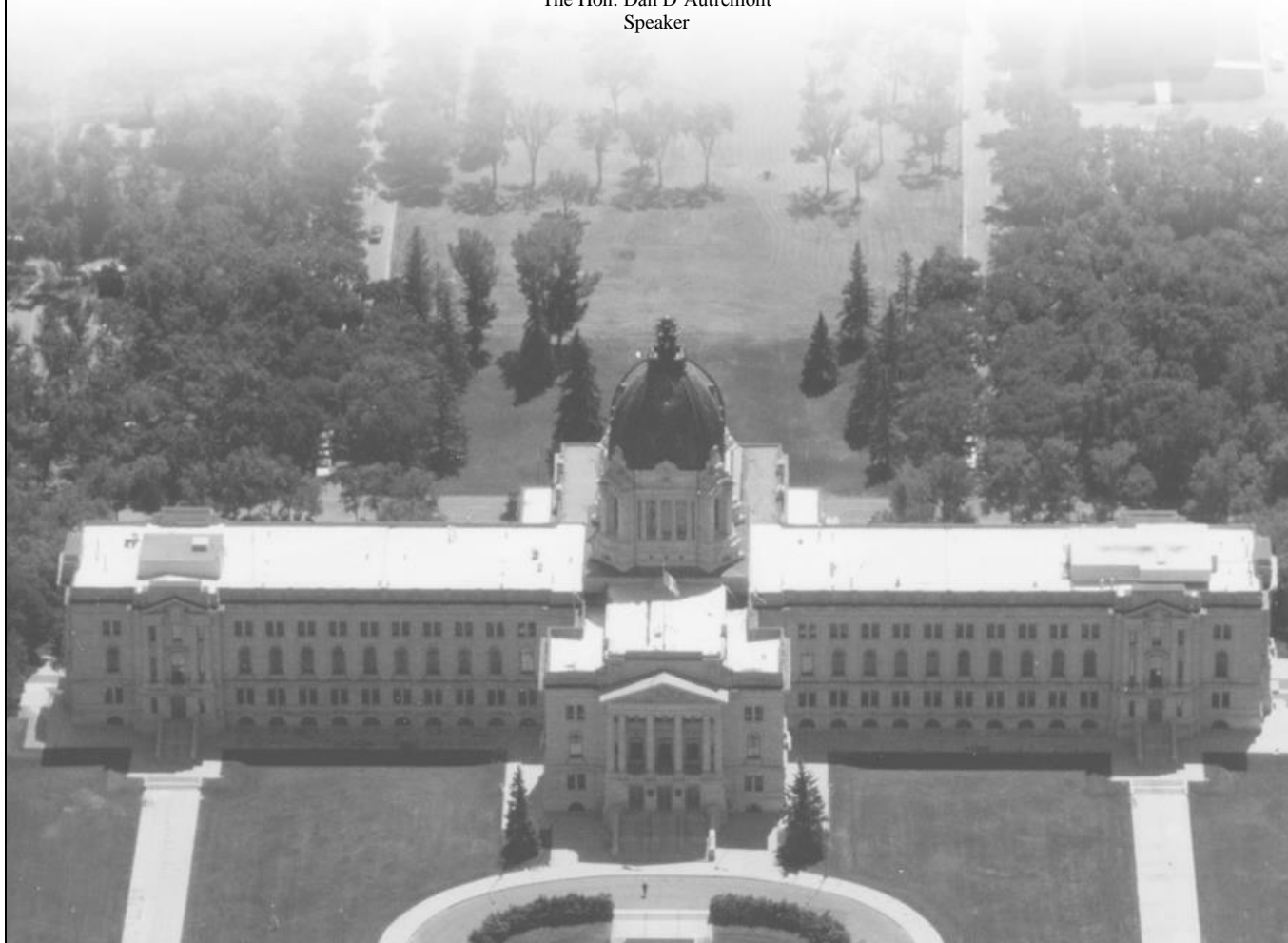
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont  
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall  
 Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Hon. Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Hon. Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Vacant		Lloydminster

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

**EVENING SITTING**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I'll call the House back to order. Business before the House is debate in reply to the Throne Speech. I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd only got slightly into my speech right before the supper break, so I'll just hit a couple of high points that I was touching on prior to the break, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again recognizing our Armed Forces, our protective services and the recognition that we've been giving them over the last week, especially in light of the tragic events in Montreal and Ottawa, again our thoughts and prayers going out to the families of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and of course the family and friends of Corporal Nathan Cirillo. And I would just wish them God's peace and blessing at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Also I was able to touch on a few thank yous. I'll make sure I do them again so they are on record. Of course my family, my wife, Leone, my daughters Katelin and Rayanne I spoke about prior to the break, I believe. Katelin finishing up her nursing training in Regina here and soon going into the workforce, and our daughter Rayanne who's just recently moved back from Ottawa with her husband. And as I said — I'm going to say it again — going to be a grandpa in April. And we're really looking forward to that as well.

Again the staff I have both in Regina and in Yorkton. Laurreta Ritchie-McInnes has been with me in Yorkton since I was elected in 2007. Served with the member from Melville for about 12 years prior to that, so she's been at this game about 19 years and very, very good at her job. And I'm very blessed to have her in my office back at home as well as two part-time ladies. Ingrid's been with me for a number of years, Ingrid Stumph. And a new addition to our team after we had Sarah Stumph leave, we have Rachelle Sawatsky that has moved to Yorkton from Lanigan. And we're really lucky to have her working with us as well, Mr. Speaker.

So the staff at home, I've very appreciative of, especially in light of my recent appointment to cabinet and being away from home quite a bit more. So really relying on their work at home to make sure the office is running in an efficient manner, which I know it is, and serving the constituents of Yorkton.

As well as the staff here, I want to name them again. Michael, my chief of staff, has been just a real help, a real right hand the

last month that I've been in this position. Really relying on him quite a bit, as well as Selena in the front office and Chaelah and Ashley, our MA [ministerial assistant] and Brittany, a new addition to our team just about a week or so ago, MA and communications. Really enjoying her in the office as well. Sad to say goodbye to Dale Richardson, but we actually traded up, I think. Dale was a great guy. I really enjoyed him for the few weeks he was with me, a few road trips up north — Onion Lake, and I think La Ronge he was with us — but I think we traded up with Brittany. So we're really happy to have them in the office.

My colleagues I touched on. Really thankful for the colleagues I have. We really are a family over here. Sometimes there might be a bit of friction, but not unlike any family. We have a really good relationship with everybody over here, and it's really a great bunch of people to work with, alongside.

And I would never want to leave out the Premier. The Premier, the member for Swift Current, is just I think one of the most recognized leaders, political leaders, not only in our country but a lot of areas around the world. I am very thankful that he is the leader. I can call him friend, and I'm very blessed to be given this opportunity to serve in cabinet as the Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health.

And with that as well, the Minister of Health, from Weyburn-Big Muddy, I just really appreciate his youthfulness, his energy. Being a new father, he's got a really good perspective on health and some of the priorities in health as well. His leadership, his mentorship, his knowledge, and just the dedication he has for this portfolio is somebody that, although I'm about 100 years older than him, I really look to him as a mentor and to learn from him, the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, the Minister of Health.

So I'm just really appreciative of the opportunity that I do have here to serve the people of Saskatchewan and also the people of my constituency.

Getting on to the Throne Speech, we look at the basis of the Throne Speech. Again I think, pointed out by members across as well, it is sort of an overarching plan, a plan for the coming year of our government. And I have said many times when I have spoken to people, it should be no real surprise, a lot of the things that are in our throne speeches and in our budgets, because they are laid out very well in our plan for growth: vision 2020 and beyond, a plan we came up with a couple of years ago to give the government and our party direction as to where we needed to go, not unlike some of the work I think a lot of us have done in the past as legislative secretaries, as ministers, talking to the people around the province and seeing the direction they would like us to go.

Some of the first portfolios I served in after being elected was Legislative Secretary to Social Services, community-based, which gave us a lot of those interactions and consultations we did back in '07, '08, into '09, gave us a social policy direction which is very reflective, I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in not only our plan for growth but also our Throne Speech and our subsequent budgets — balanced budgets, I might add. Every one of our budgets have been balanced and tied very closely to

our throne speeches, and the last few throne speeches and budgets again tied to our plan for growth: vision 2020 and beyond.

Then very shortly afterwards I served under the minister of Environment, two different ministers of Environment, with the MMRP [multi-material recycling program] plan that I know is in the works of being rolled out fairly soon. In fact we just enjoyed a reception with the electronics recycling group, and I got the chance to just talk to them about a lot about our old work under the minister of Environment and working on an MMRP.

Post that, working under the Premier for vulnerable youth, and giving some direction for support of those I hesitate to call vulnerable youth. But I came to know them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was serving in that portfolio, was youth with promise and potential. Because I think what we speak into people is what they become, and if we consistently refer to these youth as vulnerable, I think they kind of stay in that place. But we speak life into them, we refer to them as having promise and potential.

And we're seeing some of the initiatives not only from the government, through partners in the community-based organization sector, but also the general public starting to see the value of these young people and seeing some of them climb out of the situations they're in — whether it's addictions, whether it's poverty, whether it's unemployment and creating — looking at the opportunities that are created by our business sector, by our government, and being able to find jobs and really become a very productive member of society and contributing in a lot of ways.

A lot of that again is reflective . . . Many of the members on this side have spoken about our record high unemployment. I think it speaks to some of those youth as well as others in the province, looking at the opportunities that have come around over the last seven years I think under the leadership of our government and our Premier and our cabinet, you know, bringing some of those numbers into a more reasonable alignment, but also I think a record that the whole province can be proud of — 577,000 people working as of last count. Record unemployment, virtually lowest unemployment in a race to the bottom for unemployment in our country — 3.2 per cent.

And again looking at the success of our province, recognized outside of our borders by independent agencies such as Moody's who has recently given us a AAA plus credit rating, virtually the highest credit rating you can achieve, which does a number of things. It gives us a very good rate on money that we still do owe, after paying down the amount of debt that we have over the last seven years, but also recognizing the power of the economy, the potential of the province, and recognizing us with that very, very promising credit rating.

You know, talking about the strength of the province and priorities of our government, the one thing I will reflect on, I think it was pre budget speech, there was a document put out by the members opposite. And the one thing I will refer to in here, they refer to the government already spending \$14 billion this year compared to less than \$8 billion in 2007. Well, Mr. Speaker, judging by that comment you would think that

money's being spent recklessly. I would challenge the members across, in their throne replies as they stand, to start specifying in those numbers what they would argue with as for our spending.

Would they argue with spending on infrastructure in health, education, highways? Would they argue supports for people with disabilities, Saskatchewan assured income disability plan, the increases to the seniors' income plan, increases to community-based organizations, increase virtually doubling the health budget in the last seven years, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I'm wondering which one of those things they would cut, what they would, what they would question the spending on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's something that's to be heard of as of yet.

We look at the Throne Speech and the one title, "A Province Ascending." The province is doing well; we're growing. Not to say we aren't susceptible to pressures throughout the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know we're an export-based economy. We're tied to the world economy so we're bound to take some of the hits, so to speak, when the world economy has a bit of a struggle. But I like our positioning when you look at our diversified economy, where we get the income for the province, where our companies that do business in the province export to and the products that they can provide and the markets that they have. And I really like how we're positioned in that respect where we're virtually been riding the top of the wave. Any time there's been a dip, the province and the people of our province are riding the top of that wave. So that's a really exciting, exciting place to be in.

And you know, when thinking about an export-based economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I reflect back on my hometown of Yorkton. I'll try and reflect home to Yorkton as much as I can until I get to some of the health initiatives and I'll talk more of a broader sense then. But I had this conversation a few nights ago with someone at a reception and it was at the international delegates reception. As you know, we had 53 ambassadors, international ambassadors from Ottawa in Regina the week before and the night of the Throne Speech. And talking to some of those people, they were just astounded as to the diversity of our economy, the size of our province, our population, our innovation, our resources. All these different things that are part of our economy.

And I said, you know, the best thing I can describe, the only way I can really think about explaining that is it comes back to our agriculture-based. We're a strongly agriculturally based province. And you look back 40, 50, 60, 70, 80 years, 90 years, the agriculture industry was self-supported. They were self-driven. They virtually built their own equipment and a lot of that has never changed. You know a lot of farmers still do build a lot of their own equipment, modify their own equipment, come up with patents, come up with ideas.

And we see companies like Seed Hawk and Morris and Ram and Leon and Parkland Welding in Yorkton supplying hydraulic cylinders to the oilfield; supplying all kinds of loaders and material-handling equipment and farm equipment to countries around the world, when we're looking at Leons; or some of the advanced machining and advanced technology and the development of products that we see out of Ram Industries in Yorkton, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And we are a small province. We are, population-wise we're still like 1.125 million. We're growing at a rate faster than we even expected. We are growing, but we still have to export. We still need that export-driven economy. And when you look at the diverse amount of products and the market that these companies are tapping into around the world, it is truly astounding. And I know the Premier has referred to us as punching much above our weight, and we continue to do that. And it's not the government, it's business — their dexterity, their responsiveness, their flexibility, their innovativeness that has been able to, they've able to do that and I think to a large extent rubs off on the government. We have to meet their expectations, and we just really appreciate that work ethic. And that's something that we on this side of the House really try and take to heart and try to adapt to and try to use, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We're talking about, you know, the increase of more than 123,000 people in the last seven years and agreed, that's partly immigration. But we look at what some of those numbers represent, they represent people that have come back, expatriates that have moved back to Saskatchewan. That represents people that have been born here and not left. I think the member from Walsh Acres was talking about his luggage story. Our kids aren't getting luggage anymore. Our kids are staying here or they're coming home. And my daughters are true examples of that: staying here, taking a nursing career which, you know, was questionable years back under the New Democrats.

We had nurses leaving. We had doctors leaving. We had a shortage of training seats. There wasn't a need because we were declining.

Now we're growing. We need more nurses and, granted, we've immigrated nurses, but now some of those nurses tied to those training seats that we've created are staying here and they have jobs here along with our medical professionals as well. We're starting to graduate a lot of those doctors that formerly had no place here — no residency positions, half the training seats — and now we're seeing opportunities for them here, not only through our major hospitals but also through some of the initiatives that we're doing in rural Saskatchewan and giving opportunities in rural Saskatchewan to start building back up that rural health care, those rural services that quite frankly were decimated under the years of the members opposite when we had a lot of those professionals leaving or being fired.

I want to talk a bit about our strong economy as well, continue to talk about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I don't think we can say it enough, that the strong economy isn't the end result. It's simply the tool, that pathway to a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people. And we know some of the costs of living have increased and, you know, there's some added pressures in that regard. But we also look at the supports that have been put in place for our seniors, for our students.

We look at things in post-secondary education like the graduate retention program. We look at the scholarship programs. We look at the bursary programs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where, granted, some of the costs of some tuition and things like that have slightly increased, but when tied to some of these programs through education, they far outpace the cost of

education. In fact some students I've talked to, if they're living in a major city, going to school in a major city, they're actually, with the programs in place, once they've been working in the province with all those programs in place, they're actually coming out without any student loans and getting a big tax break, a big income back from their investment in education but also through the graduate retention program, staying in the province and recovering some of that money as well. So those programs are definitely working.

[19:15]

Our economy is very diverse. And I know the members opposite, specifically the Leader of the Opposition, and I'm not poking fun at him, but he likes to use or formerly used the term eggs in baskets. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we've got lots of eggs in lots of baskets. We've got hard-boiled. We've got coloured Easter eggs. We've got standard eggs. We've got brown and white eggs. There are so many diversified parts of our economy right now, and again pointed out by some of my colleagues on this side of the House, so I won't delve too deep into those.

But we look at the increase in jobs, and it's not all just in resource. It's not all just in health. It's not all just in innovation. It's in all of it. We're looking at resource jobs are up 10 per cent. We're looking at manufacturing jobs are up. Agriculture jobs are up. Technological jobs are up. Innovation jobs are up. Health care jobs are up.

And I would point a lot of that in regard to our medical professionals, whether it's diagnostic imaging, whether it's 2,600 nurses of all different designations that are working in the province when under the members opposite I think we lost 400-and-some nurses. I can't remember the timeline, but the number that sticks in my mind is over 400 nurses, 150 to 200 doctors that left the province. We now have 423 doctors and climbing under the last four years or under the last seven years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, under our government.

You know, I won't get too much into the trade. I've talked about our export markets but, as spoken about earlier in this Assembly, the Premier will be going to India to tell the Saskatchewan story and develop some more trade partnerships there. And that's what it takes, Mr. Deputy Speaker — a little bit of travel, build a relationship, recognition of what our province has to offer, not only our innovation and our manufacturing and our resources and our food and all the rest of it but everything that we have to offer.

And now we're seeing that our exports are climbing because simply of some of those transoceanic trips that some of our ministers and our Premier has taken to develop those relationships and tell our story and increase our markets. And it's reflecting back in our province's added exports, added production, added income for the people of the province, and more economy, more jobs for our people here. And as our Premier said, it's pretty good for a province that doesn't have a seaside port.

So we've had a number of initiatives when it comes to building our skilled workforce. We know with a growing economy, growing jobs, we have to fill those jobs with skilled people. So

I look at some of the initiatives that we've taken on, whether it's through the recognized post-secondary education, the flagships I would say like the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], U of R [University of Regina], SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] and some of those, but also the college, the regional college structure in this province. We're seeing more and more and more affordable and accessible classes through those organizations. And I'll point to Parkland College in Yorkton. We have the new Trades and Technology Centre that's coming up, you know. Thanks to the former ministers and the current minister, that project is coming very well, Trades and Technology Centre.

So the recognized trades, with power engineering and a lot of the construction type trades, electrical, and those type of things but also initiatives that have been started recently in health care. I think the number I heard was 1967 or 1969 was the last graduating classes of nurses out of Yorkton. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm proud to point out that through the college and through partnerships with the universities and initiatives of the government, we were just celebrating about four weeks ago the first intake of RN [registered nurse] students in Yorkton. I think there was 10 of them, if I'm not mistaken, that will be graduating anywhere from two to four years, depending on what part of the program they're in at this time. So we're seeing all those opportunities that are now accessible in rural Saskatchewan. And years back under the NDP [New Democratic Party], we saw those downsized, pulled back into the major centres, and our rural areas were left to languish.

We're looking at, you know, we've had the advanced education and skills but we also have to get a lot of our people to that point. We have a lot of people that need grade 12 equivalency. We have the adult basic education programs, and then the classes that come post that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm proud to report as well that our colleges are very engaged in those processes. In fact I think I'll be attending another graduation ceremony at Parkland College in the coming months, and it is just astounding to see the family members that are celebrating, the students that are celebrating.

I think specifically, Parkland College, I could probably point a number in the area of 75 per cent that would be Métis and First Nations descent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's just great to see the opportunities that they have and the jobs that they are filling and really engaging in the workforce and just an amazing job that they are doing. I am just so proud of them.

More apprenticeship sheets . . . seats, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That could have been bad. Three hundred more apprenticeship seats, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because again we need to fill those positions. We need to fill those skilled trades for our growing economy, for our construction and all the rest. So I'm really excited about the growing number of those seats as well.

Looking into the infrastructure, that's been a focus of ours since we've been elected. It was recognized prior to us being elected, the infrastructure shortfall, the deficit that we have in the province, whether it's municipal, whether it's provincial, whether it's health, whether it's education. I know my colleague from Saskatoon, the Minister of Education, spoke a lot about his infrastructure needs and the deficits we have there.

This year alone, nearly \$3 billion has been committed to renew and expand the province's infrastructure. That's astounding, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we recognize that we will never address the infrastructure shortage in this province in a shortfall if we keep doing things the same way as we always have because we know that's a definition of insanity: do the same thing over and over and expect a different result.

We're doing things differently. We're engaging with flexible P3 [public-private partnership] partnerships. We are engaging with a huge amount of different initiatives to try and address that challenge because, if we look back in history, whether it's buildings or infrastructure, any type of infrastructure 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 . . . We look at a lot of our major infrastructure is 60 years old, 50, 60 years old. Products were a lot cheaper back then. The design standards were a little bit different. Labour was a lot cheaper. We could pound these projects out at an alarming rate, but now we are seeing a lot of those projects come to their time life.

So how do you address those shortfalls? How do you address those challenges? So we have to think outside the box, and that is exactly what we are doing. And because of that, we're looking at a new psychiatric hospital in North Battleford. We're looking at other new facilities around the province. We're looking at infrastructure projects like the Regina bypass that quite frankly could be 10 years out and double the cost at that point if we didn't look at different ways of doing these different projects.

As well, when it comes to infrastructure we know that our municipalities feel the pressure as well. We've done record revenue sharing. One point of our PST [provincial sales tax] has been going to the municipalities for a number of years. I know they appreciate that because now they can plan. It's all based on the previous year's taxation, so they know exactly what they're in for, what their income for the transfer payments will be the following year. They can plan, whereas previously they had no idea. It was mud on the wall; see what sticks, and then whatever money we get we'll pick our priorities. Now they can better plan to what projects they're going to attack.

We had a program out a number of years back called SIGI. That was the Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative. That was so successful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're bringing it back to help the municipalities address some of their challenges as well, and looking to partner that even further into some of the First Nations to help with some of their infrastructure deficits as well.

I touched on some of the highways, a lot of different highways work. I'm happy to report the twinning project that has just been finished out west I believe is fully open right now. I travel the one between Fort Qu'Appelle and Regina quite regularly. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, talk about an efficient use of taxpayers' money. If we were to four-lane that part of highway would be probably triple the cost. But we see a lot safer movement of traffic, a lot more efficient and effective movement of traffic. Some people still have a bit of an issue knowing exactly how to use it but, you know, that's few and far between. And I can tell you that the traffic moves seamlessly between Fort Qu'Appelle and Regina where the majority of the traffic is with commuters and also people travelling to our

valley down there as well.

I'm going to start touching on some of our health care initiatives. I don't want to take up too much time. I have some colleagues that really want to chime in here as well. But you know, when it comes to health care, my new position alongside the Minister of Health is an exciting one. It's challenging but it's exciting. It is the biggest part of our budget and I believe it is one of the most challenging. There is a huge deficit in the health infrastructure.

One of my first duties as Rural Health minister was to attend the, I'll call it the sand-turning or the gravel-turning in Saskatoon for the children's hospital. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was, I'll be quite honest, quite a surreal moment for me that day because as I stood on that site and we were looking at all these young kids that have actually accessed services for pediatrics, and children and some expectant mothers that were there doing the sod-turning, standing on that site and I'm taking part in all this, and I just kind of looked up to my right and up there, the third floor of the RUH [Royal University Hospital], I affectionately refer to it as peds 3000. For a time from 1998 to the year 2000, my family spent the better part of two years on that floor. And as we'd sit up on the floor and we'd look out those rooms, we looked down exactly on the site of where that children's hospital is going to be. And it used to be an old part of a parkade, what my son would affectionately call the car collection because he would look out at that and he had this vision of his Hot Wheels toys and his little fold-up box — it looked like a parkade — and lining them up. And if you actually looked out of that room, you would see what he was referring to as a car collection.

And you know, fast forward a number of years. Fifteen years passed. I'm looking down where my son referred to his car collection, and we're building a hospital there now that will be open in three years, will have a helipad for STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] service on top of it that he would have just . . . We were blessed by the service we had but just a blessing to those people going through the same struggle that we had to go through at that point with the great care we received there but bringing that standard of care up even further, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And delivering that service to the people of the province and the children, specifically the children of the province, is something I can tell you I was just so proud of that day.

And to me that's why I got into this. I never imagined myself being a politician but, you know, it's hard to see what's coming ahead of you. But in hindsight I look at some of what I've personally been through and what some of my friends have been through, and to see what I'm able to be involved with now, it is just utterly amazing.

And you know, in that time as well I can refer to a lot of the different doctors. But you know, I think some people, even some of the media will question, like do we need a children's hospital? You know, I think it came to light for me that day. I'm going to refer to . . . His name is doctor Jerry Yager, was Brayden — Brayden was my son — was his neurologist. He's the fellow that diagnosed Brayden, that he pretty much held our hand right through that whole process. And you know, lo and behold, we're there for this announcement and Dr. Jerry Yager

was one of the people that was specifically named as behind this children's hospital from the beginning and one of the major people that was behind the fundraising effort for this hospital.

So I'm not so worried about maybe what I feel. Our government, I think we feel it's the right decision. I'm not so worried about what the media feels or what the opposition has to say about it. But when I look to somebody like that, a medical professional that's been in it his whole life and dealt with these children and either held their hand through to success or some of them through to the next life, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's the guy who I'm looking at for leadership on this project, and that's why I know we're doing the right thing. And I'm very happy again to have taken part, taken part in that.

When we start looking at health care we talk about that Patient First Review quite a bit, and now we're looking at the update. The review came out in '08 I believe it was, I think, the first draft. A lot of those initiatives we've looked at, we've moved on. Now what's the next step? So really excited to be a part of the tail end of that, look at some of the work of the former two ministers, and continue on with that work to see what our next steps are.

Now some of the initiatives we put in place, we recognize that there were some issues with seniors' care. There had to be an Urgent Action Fund, \$10 million put in two years ago I believe and then \$3.7 million for ongoing programs, support for our seniors.

The Saskatchewan surgical initiative, the success rate on that has been astounding. Some areas have had trouble, have had issues, but the successes that we're seeing in the surgical initiative is really, really great to see. And again it's not about the government patting themselves on the back. It's about as the review says, patient first and putting the patient first ahead of everything else, patient-centred care, and that's where we're focusing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'll skip over some of these other initiatives. I can talk about *The Human Tissue Gift Act* which is going to modernize our legislation and minimize that wait-list, specifically people with corneas, cornea transplants. But it's going to give us access to more corneas and to help people regain their vision quicker, and maybe some of them wouldn't even have got their vision back at all, so improving the quality of life. Again, patients first.

*The Pharmacy Act* expanding the purview, the accessibility of services at a pharmacy, again flu shots, things like that. Let's keep people out of the emergency rooms, out of the hospitals, out of the clinics and get them serviced efficiently and effectively as possible, as quickly as possible and not bog down our system.

[19:30]

We know, I talked about the numbers of doctors and nurses so I won't dwell on that. That's a pretty well-known fact. We know that mental health and addictions is an issue, mental health in general. I had just the pleasure of meeting up with somebody I met a couple of weeks ago at the Alzheimer's gala here in town and Roxanne, she came to visit. I know the Minister of Health came by for a visit with me today and just what a great woman,

early onset Alzheimer's, 51 years old, very open about the fact that she's given about 10 years possibly to live but she's making the best of those years being an advocate, a spokesperson for Alzheimer's. Again it ties into the mental health part of things. And you know, somewhat invisible, especially when it comes to mental health or Alzheimer's can be invisible for quite some time.

And I'm proud to say that our government is really paying attention to these initiatives and doing our best to address some of the challenges and some of the needs of those patients as well. And we did name a commissioner for a mental health review, and again happy to report in the coming month or two we're going to see the mental health and addictions review action plan come out to give our province sort of a 10-year plan on where we need to get.

I know I talked a bit about, referred to emergency rooms, and that's a big thing that we've committed to is reducing those emergency room wait times. And that comes in a number of different ways, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know the minister spoke extensively about hot-spotting, identifying some of these really high users that, not that they don't need the medical treatment, but they're maybe not accessing the proper medical treatment at the emergency room if they're back over and over again and bogging down the system and frankly costing the system a lot of money.

Hot-spotting is about identifying those patients and directing them, getting them the best quality of care for the situation that they're in, whatever they're suffering with, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you know, there's a couple of pilot projects on the go right now, some success that we've seen, quite a bit of success, and looking forward to how that project rolls out to minimize the pressure on our emergency departments and improve the quality of health care in those regards.

A couple of other initiatives. The collaborative emergency centres, we have two open right now, three more to be opening soon, one very close to home in Canora. Again, talking about some of those health services stripped out of the rural areas, you know, pulled into the major centres. And what that does, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then we start seeing areas like Canora loading onto Yorkton and Yorkton loading onto Regina and Saskatoon.

That's the one thing I really want to focus on, is do my best to try and not only retain but increase the quality of care and increase that care in our rural areas, because we well know that if the Yorktons are strong we can pull pressure off Regina and Saskatoon. And if Canora and Esterhazy and Preeceville are stronger, then we can pull the pressure off of Yorkton. It serves people in the rural areas better. It serves people in the whole province better because we're more effectively using the dollars that are allocated towards health care and providing a better quality of service for the patient. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's patient first.

Innovation sites. We're opening a new innovation site in Yorkton very soon. It's actually up and running right now. The official opening will be towards the end of November. But again, a primary health clinic where people that would normally maybe run to the emergency room but they're able to access

specific services, directed by a person right at the front of the clinic to where they might be best suited. They might not need to see the doctor. They might need to see a nurse practitioner, maybe a physiotherapist, maybe a pediatrician. And directing those services specifically to where they need to go and again not bogging down the emergency room with things that could be dealt with in a clinic more effectively. And again, making sure the emergency room is there to handle the emergent cases that do come in.

Primary health centres, we've seen a few announcements. In fact, the Minister of Health and I were just up in Kelvington, to the member from Kelvington, the former minister of Social Services' home constituency, expansion of a long-term care facility with an integrated primary health centre in it. And you know, that's the neat thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now we're seeing sod-turnings, turning sod project, actually not starting — when we got there, there was such a huge hole in the ground that they're just off and running. This project will be . . . It is up and running. The money's behind it. It's not a nine-year announcement before another government has to come in and actually put the boots to the ground and get the project off the ground, but it's actually being built.

And just the appreciation of those people was heartwarming, and not so much for the government but appreciation for the hard work of the member from Kelvington-Wadena, who we know publicly isn't running again, but she is going to be missed so very much in these benches on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I won't talk too much more about that.

The one thing I do want to touch on, I know the minister's answering questions about lean, day after day after day. And I just want to recall a few experiences I've had. I mean you kind of get in this place, and you hear all these for-and-against arguments, but again I like to listen to the front line. Well the minister and I were on a trip up north to a northern hospital, and we encountered a young lady there, actually a lean leader. Admittedly she said, I got into it apprehensively. You hear all this lean. You hear what's going on, and I don't know about this stuff. She said once she was finally engaged, sort of, you know, dragging her heels slightly, she could not believe the difference it made.

And two specific things I want to point out that she said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was talking about patient care in the long-term care facility. By simple lean measures they put in — sort of an aha moment for them — but by simple lean measures they put in, one specific client that she talked about, one specific resident of the long-term care facility was falling virtually daily out of a chair, out of a wheelchair or, you know, trying to get around because of inefficiencies in the system. Once they put lean in place, they put lean processes in place for patient care, that gentleman has not fallen once, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's coming from a front-line worker, not from some tweet quotes that the Leader of the Opposition will use in the House here.

Another thing she pointed to . . . And I know the Leader of the Opposition, and I mean he can only go with the research and the information he has, so I'm not, again, not faulting him. But what I heard from her — and we're hearing about the translators and terminology and all the rest, and I'm not going to get too deep into that — but what she's told me was the



phraseology, the actual Japanese phraseology has a specific purpose. At this point she said to me, I don't know how I communicate with my staff. To communicate what I want to communicate instead of using one word, I'd have to use phrases that might mix the message. I can communicate the one phrase and they understand exactly what I'm talking about.

I know there was some joking about the RPIWs [rapid process improvement workshop] that these people go through. We walked through. They had two ongoing RPIWs up at that facility. And the excitement of the family representatives, the health care representatives, the management representatives, it wasn't top-down. It was everybody in one room talking about an issue and really coming to an agreement, coming to a specific, efficient, and effective way to improve the health career of these people.

And I know members across were heckling a little bit when the minister was up on his feet today about, I think it was treasury board last night when we had some of the CEOs [chief executive officers]. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I challenge them. I think there's been invites and they haven't been taken up on. Members of the media, members of the opposition, go out. Talk to the CEOs. Talk to some of the people — not only against, but talk to the people directly dealing with some of these processes in the front lines, and hear not just the negative. Listen to the positives.

Like you know, some of the references today in the House was, yes, like some of these comments were in what the member or the Leader of the Opposition is quoting. But read the whole document. There is a lot of specific points saying, regardless of all of this, don't go back. Don't stop. This is working. Transformative change. I've been in health care for decades. I've never seen anything like this happen. Don't stop.

And that's not somebody that's trying to save a job, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's somebody that's been in the system for decades. They're seeing the change and they don't want it to quit. Even if they might be only a couple years from retirement, they're seeing the success. They're seeing the patient being put first and a lot more targeted service there.

One final word about health. My last speech in the House — I think lengthy speech in the House — was my budget reply, and I took that as an opportunity admittedly to sort of put a lot of my dad's life on record. He served a lot of time in the navy and it kind of touched base, touched home with me today as well. He wasn't wartime. He was postwar, cold war actually, minesweeper duty, and I think some of that duty might have had a lot to do with his untimely death. A lot of asbestos in the old engine rooms and on the old minesweepers and ships.

But you know, the one thing that really struck home with me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spent pretty much the last three months, you know, two months running him around Saskatoon, Yorkton, wherever for different testing to get him diagnosed, to get him the best treatment possible. I virtually spent the last month in palliative care in Yorkton with him, which thankfully for technology I could actually work from the hospital room. If I had to take a call, I could leave palliative care and call from the front of the hospital. But you know, the one thing that, you know, you sit back in the ER or the emergency department, you

sit back in palliative care, you sit back in a ward, and a lot of people knew who I was, the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. But you know, they know me for me. I'm just Greg from Yorkton so . . . I'm quoting. But they know me.

So there was no apprehension, nothing other than just speaking to the son of a palliative patient and watching the service he got, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's the one thing I'll remember about dad is over and over again — I won't use some of his expletives, because he's kind of a colourful navy guy — but saying, you know, yes, the building needs some work, but you know, he pointed out it's still a pretty strong building that maybe needs some work and eventually get a new hospital there. The staff, the treatment, the services, everything that was available, he said, second to none. He said, if anybody wants to come in here and argue with me about the quality of health care, where it is today in this province, bring them on because I'll argue with them. The guy's palliative, laying in a bed, but he's still an old, tough German. He's ready to fight with people.

Watching things happen from behind the scenes and being involved in it from sort of a fly-on-the-wall perspective gave me a really good view of what's going on, watching some of the lean practices, watching where lean wasn't in place, some of the inefficiencies, but still gaining a whole new higher appreciation for not only our health care system, what we truly do have in this province, but for the professionals that are serving our patients' greatest needs and the love and care that they have. And that was just excellent.

I better move on here pretty quick. There's so much to talk about. You know, post-secondary education is something I touched on with our college. But again Sask Advantage Scholarship, the grant for education savings partnering with the RESP [registered education savings plan] program through the federal government, graduate retention program — all great initiatives that are really starting to pay dividends. And actually, we're putting more money into those programs than we expected because the uptake is so great, but again, it's serving a specific purpose. It's money well invested. We're keeping our kids here and helping with our labour shortage in the province.

I'll just go through some of the headlines, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our innovation, again, diversifying our economy, we look at the innovation available through the U of R with the petroleum institute. We look at Saskatoon with the synchrotron with . . . I better get the names right. The cyclotron radioscope facility at the University of Saskatchewan is in its final stages, a \$25.5 million laboratory that is a partnership between us and the federal government and the university that's going to provide Saskatchewan researchers with resources they require to develop radiopharmaceuticals, drugs containing radioactive materials — which I know very well about, going through, again, the issues with my son many years ago and with my dad — able to access the PET/CT [positron emission tomography/computerized tomography] scan in Saskatoon, and just the amazing work they are doing there with that diagnostic imaging equipment.

But again these drugs, outside of cancer treatment and diagnostic imaging, diseases like cancer, but Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and MS [multiple sclerosis], you know, it's something that we really want to focus on. And again,

investment in some of these things for the innovation side, diversifying our economy, but also twofold is creating a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people because of our investment in health care.

I talked a bit about our support for communities, again our revenue sharing, \$265 million this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I know Yorkton, the percentage 150-some per cent, the amount Yorkton, that it's getting now compared to before, our government is virtually doubled, more than doubled. So I know they're very appreciative of that, although they have the same challenge as us. They have huge infrastructure projects, limited resources, so you kind have got to pick and choose and find the projects you want to do.

But the thing I like about this program is, formerly I think a lot of the funding that went to municipalities was targeted, you know, maybe sexy, pretty projects you could cut a ribbon on and pat yourself on the back. What we're seeing now — I can point specifically to Yorkton — is because of their revenue sharing, they have their funds. They can designate the funding where they want. They might have something fairly exciting, so-called exciting to put the money towards, but then again we see a flood in Yorkton and the area of southern Saskatchewan this year. So what they did, they took funds that they would have maybe allocated to a different project towards the extended improvement of their sewer system. So now, although we were very well positioned in respect to the last flood in 2010, this year we came out of it way better than we did in 2010. There is still more work to do allocating those funds not to a project designated by the provincial government or federal government. They designated funds to projects that they deem fit. They're leading the city; let them make the decisions, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program]. Improvements under our government to PDAP was very lacking, I know, prior to 2010, recognized through the flooding specifically, Maple Creek, Yorkton, and around the province in 2010. And now we see — although many would still want to see more — a very advanced program to what we saw under the previous administration.

[19:45]

I'm not going to get too much into the agriculture. It's a big part of our economy, especially around home, but we're looking at the partnership to look at the western grain transportation. We're looking at, you know, the expansion of supports for agriculture, expanding of SaskTel's service into the rural areas again to support those agricultural economies.

I'm going to try and get through some of this really quick here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Couple things I want to focus on is the Hub. Yorkton was the second Hub in the province. Hub program, basically a silo-breaking-down initiative involving all the different organizations, human services organizations for the most part in a city, and targeting those that are at risk. So you'll have different organizations bringing cases to the Hub. They discuss the best way and the best organizations to deal with that situation, and we're seeing a lot better results. It started in Scotland, adapted in P.A. [Prince Albert], and now rolling out around the province. And that's one initiative that

isn't really health oriented but we're seeing and we will see, I believe, that initiative helping to keep people out of hospitals and emergency rooms in the future.

So my time is pretty much to a close, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll sit, I'll take my seat here quite quickly. You know, housing, we see housing was a critical rate a few years ago. Through a lot of the initiatives of the government, we see now a vacancy rate of 3.3 per cent. Rent stabilizing. Housing availability is here, programs like Habitat and social housing has been recognized. We'll be seeing an announcement in Yorkton very soon on social housing for disabilities and the first ever faith build through Habitat for Humanity will be in Yorkton very soon. The funds are pretty much in place.

You know, we have a great poverty rate, second lowest poverty rate in the country, but still we've announced that poverty strategy rolling out and, you know, coming highly applauded by Dr. Ryan Meili and Dr. Cory Neudorf and Alison Robertson, people that are recognized when it comes to anti-poverty strategies.

Parks, Culture, Sport improvements to our parks. I know Good Spirit Lake, the lake that I attend in the summertime, great improvements there with the boat launch, updated paving, campsite improvement, and the like. It's really starting to get the attention it deserves as just the jewel in the Parkland that was virtually neglected under the NDP, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, I mean the other members will be talking more about environment, carbon sequestration with the Boundary dam project, and all the rest of that, Mr. Speaker. So, just in closing I want to I guess end kind of where I started out, Mr. Deputy Speaker. An initiative I'm very proud of, our scholarship of honour really means something, even more so now we have the returning vets from Afghanistan and the Middle East, and now we see vets that are falling on our very land, our own country, and servicemen falling here. So you know, looking at the support that . . . and I know the members of the opposition as well, they support our armed forces, but looking at the initiatives that we've actually put in place to support them, their families, and education is something I'm very pleased with.

One of the last quotes I know in the Throne Speech was, "We are forever indebted to those who have paid the ultimate price for our freedom." Mr. Speaker, as many have said, many gave something, but these individuals, Mr. Speaker, they gave all. John 15:13 says, "Greater love has no man than he lay down his life for his friends," Mr. Speaker. And that's my favourite scripture this time of year, when we're coming up to Remembrance Day, and looking at the sacrifices of World War II vets up in our galleries today and seeing some of their stories on the video series that's coming out very, very soon.

And I encourage people to look that up and recognize the sacrifices of our vets, all the way through our history: World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict, and some of our vets that fought in even Vietnam and other conflicts around the world, Mr. Speaker. So I'm very, very appreciative of that. Because of them, we can stand in this Assembly and we can do what we do here virtually every day, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So in closing, I want to remind people of . . . I always love this

licence plate at Remembrance Day. I've seen this very often and it's a licence plate that says, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it says, "If you won't stand behind our military, try standing out in front of them," Mr. Speaker. And I challenge anybody out there that doesn't stand behind our emergency services, behind our protective services, our RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], and specifically our Armed Forces that have been targets on our own shores here, our own land the last couple of weeks. Stand behind our military. And God bless them, Mr. Speaker, and God bless the families of Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So with that I will be supporting the Throne Speech and not even considering the amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's a pleasure for me to join in on the response to the Speech from the Throne that was delivered in this Chamber last Wednesday, Mr. Speaker, by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan.

I want to join with colleagues on both sides of the aisle in offering my deepest sympathy to the families of Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent. I know that Corporal Cirillo was laid to rest today, Mr. Speaker, in his hometown, I believe, of Hamilton, Ontario, and the church was full. I saw some of the clips on the supper news, and the Prime Minister I thought spoke eloquently on behalf of all Canadians in thanking Corporal Cirillo and particularly his son, his young five-year-old son, I believe. The Prime Minister in the clips that I saw talked about how at some point in time later on in this young man's life he can come to appreciate what a hero his father is and was and how Canadians from coast to coast to coast appreciate the bravery and the sacrifice made by Corporal Cirillo. And then of course the same thing holds true for Warrant Officer Vincent and his family. He was tragically taken from us, I believe, last Monday in Quebec, Mr. Speaker.

So last Wednesday was a bit of a surreal day here at the legislature. And I'm fairly new here. I'm just coming up on three years of being elected in November, but I seem to, you know, recall previous throne speeches and the activities around the legislature and the pomp and circumstance associated with the Throne Speech. And it's an exciting day. It starts off a new legislative session and we have lots of different activities going on, but that particular day with the events that unfolded in Ottawa earlier that day brought a different type of atmosphere to this legislature.

And it felt a little bit, I felt a little bit uneasy, as I'm sure all colleagues did, until we knew that the security staff at this building and the work that our Sergeant-at-Arms does in conjunction with his security staff, and the Regina Police Service, and the RCMP. And walking down the hallway outside my office here, Mr. Speaker, and literally seeing police officers and the SWAT [special weapons and tactics] team and others patrolling the grounds and patrolling inside the legislature and ensuring the safety of not only elected members, but the people that work in this building, the staff, the people that work for Legislative Assembly services and of course our visitors to the

building, and I thought that I've never felt more safe in my life, Mr. Speaker, than I did last Wednesday when the activities in Ottawa were unfolding.

I just want to thank the Sergeant-at-Arms and his staff for the tremendous job that they did, not only that day, Mr. Speaker, but continue to do in serving the people of Saskatchewan and those that visit and operate in this building.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is a pleasure on behalf of the constituents of Regina Northeast to join in on this Throne Speech debate and talk a little bit about the constituents of Regina Northeast. It is a growing constituency, Mr. Speaker, as are many constituencies in Saskatchewan these days. And I've had some boundaries redrawn within the constituency and had the opportunity to get out earlier this summer and knock some doors in some new areas that have been added to my constituency and had great conversations at the doorstep.

And as I think my colleague from Walsh Acres said earlier today, not everybody agrees with what the government is doing, and you have that opportunity to talk about those kinds of things. But I think it's safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that the vast majority of people that I spoke with certainly are in agreement with the direction that the government is taking with respect to how we are operating and, most importantly, the direction that the province is going in. And that was articulated to me on a number of occasions in speaking to the moms and dads on their doorsteps earlier this summer. And so I really appreciate that kind of feedback.

We obviously get that as well when constituents come into our constituency offices and offer up advice, and they perhaps need some help with some issues. And we get the opportunity to sit down with them over a cup of coffee and talk about issues that are important and pertain to their lives and where we can help out. And so it is a pleasure always to go and meet with the constituents of Regina Northeast. And I look forward to continuing to do that, not only now but as we move along into the next election cycle, Mr. Speaker.

Earlier this year in June the Premier asked me to take on some new responsibilities within cabinet, and I appreciate the Premier's confidence in me in taking on the portfolio of Advanced Education and as well as Minister Responsible for SaskTel and continue to serve on the treasury board and the Crown Investments Corporation board and some other committees. It's a bit of a heavy workload, Mr. Speaker. I'm not complaining, but I'm learning an awful lot about government from all aspects of the operations of government, from the executive side to the Crown side, and it is a tremendous opportunity. And I thank the Premier for that opportunity, and I want to continue to serve in whatever capacity the Premier deems necessary.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I have a very worthy staff that assists me in the Ministry of Advanced Education's office, and I just want to thank Amiee, and Michelle, Kris, Amanda, and Tyler. And I also want to thank my constituency assistant, Mr. Ron Naidu who continues to serve with me and does a tremendous job in running my constituency office here in Regina Northeast. We have a joint office that's shared with the member from Regina Douglas Park and Regina Dewdney, and Brittany and

Becky along with Ron do a tremendous job in helping me out in serving in that particular constituency office, Mr. Speaker. And a thank you to them for all the hard work that they do in particular my CA [constituency assistant].

As well, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the tremendous work that officials in the Ministry of Advanced Education and officials, employees of SaskTel do to not only help me in my role and responsibilities but the tremendous work that they do on behalf of the people of this province. And we are very capably led by very professional, very competent public servants, Mr. Speaker. I am very ably served by my deputy minister, Dr. Louise Greenberg, and all of the senior administration staff that I get the opportunity to interact with on a fairly regular basis, and the dozens and dozens of other employees that work in the Ministry of Advanced Education that I perhaps don't get an opportunity to interact with all that often, although I've been over there on a couple of occasions and had the chance to meet some of them. And they do tremendous work on behalf of the people of this province.

On the SaskTel side, Mr. Speaker, it is led by the CEO, present CEO Mr. Ron Styles, a long-serving public servant in the province of Saskatchewan, his senior executive team and the literally thousands of employees that work in SaskTel through the entire province and work to serve the people of this province. And I just want to acknowledge the work that they do every single day on behalf of all of us, Mr. Speaker, if you'll indulge me on that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to touch on a couple of different aspects of the Throne Speech itself that relate to my responsibilities as Minister of Advanced Education. But before I get into the specifics of what was outlined in the Throne Speech last Wednesday, I found it interesting that earlier that day — and we live in a political environment here; on a day-to-day basis when the legislature is sitting we have opportunity to debate, and we have question period and questions and answers and we engage in the political thrust if you will, the cut and thrust — and I found it interesting that the Leader of the Opposition and the official opposition, the NDP issued, I think it was a 25-point plan or something of that nature earlier in the day on the Throne Speech date. And what they were outlining was what they wanted to see in a Throne Speech, and I believe it was 25 points that they insisted had to be in the Throne Speech that they wanted to see.

And what I found most interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that nowhere in those 25 points that the Leader of the Opposition outlined was any mention of post-secondary education. There was no mention whatsoever of advanced education either at the universities, no mention of our regional college system in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no mention of formerly SIAST, now Saskatchewan Polytechnic; no mention of student support services in this province for those who are attending post-secondary education. It didn't even make the top 25 list of what the Leader of the Opposition insisted had to be in a Throne Speech of issues that need to be addressed in this province, Mr. Speaker. So I don't know if that means that my ministry is doing a terrific job in the area of advanced education, or it just doesn't rank very high; it just doesn't rank very high on the list of priorities with respect to the NDP, the official opposition, Mr. Speaker. I'll leave that for them to

decide. I'll leave that for them to defend in completely ignoring post-secondary education in the province. And I want to talk about what we are doing in post-secondary education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm very proud of the record of this government with respect to investments we've made into advanced education in this province since 2007. Ministers before me have done a tremendous job in outlining how much of a priority advanced education needs to be at the treasury board table and at the cabinet table. And I think it speaks volumes. If you look at where this government is spending its money, it speaks volumes as to where our priorities lie.

And I know we can get into all kinds of debate whether we're spending enough or should be spending more in a particular area versus one area, or whether there's other ways to provide student support services. But the fact of the matter remains, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can have that debate. We can have that debate if the opposition would put forward a plan as to what they would like to see with respect to advanced education.

[20:00]

And when I look at our support for our universities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I look at the amount of funding that is going into the universities themselves, and I find it interesting that I hear quite often from members opposite that the government is cutting back funding to our universities, the government cuts back funding in their operating grants to the universities. And yet when I look at the facts, when I look at the numbers, and I see since 2007 when government, this government took over in November of 2007, that for the University of Saskatchewan, funding is up 65 per cent from 2007 till today. At the University of Regina, funding is up some 40 per cent from 2007 to today.

Enrolments at those two respective universities, Mr. Speaker, are around 10 per cent. I think they're about 12 per cent for University of Regina and about 9 per cent for University of Saskatchewan, numbers in there. And then I look at the CPI, the consumer price index, or the rate of inflation over those last seven years, and on a compounded rate of return with respect to the inflation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's about 14 per cent. So now if you look at how we have enrolments going up around 10 to 12 per cent — we'll say 12 at the high end — inflation's running compounded over those seven years at about 14 per cent, and yet the level of funding on average is up almost 58 per cent in total for those two universities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think even the member from Regina Lakeview could pull out that big old calculator they used in the 2011 campaign, put in all those numbers, and come up with a cut to the post-secondary system with respect to our universities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we will continue to do that. We will continue to support our universities in this particular province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In the Throne Speech itself, there were a couple of issues that we dealt with that laid out specifics with respect to things we want to accomplish here in the fall session and as we move into the '15-16 budget. When I was first appointed Minister of Advanced Education, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had the opportunity to go out and visit a number of our post-secondary educational institutions. And I took the opportunity to go around the province and visit different campus sites of our

regional college system.

We have Northlands College up in La Ronge in northern Saskatchewan; Cumberland College, I visited the campus site in Nipawin; Carlton Trail. We have Great Plains down in the Swift Current area. The seven different regional colleges throughout the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had the opportunity to visit every single one of them, meet with their presidents and meet with their board Chairs.

And one of the things that was made clear to me was that they had some difficulty, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with their Internet bandwidth, attaching all these different campus sites they had within their respective regional college region. And so some of their techie people sat down with me and asked if there was some possibility that the government could look at increasing the bandwidth that we would have go into these different campus sites so it would enable them to do things like video conferencing capabilities between campuses, where they could live stream classes much easier. For example, from La Ronge to Buffalo Narrows, Creighton, and Ile-a-la-Crosse they could have these different live streams feeding into these different campus sites from a central location in Northlands College in La Ronge. You could increase the number of students who could receive individualized online adult basic education instruction, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You could also increase the mining and trades education with easier access to online information. In other words the information that came into these colleges would be more easily accessed and could be more sped up, is what I'm trying to say here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to the amount of time it takes to download various different types of programs.

So I thought it was a fairly reasonable request and I came back and had discussions with my officials and had discussions with SaskTel officials to see if there was some way that we could do what we did on a similar basis with our K to 12 schools across the province. And I'm told for, you know, there's some dollars involved that we were able to find here in my budget during the course of this particular fiscal year, and then ongoing years further out, where we could take any of those colleges, those campus sites that had less than 100 megabits per second and upgrade that to 100. And any of those who were over 100 megabits per second, upgrade that to 1 gigabyte per second or 1000 megabits per second.

We said that we were going to look at doing that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's exactly what we did. We announced that in the Throne Speech. Now this isn't some big, splashy program that governments, you know, we always like to announce and those kinds of things, but it's the small incremental steps that helps our education, our post-secondary education system deliver the programs that they're mandated to do. It provides more accessibility for the students out in those areas that are not downtown Regina or downtown Saskatoon to access programs, to perhaps complete their grade 12 education, adult basic education, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that might take them out of a cycle of poverty or a cycle of unemployment and put them into the workforce, put them into a situation contributing to the economy of Saskatchewan or perhaps allows them to go on to another program in post-secondary education and obtain a degree. And I think that's the kind of thing, these are the kind of

small steps we can do very easily, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'd be surprised if the opposition didn't recognize the value in that, and I'd be surprised why they wouldn't want to vote in favour of this kind of program within the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

One of the other things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I'm quite proud of is our support for having Aboriginal students get into post-secondary education. And there are a variety of means of that happening, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm told at the University of Regina they released some figures here not that long ago, that since 2009, the last five years, Aboriginal — these are self-declared Aboriginal individuals, self-declared — enrolment is up some 50 per cent in the last five years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm also told at the University of Saskatchewan that Aboriginal enrolment year over year is around 10 or 11 per cent increased over last year. I think these are terrific numbers.

I had the opportunity also to go out and visit with the president of the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Mr. Riel Bellegarde. And he tells me that enrolment is up considerably at that institution as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I had the chance when I was first put in this position, I think the very first event I attended after the swearing-in at cabinet in this role, was the graduation ceremony in June at the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. And I know that the Minister of Education was there, and the member for Saskatoon Greystone was there, along with some federal representatives. And I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it was a very moving ceremony. There's quite a bit of pomp and circumstance associated with that graduation ceremony too, with a smudge ceremony, and they drum you in. To see some of the cultural outfits or costumes or dress, I should say, that some of the students wear representing their First Nation and to have their families in the audience so proud, taking pictures and whooping and hollering and enjoying the afternoon with respect to that graduation, it was a very worthwhile event to attend and I quite enjoyed it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think it speaks to how this government is focusing in on increasing enrolment in post-secondary education for the Aboriginal students.

We know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that since 2008 there's been a 25 per cent increase in the number of First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan who have attained a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree. And the number earning a university degree has jumped some 40 per cent since 2008.

We know that there's still much work to do to close the education and employment gaps between First Nations and Métis people and non-Aboriginal population, but we are seeing steady progress, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we also know that when First Nations and Métis students, families, workers, employers, and communities succeed by obtaining post-secondary educational credit, we all succeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's going to be something that we will continue to focus on in finding opportunities, whether it's at First Nations University of Canada, whether it's through SIIT, through DTI [Dumont Technical Institute], Gabriel Dumont Institute, or at our two universities, we will continue to look for opportunities to provide accessibility for our Aboriginal population in obtaining post-secondary education, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The last one I just want to talk on is the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, SIAST, or what was formerly known as SIAST. It is now known as Saskatchewan Polytechnic. I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is a transformational change for this particular training institution. This puts it on level with other polytechnics across Canada. I think it's one of 11 now polytechnics in Canada. It will be an employer-driven, student-focused institution. And Dr. Larry Rosia there, the president and CEO of Saskatchewan Polytechnic, has a grand vision for where he wants to take that institution, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I think it elevates the level of post-secondary education in this province. It takes us to a new level. It allows us to compete with not only other provinces, but indeed other countries in attracting students and faculty to the province of Saskatchewan for skilled trades and technology type training, as well as offering now degrees, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's something else we talked about in the Throne Speech, that we want to see more opportunities for degrees being awarded in this province through our degree authorization process.

Ministers previous to me have established the Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board, which for the first time in the history of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, allows an arm's-length body outside of government that has academically qualified individuals take a look at programs that different institutions want to offer with respect to degrees here in the province of Saskatchewan, outside of our universities. And I think that's good. I think that's a good opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for these institutions in the province, other than universities, to take a look at opportunities to offer degrees. Why? Because it provides more accessibility for our students, not only students from Saskatchewan, but students indeed who come from outside the province of Saskatchewan and indeed international students.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to finish off by talking a little bit on the SaskTel side and what we're doing with respect to increase support into rural Saskatchewan. If I could just find my notes here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the SaskTel increases. Here we are, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Colleague from Indian Head-Wolseley was thinking I would never find the documents, but I just . . . Because I want to get the numbers straight, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and just some of the things that our government has been doing since 2007 in expanding not only cell coverage but Internet coverage throughout the entire province. And is there more work to be done? There absolutely is more work to be done, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We acknowledge that. I certainly acknowledge that as Minister Responsible for SaskTel. But what I can tell you is that we have made a commitment, not only to our urban centres in the province but certainly to the rural locations in the province of Saskatchewan with our SaskTel rural strategy.

Some 54 communities that previously could not access high-speed Internet will receive that in this coming year, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have expanded or improved high-speed service to 318 communities in the province of Saskatchewan since 2007 and SaskTel is also improving existing service by doubling the available Internet speed in 220 rural communities, and that will be complete by the end of 2014.

So as I spoke earlier today on the CommunityNet service with respect to the schools in the province, some 500 schools. It allows for doubling download speeds for primary schools and increasing by up to 10 times for secondary schools. And it's being rolled out to First Nations schools as we talked about earlier today. And as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reference I made earlier about the upgrade of Internet access to our regional college system I think is incredibly important for taking those college campuses to the next level with respect to interconnectedness. And improving cellphone capacity in 111 different rural communities by adding more spectrum to their wireless 4G towers, resulting in an increase of 100 per cent in voice and data capacity.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that it's not perfect throughout the entire province, but SaskTel is in a very competitive environment with respect to competing with the big three, Rogers, Bell, and Telus. We are the only company in the province of Saskatchewan that's adding infrastructure to rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I would just point that out to the citizens of this province that when you are a SaskTel customer, you are investing back into your telco [telecommunications company] that is providing infrastructure into rural Saskatchewan, both on the cell side and Internet side. And I think that's incredibly important, and we will continue to do that as we outlined in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So those are a couple of areas I just wanted to touch on in my response to the Speech from the Throne. Again I want to thank the good citizens, the good constituents of Regina Northeast for allowing me this privilege and this opportunity to have experience standing up in this Chamber and representing their interests here. And I look forward to continue doing that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. With that, I'm going to close by saying I will be supporting the Throne Speech and not the amendment from the opposition. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Estevan.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a pleasure for me to rise in this Assembly this evening and respond to the Throne Speech delivered by Her Honour last Wednesday. Before I do get to my comments on the Throne Speech, there are comments that I, like many of my colleagues, would like to make.

And first of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to offer my condolences to the families of the two soldiers, Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent, who lost their lives in such a cowardly act of violence last week. I, like many others I'm sure, that when I thought something like this could never happen in our Canada, something so senseless as this. But I want to thank all those who put themselves in harm's way to protect the citizens of this great country.

I would like to thank those who were at the legislature last Wednesday and since: the RCMP; the Regina Police Service; the military; our Sergeant-at-Arms, Patrick Shaw; and of course the entire security unit here at the legislature. It was comforting to witness the degree of protection this building provided for those who work here and those who are visiting here.

Last Wednesday's events are proof that freedom is not free. As we approach Remembrance Day, I want to thank those who have served and continue to serve our country. And we should not remember them just on November 11th, but every day of the year.

And, Mr. Speaker, just this morning I attended the ceremony for the military heritage project that was held in the rotunda. And it included a video of a World War II veteran from Saskatchewan who, along with others, was introduced during routine proceedings today. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this veteran, Mr. Harrison, 93 years old, and he spoke to those gathered and said that this was his first time in this Legislative Building, something that just truly amazed me. And as he was saying that, I was just so touched to think that I come in here every day and take, just take the security, the safety, the freedom for granted. And this gentleman who fought for the freedom I enjoy, that was his first time in this building.

[20:15]

I just encourage everyone . . . It showed a short clip of a video that he had made, and these videos are *Stories of Courage*. And it was very interesting. I could have sat there all afternoon and watched it. But I would encourage anyone who has the opportunity to take advantage of them and watch them as you hear their recollections of the war.

Mr. Speaker, there are a few thank yous that I must make. I must thank my family for all they do for me. My son Terry, he farms my land and farms his own land as well as holds down a full-time job. My daughter Trish, she helps keep checking my home, and in the summertime, she'll be out there to help me cut my grass. My yard is 5 acres, so it keeps me going. The older I get it seems like the longer it takes. And she also holds down a full-time job. And they are great kids.

My grandkids, they've grown up on me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Beau is going to be 20, and he's in the process of enlisting in the air force. And I would like to take a moment just to thank the member from Wood River for the guidance that he's given to Beau. Shelby, the next oldest, he is sixteen and a half, in grade 11 at the Estevan Comprehensive School. Bailee is almost 16 and she's in grade 10 at Midale high school, and Tristan is 14 and he is in grade 9 also at the Estevan Comprehensive School.

Of course my mom, she lives in Estevan in Trinity Tower, and she's now in her late 80s. She's in great health and she's . . . I have a lot to thank her for, Mr. Speaker, and if I ever step out of line and say something that is untoward, it certainly isn't because I was raised that way. Mom and dad did a good job. They had . . . I have seven siblings and, you know, they worked hard, spent a lot of time with us kids, and I'm forever indebted to my mom and my dad. Of course my dad is no longer with us. And of course my siblings, they are all very supportive of me. And I know I shouldn't single out any one of them, Mr. Speaker, but I'm going to mention my sister Edna who visits this legislature many, many times, and I would just like to let her and her husband, Lawrence, know that my thoughts and prayers are with her and her family as they are dealing with some serious health issues in their family right now.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my constituency assistants. Rosalie Story, who has been my constituency assistant for, gosh, I think it must be close to seven years now, and Rosalie is away on maternity leave. Her and her husband, Jared Story, had a little baby girl in August. Little Ava was born, and she's just the sweetest little thing. But I'm also very lucky to have Wilma Bjorndalen and Susan Colbow who are handling the office, and very capably I must add. And last but certainly not least, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of the Estevan constituency whom I have had the honour of serving since 1999.

And speaking of my constituency, Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the Premier, Minister of SaskPower, Minister of Environment, several of my colleagues and I attended the grand opening of the carbon capture and sequestration unit at the Boundary dam power station. And I will go into that, more detail on that a little later on in my comments, but what a historic day that was in my constituency.

Estevan is also home to the Energy Training Institute and I'm proud to say that the Minister of Advanced Education visited that facility just a short while ago, and what a state-of-the-art training facility it is, Mr. Speaker. Offers training to many avenues of the oil industry and as well as other industries in our province, and this facility operates under the umbrella of the Southeast Regional College.

Estevan is home to another state-of-the-art facility as well and that's the Spectra Place events centre which serves as a home for the Estevan Bruins hockey team, many well-known entertainers that perform there, as well as trade shows are hosted there.

Estevan has also been approved to house a CT [computerized tomography] scan at St. Joseph's Hospital. Fundraising is well on its way and I think about three-quarters of the required \$2 million have been raised at this point. Fundraising is also under way for a new nursing home in Estevan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And of course with the province funding 80 per cent of the capital cost rather than only 65 per cent as was funded in the days of the NDP government, it makes it much easier for communities to fundraise for important projects such as these.

As well, Mr. Speaker, Estevan has been chosen to host the 2016 Saskatchewan Summer Games. The committee is working very hard on that, and just recently, office space has been donated for the duration of the time needed to organize these games and for everything that has to be done regarding the games. Dr. Doug Blue, a retired dentist, donated the use of the building that housed his dental office pre-retirement, generously donated this. So on behalf of many of the people of the Estevan constituency, I thank him. And Dr. Blue is a prime example of the generous people of the Estevan community. And these are people who step up to the plate and do what needs to be done. They volunteer, and I'm just so proud of every one of them.

And a prime example of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the United Way Telethon that took place in Estevan about 10 days ago, and this is a 35-hour telethon that takes place every year. And they had a goal this year of \$340,000. They exceeded it, raising \$347,000, making them the first in Canada to reach their goal. And the Estevan United Way has been the first to reach its goal 38 out of the last 40 years. So that is really something that

I am proud of and they should be very proud of, and I thank all the volunteers that made that organization a success.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the Throne Speech. I am proud of our government and I am very proud of our province — a province that has a balanced budget. A province that recently received a credit upgrading by Moody's to AAA, their highest rating possible. A province that hit a record high employment in June with 577,000 people working here. A province that in July hit a record low unemployment level of 3.2 per cent, the lowest unemployment rate ever recorded, and in September the lowest unemployment rate and the fastest rate of job creation in the nation.

Mr. Speaker, we have a province that now has a population of 1.125 million people. And this, every time I hear this figure or a figure over the million people, it always reminds me of the former member from Regina Wascana Plains, Doreen Hamilton, who said it was statistically impossible to increase our population.

Mr. Speaker, we've only been here for a short time but, you know, it's the doom and gloom on the other side. It never ends. The NDP are never happy, and I just cannot imagine living with such pessimism. I know their job is to oppose, but their job is also to propose. They are so caught up in the old NDP socialist ideology that if anyone other than the negative nine over there has an idea, they automatically reject it. It's only a good plan if they come up with it. But here's the problem — they don't have any new, reasonable ideas, no reasonable proposals. They think they should be government. The last time they came up with any ideas was the tree book, which was authored by the present Leader of the Opposition, and it was so over the top that the people of this province soundly rejected it. \$5 billion of additional spending. That's on top of the budgets that ministries now have.

Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the member from Athabasca deliver his response. His speech has had the same content since we formed government in '07, so I guess he has a pretty good memory. Perhaps a bit selective. And this may surprise you a little bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I'm going to agree with his colleague, the member from Regina Rosemont, on this one occasion only, and that's when that member says that the member from Athabasca isn't very good at math.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca keeps saying how we inherited a \$2 billion surplus from them. Then when asked why they didn't implement programs or build infrastructure, he says they didn't have the money. Well either they had it or they didn't. You can't have it both ways, but the member from Athabasca just can't get that through his head.

This government, under the very capable leadership of the member from Swift Current, has invested and continues to invest record amounts in capital projects. When I was first elected in 1999, the city of Estevan approached me in regards to a truck route around the city. That request was ignored by the government of the day, the NDP. Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to say that the truck route is under construction, completion expected in the summer of 2015.

The twinning of Highway 6 and 39 was also talked about back

then. Under this government, it has been announced and is in the pre-planning stages.

The Marian Health Centre in Radville was another long-needed facility. The NDP ignored this need. In fact they were closing long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker. Under the Sask Party government, the new Marian Health Centre and long-term care centre is open and the residents moved in during the summer. And the hospital is serving that community under the very capable leadership of Dr. O. and Dr. Helms. And I am sure that they are very, very happy with their new facility. A grand opening is scheduled sometime in the very near future.

The carbon capture and storage unit at Boundary dam power station, first in the world. Mr. Speaker, again I remember just months before the '07 election, the government of the day, the NDP, in fact it was when the member from Regina Lakeview was minister of SaskPower, announced a \$3.5 billion power station, Shand 2. They announced it. People were all very excited. Then in the dying days of their government, they cancelled it. They got everyone's hopes up and then crashed them, which was pretty typical. Officially I don't know why they cancelled it. I do have some ideas of my own though.

The Sask Party government invested in the carbon capture and storage, making it the first commercial power plant in the world with a fully integrated post-combustion carbon capture system. The captured carbon dioxide is stored for use in oil recovery, and it's equivalent to taking more than 250,000 vehicles off Saskatchewan roads each year.

And, Mr. Speaker, I must add that at the peak of the construction of that carbon capture and storage facility there was 1,700 workers there and there was no time lost to accidents. So that's something that the employees out there can be very, very proud of.

This government also invested in the construction of the Saskatchewan cyclotron and radioisotope facility at the University of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this lab provides researchers with the resources needed to develop radiopharmaceuticals. These drugs can be used to detect, diagnose, and treat diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and multiple sclerosis. And this is imperative, Mr. Speaker, as I don't think there is one person in this Chamber who hasn't been touched or had a family member or friend, someone close to them that's been touched by at least one of these diseases.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've also invested in schools in our seven years as a government, more than \$700 million. That's a 268 per cent increase. Forty new schools have been built or are in the planning stages — a far cry from the NDP's record of closing 176 schools.

[20:30]

This government has significantly increased the benefits under the seniors' income plan and personal care home benefits program. In 2014-15 we will nearly triple the benefits our seniors receive under the seniors' income program, or SIP [seniors' income plan]. In their 16 years as government, the NDP never once increased the benefits. And that's shameful,



Mr. Deputy Speaker, absolutely shameful. Not only has our government nearly tripled the benefits of SIP, we've nearly doubled the number of seniors eligible for that program. We've also created the personal care home benefit, with benefits of up to \$4,400 per year for those that qualify. And with our historical tax changes, low-income seniors have \$700 more in their pocket than they did under the NDP. We have also invested \$34 million for 420 new seniors' housing units across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I also find it very interesting that the NDP opposition has developed an interest in agriculture. Boy, their 16-year reign in this province, I don't think the farmers will ever forget the ag policies of the NDP. We had tax revolts. We had sit-ins at the legislature. And I can also remember, I think it was at the same time we had the sit-in at the legislature that they had the doors chained where the members were barricaded inside this building. They were chained from the outside, Mr. Speaker. And it was people that were so fed up with the NDP's ag policies. And of course, that was under the leadership I guess of Dwain Lingenfelter. The only ag policy they had in the '70s was the land bank, and thank goodness that that all changed in the '80s or we'd have state-run farms in this province and that would be very, very sad. Today we have a strong agriculture sector, contributing \$4.5 billion to Saskatchewan's gross domestic product and sustaining 50,000 direct and indirect jobs.

In the coming weeks, Saskatchewan will host a New West Partnership transportation and market access summit to discuss long-term improvements to Western Canada's transportation system.

Because producers are reliant on technology, SaskTel's rural strategy will see the expansion of high-speed Internet into another 54 communities by the end of the year. As well, SaskTel is doubling the available Internet speed into 120 rural communities and improving cellphone service in 111 rural communities by adding more capacity to its 4G network. And this is in addition to the 318 rural communities that have already received improved Internet service and upgrades to cellular service in more than 500 locations since we formed government in 2007.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on. There's things that I would like to say regarding advanced education, regarding social services, housing. And I guess I will just add that in housing, when I read about the need for housing, I remember the debate during the last election. It was the televised debate that the chamber of commerce sponsors every election in Estevan. And when we were asked questions up there, and one of them was regarding housing: what is the Sask Party government, if we form government, what are we going to do regarding housing? How are we going to deal with the challenges by all these people moving in here and needing housing? So I answered it and what our policy was. And a gentleman got up on the floor, and he said, I know one way to solve housing in Saskatchewan. And everybody kind of looked and we thought we were going to really hear something. He says, elect an NDP government because there'll be lots of houses because everybody will leave this province in droves again. And I think he was bang on.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, there are others that would like to speak. And I'm very thankful to have this opportunity to speak in this honourable Assembly this evening. I was sick with the flu

yesterday, and just thankful that my voice held up today. And I guess it was the Buckley's Mixture I took that did it, and I understand you all had a taste of that mixture yesterday here in the Chamber.

But I will close by saying how honoured I am to serve under the leadership of this Premier and alongside the group of men and women that I serve with, very capable men and women in this caucus. And I thank them for being such great colleagues, such hard-working people that truly, truly care about the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will support the main motion. I will not support the amendment. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a real pleasure to follow the member from sunny Estevan, the member with a sunny disposition, although she seems to have been under a rain cloud or something tonight because there weren't a lot of positive things that we heard. But, Mr. Speaker, this particular Throne Speech presents a whole number of challenges for Saskatchewan people. And I will speak to some of those in a minute or two, but first off I'm going to say thank you to all of the people of Regina Lakeview who have provided me with the opportunity to be here in this legislature over five elections. It's been an honour to serve them and I look forward to doing that in the future as well.

I also want to thank my wife, Linda, and my daughters Solveig and Ingrid for their support over the years, and also my parents who live in Regina who are in their 88th year this year and have been supportive all the years that I've been in the legislature, and my wife Linda's parents who are 90 and 95 and have from a distance provided support from out on the West Coast. It's these family people and my extended family across Saskatchewan which give me strength to do this job. I also want to thank Conni Yakimchuk who works in my constituency office, and also Cory Oxelgren, as well as all the staff here at the legislature who provide support for much of the work that we do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech this time is, as my colleague from Saskatoon mentioned earlier today, much of a recycled speech. It includes many almost exact phrases from the last year and the previous year and others years as to some of the initiatives of the government. A Throne Speech is something where, a place for the Premier and for the government and the government members to set out their vision for where we're going.

But I have had the pleasure — I guess, if I can put that in quotes — of listening to virtually all of the speeches that have been made by government members. And it's amazing how much of their speech goes back, back, back, some even this afternoon, back to the '40s and '50s, but many times back over the last 20 or 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, I think what the people of Saskatchewan want is a Throne Speech and members who are looking forward to tell us where and what is going to happen with this province. What we know is, we've had 10 years of absolutely amazing economic activity in the province of Saskatchewan. And the question

becomes how have we used these gifts, these talents — if we use the Biblical terms — and are we accountable to the people of Saskatchewan for how we've used these gifts.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think there are a number of challenges because this Throne Speech ignores many of the needs of ordinary people. It doesn't really talk about health care, which is always the number one issue for the people of Saskatchewan. It doesn't really talk about education. It doesn't deal with the fact that the economy seems to be going well, business people talk about things going well on sort of an upper level, but a lot of people are having a hard time paying their day-to-day expenses. And they're starting to worry, when they look at broader world indications, whether it's the value of the Canadian dollar or whether it's the price of a barrel of oil — which we know affects our economy — or the price of potash, or the price of wheat.

We know that last year we had just an absolutely amazing year in agriculture, which hasn't been matched this year. And we don't yet know what the consequences of that is going to be for our economy and for our day-to-day living. And, Mr. Speaker, it's that sense of uneasiness that I think we all need to talk about when we're here in this legislature. We need to connect with those people who are concerned about what's going to happen for them in their families, what's going to happen with them in their small businesses, and how are we going to make their life better.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that the government and the Premier like big ideas, big plans, doing things. We know where some of these things get them in trouble. We've heard about the \$40 million spent on a big idea around the use of a Japanese motor company's method of management in a people business, in health care. And we know how that has disconnected.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm a person who reads widely, but one of the magazines I look at monthly is the *Harvard Business Review*. And, Mr. Speaker, it's quite often that there are lessons in the *Harvard Business Review* that are important for us in Saskatchewan. And in May this year they had an article which was called "Beware the Next Big Thing." And then it says, before you adopt a new management idea, figure out if it's right for you. And, Mr. Speaker, it goes then to examine where do new management practices come from, and it basically says that they come from companies or institutions or organizations trying out new ideas to see how they'll work in their organizations. And as we all know, there are fads that develop and things that are used. Now unfortunately, it seems as if the Premier and the government have basically gone whole hog into a whole scheme around our health care system which has not connected. They haven't figured out if it's right for Saskatchewan.

And every day now, and we've heard about it last spring, but also over the last number of months, we hear both the Premier and the Minister of Health say one time, well we're going to adapt it for Saskatchewan; next time, no, we're going to stick with this big idea, this big plan. And, Mr. Speaker, I think one thing that Saskatchewan people generally have as a characteristic is that they are skeptical of that big plan or that next big thing because they've seen too many of them crash.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we think from this side of the House that the government is stuck in thinking, without really listening to people, on this whole issue of the use of the Japanese management model. And what we know is that there doesn't appear to be listening to, clearly, the opposition. They don't listen to the front-line workers. We've now had some pretty clear confirmation they don't listen to the senior management. And now we see some of those senior management are being slowly but surely pushed out of the system.

We saw the deputy minister of Health, Mr. Florizone, be moved out of Health. We've now seen the president of the Saskatoon Health Region, Maura Davies, be pushed out. I think today I heard that the head of the Health Quality Council, which was the main sort of lean person in many ways, has moved out of government completely. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what's happening, but I think that this top-down, driven ideological plan is starting to shatter a lot of the management at the top level.

[20:45]

What we all know and what I have heard on a regular basis is that the front-line people are wondering what the message is. Where are we going? What are we going to do? And, Mr. Speaker, I think that that whole plan, that whole way of organizing the system has lost its centre and has lost any strength that came from a new idea.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's time for the Premier to say this was a mistake, and let's try and get out of it with the least amount of cost to the people of Saskatchewan. I think if he had the courage to do that, rather than the blustering that we saw today in question period, I think we might end up actually maybe retrieving some value out of some of the ideas. But, Mr. Speaker, it's when people proceed without listening that real problems arise.

Now, Mr. Speaker, going on my quest, looking at *Harvard Business Review* last fall, there was an article that was written by a CEO of many companies. He'd been 35 years advising various boards. The guy's name who had written this article, or basically it's an interview, was named Ram Charan. And the head of the article is "You Can't Be a Wimp — Make the Tough Calls." Mr. Speaker, in that interview and in that question, based on his advising companies over many, many decades, he said, "Listening isn't just hearing; it requires the willingness to entertain other viewpoints — especially opposing ones."

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that the listening part of managing our province has suffered in the last while because the Premier and the government have been so convinced of how correct they are in what they're doing that they've lost sight of the fact that it's how it affects people on a local basis.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have the words. We have talk about patient first. We have talk about some of these things, but we don't have the connection. And it's some of the interviewing of staff that has taken place across the health regions of the province that indicates how disconnected the overall strategy from the minister and from the Premier is to how the services are being provided to people in the province. And so, Mr.

Speaker, when you forget how or maybe you don't know how to listen, you can't then manage what's going on in your operation.

Mr. Speaker, when people's needs are being ignored, when people are feeling like they're not part of it, of the whole society, when they feel like they're disconnected from the economy because so much of what seems to happen in the public sphere doesn't affect them at home, there are all kinds of consequences for what happens in elections and in other decisions that are made.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's also an article this last summer in the summer edition of the *Harvard Business Review* where it has an article on "Becoming a First-Class Noticer." This is kind of a more sophisticated version of listening, but it's basically an article by a professor at Harvard who says you need to have an organization that's operating where they notice and listen to what people say. And it's when you have that type of an organization you end up picking up the signals when things go wrong.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've had a number of examples, whether it's the smart meter issue or whether it's some of the lean issues or whether it's some of the other issues around some of the activities of the government where warnings are given. There's issues that come up, but the senior people don't notice. They don't listen. They don't observe. And what happens? Well people are hurt. I mean houses are burned. People end up having trouble. And then you end up with a situation where somebody has to be the scapegoat, somebody has to take some of the blame. So yesterday we have the president of SaskPower step down kind of as a scapegoat.

But I noticed tonight over the dinner hour that one of the online polls from one of the media stations asked whether the Minister of SaskPower should resign. I think the number was pushing 70 per cent of the people who responded saying, it's not enough just to have the bureaucrat, the president of SaskPower leave. There also has to be some consequences for those people who have the power in the government. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's the kind of noticing or that's the kind of listening that needs to take place in this government as it moves forward. When it doesn't do that, then it becomes more and more distant from the people and from what's good for the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, another area where there is some quite interesting media, what happened in the summer, in July, there was an article in *The StarPhoenix* about the Parkridge Centre in Saskatoon. And I took a special notice of this article because its headline, "Decrepit Parkridge was public-private partnership." And this article on July 12 in *The StarPhoenix* then talks about the Parkridge long-term care home. Leading sentences quote: "A leaking, mouldy Saskatoon long-term care home built in the 1980s using a public-private partnership model now needs up to \$19 million in critical repairs." I noticed this because when I was the Minister of Health, we had to deal with a similar mouldy operation out in Wolseley that ended up costing a lot of money in the process of getting fixed. And eventually, I think, it was purchased by the province.

And what's happened in this case in Saskatoon, Parkridge has kind of reached the end of its life in a lot of ways but the

government is stuck buying it and then fixing it. And what's particularly telling in the article is that:

Engineers and architects warned the Grant Devine government in the 1980s that the arrangement used to build Parkridge Centre could lead to piecemeal, unsafe construction of the long-term facility.

Now, Mr. Speaker, almost the same day down in Swift Current — actually it was July 20th so a week later in Swift — on July 20th, 2014, this summer, there's an announcement of a public-private partnership specialist, Plenary Group, has been selected to partner with the Cypress Health Authority to build a long-term care facility. And the article goes on to say:

The contract's financial details and the final value for money analysis will be disclosed once contract negotiations and signing are complete.

Signatures are expected to hit paper in September.

So, Mr. Speaker, the government is entering into a similar kind of arrangement, probably about 30 years later, as to the kinds of things that were going on in the 1980s. And that particular article has a big picture of the Premier right beside it.

When you go and ask, well who's the Plenary Group, well it's a group based in Melbourne, Australia. They operate public infrastructure projects in Australia, southeast Asia, and North America.

But, Mr. Speaker, once again it's an operation or a plan that kind of takes the ownership and the management of an important facility for the people of Swift Current. It's something that's been in the planning for a long time and it's something that's needed down there, but it's done in a way that takes it out of the local control and ends up using a model that had some longer term problems from a previous generation.

Now I think that the Premier acknowledges that he learned quite a few things during the '80s when he worked in the government, both good and bad. But I would say that this whole emphasis that the government has had on using public-private partnerships to build things which are important for Saskatchewan people has missed the point. Once again they're not listening to the contractors. They're not listening to the people who are our construction specialists. They're not listening to our architects. They're not listening to our engineers who say, we can build those things; we know how to build projects in Saskatchewan, and we're quite willing to do that. Why is it that you lump nine schools together so you . . . There's very few organizations on this Earth that actually can build some of these big kinds of operations, and it cuts out some of the local people. Mr. Speaker, once again, it's that tin ear. It's a lack of listening that affects what the government is doing.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we're in an interesting time. I know that after you've been through a number of different elections through different provinces, looked and observed, you have concerns about how the public makes up their minds about who are the right kinds of people to be the leaders in their community. And, Mr. Speaker, the historiography that's

provided by members opposite, which is a constantly changing number of stories about how this province was built, has provided some I think very difficult perspectives for people to make some choices. But what we do know is if the government doesn't listen to what people are saying, if it doesn't listen to the leaders in the local community, that there's going to be problems in the longer term.

Mr. Speaker, I think this whole area of basically pushing the financing of our schools onto our children and our grandchildren, pushing the financing of many of our highways and other roads farther down the road without directly acknowledging that these are debts that we're all incurring is going to have drastic consequences for all of us but especially for our children and grandchildren, who will be working to try to make our province a better place.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am frustrated by the Throne Speech, which doesn't seem to have a lot of life to it. I think it's pretty obvious, when we heard it the other day, that it was a kind of a dud almost. I mean it was very quiet in this place. People weren't reacting to it because there wasn't really anything there to get too excited about. And, Mr. Speaker, maybe that was the plan. But on the other hand, I think people want a lot more than that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm in a position where I can't vote for this Throne Speech. I would like to be excited about a vision for the province. I don't see that it's here. I would like to know that the government and the ministers and the Premier are actually listening to the people of Saskatchewan, and I don't see that as well. I think that we're in for some very difficult times in the next five years, and I know that all of us need to be ready to respond to that. I'm not sure that the Premier and the government are. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll be voting for the amendment but not for the main motion. Thank you.

[21:00]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's a true pleasure for me to rise and enter some comments on the Speech from the Throne the other day, at this hour, and I should be done here in about 45 minutes to an hour.

But more serious, Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on behalf of the constituents of Rosthern-Shellbrook, to enter these comments, and to serve in this Assembly. And I, as is customary with a few thank yous at the outset, I think first and foremost I'd like to thank the constituents of Rosthern-Shellbrook for giving not only me the opportunity to serve here on their behalf but for the interaction that I have each and every day that I get to spend in the constituency and in the communities there.

I'd also like to thank my constituency assistant Sally Fitch for being the eyes and ears and, as I always say, thankfully the face of Rosthern-Shellbrook in our office there. And she is gracious as people call in, and caring. And I know I appreciate it, and I'm sure each of the constituents that she deals with each day appreciate it as well.

My children, Mr. Speaker, I thank them for the sacrifices they make to allow me to serve down here. I may think they're larger than they do, but I do thank them for what they do so that I can be here for parts of the year. And my wife of course, Mr. Speaker, my best friend obviously and someone that has had the ability to tolerate me for 21 years, I'm, you know, just absolutely thankful and I'm the luckiest guy around to spend that much time with such a great lady.

So, Mr. Speaker, with this Speech from the Throne . . . And the theme of the speech is keeping Saskatchewan strong. And you know, now with I think there is 5,000 people that moved to Saskatchewan in the last recorded quarter here earlier this year, brings us up to about 1.12 million people in the province now, Mr. Speaker. And I believe Statistics Canada has projected that we'd be at 1.5 by the year 2038.

And the Rosthern-Shellbrook constituency is contributing to that, Mr. Speaker, with the last census. All of our towns, the towns in Rosthern-Shellbrook all experienced growth, Mr. Speaker, and a number of years ago that wasn't just the case. So our constituency is absolutely doing its part in the growth of our province with regards to population.

There's a record number of jobs, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan of 577,000 people working in the province now. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country at 3.2 per cent, and our credit rating has been upgraded to AAA by Moody's, Mr. Speaker.

And on the note of jobs in Saskatchewan, with a son that's getting close to finishing university and looking to work in the community where he grew up, I think he's going to be successful in finding work in his field, Mr. Speaker. And again I say just a short number of years ago that might not have been possible but it looks hopeful now. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's in part due to the bustling economy that we have here in the province.

There is growth in our province of Saskatchewan, and many people have experienced that benefit of that, the benefits from that growth. We always know that there's more work to do when it comes to ensuring that all residents of Saskatchewan have a high quality of life, and we do not want growth just strictly for the sake of growth.

Mr. Speaker, when we have . . . release our Throne Speech or our budget speech or all of the decisions we make in government really are rungs in the ladder, Mr. Speaker, if you will, for the growth plan that we released a couple years ago. The growth plan was announced in the fall of 2012. It's had some progress reports since then, Mr. Speaker, but it was a vision for the province of Saskatchewan, and it continues to be our government's guiding document. The growth plan I might add was not just a bunch of targets and goals for Saskatchewan that was put together for the year 2020, but it was one that was consulted on with Saskatchewan people and put together by the opinions and by the views of Saskatchewan people on where they saw their province in the year 2020.

One growth target that I always like to talk about was the target to double exports in the province by the year 2020. And, Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne the other day has some

tidbits in there to address that in the way of new-growth tax incentives to expand export sales, Mr. Speaker, and new-growth tax incentives to create new corporate and head office jobs here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, not only is that an incentive and a revenue-neutral incentive to spur added exports from the province of Saskatchewan but to add value to the exports that we already have, Mr. Speaker. Nowhere can this be more evident than in the industry of agriculture, Mr. Speaker. When we value-add our agricultural products, really what we end up doing is adding a tremendous amount of value to an already raw product that we're exporting. And so not only does it add exports, Mr. Speaker, when you do new-growth tax incentives like this, but it adds value to the exports that we already have. And it adds jobs. It adds jobs and careers, Mr. Speaker, to our province of Saskatchewan.

I remember last legislative session, the signing of the comprehensive European free trade agreement, Mr. Speaker, CETA [Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement], and I believe we had a debate on that in this House. And again, Mr. Speaker, as that deal progresses, we look forward to that deal being beneficial for the exports of Saskatchewan and, combined with value-added products in agriculture and other industries, we look forward to it adding dollar value to the exports of our province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of words on infrastructure in the province of Saskatchewan. And we've heard about a lot of the infrastructure projects around the province, including the nine joint-use elementary schools, the Regina bypass, for instance. The Saskatchewan Hospital in my colleague's riding from North Battleford, Mr. Speaker, is a hospital for all of Saskatchewan, just a couple of miles out of the riding of Rosthern-Shellbrook — a significant investment, one that's been asked for for a number of years, Mr. Speaker, and it's this government that's getting that done. As well, a partnership with bridges in the city of Saskatoon, and that committed partnership in the city of Prince Albert, if we should go there, Mr. Speaker.

So what we're doing as a government is using the tools that are available to the Saskatchewan people to move these very much needed and very much asked for infrastructure projects ahead, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's what Saskatchewan people want their government to do is to find and utilize the tools that are available to them so that we can get some of these infrastructures on the record and get them going, Mr. Speaker.

A few words with regards to my home constituency, Rosthern-Shellbrook, and as I mentioned, we continue to grow. And the optimism is very high in our constituency. We've benefited directly from the growth of our province in both private and public sectors, Mr. Speaker. We have more tradespeople than we ever have, and they're all busy and we could use some more. But we have more plumbers, more electricians, more tradespeople than I can ever remember in my 40-odd years of life.

We have welding shops opening up, Mr. Speaker. There's a welding shop opening up in a small community that hasn't seen that many buildings built over the last few decades, and they've had all of a sudden a number of houses and now a business

setting up in town. The lumberyards are busy, Mr. Speaker. The contractors are busy. One of the lumberyards built a new building, a significant-sized building. One of the car dealerships built a new building, Mr. Speaker, again a significant investment. One of the agriculture dealerships built a new building, Mr. Speaker. The ag service centres are expanding. And primary agriculture, Mr. Speaker, is doing very well, whether they're in the cattle industry, the grain industry, whether they're in the honey industry with apiaries, Mr. Speaker, or whether they're in the pig industry, Mr. Speaker. All of agriculture seems to be very strong and doing very well and thus the spinoff businesses are doing well.

So Rosthern-Shellbrook, Mr. Speaker, the businesses in Rosthern-Shellbrook are doing well. There's expanding careers, expanding opportunities for youth. And as a result of that growth in our constituency and across the province, the government, our government has been able to make a number of investments that directly benefit the constituents of Rosthern-Shellbrook. And I would like to point to municipal revenue sharing. We have the community of Rosthern in 2015 is up 140 per cent, Mr. Speaker, over '07; Spiritwood, up 119 per cent; and the community where I live, Shellbrook, up 158 per cent, money transferred to our municipalities.

The community rink affordability grant, Mr. Speaker, not a lot of money to each ice surface in the community — I think it's \$2,500 — but it's greatly appreciated. And in particular, Mr. Speaker, some of those facilities are running tight on their budget, and any money that is donated or given to them, you know, comes directly off the costs of the kids that are playing hockey and playing sports there, and it's greatly appreciated by the boards that are there. And like I said, it doesn't seem like a lot of money at the outset, the \$2,500, but in our constituency there's 16 communities that have applied for the community rink affordability grant for a total of 24 ice surfaces, bringing us up to about \$60,000, Mr. Speaker, just in that grant. And it's one that is greatly appreciated by families, by boards, and by volunteers, and by the communities in general, I know. And I've been approached a number of times on that grant in particular.

The Community Initiatives Fund, Mr. Speaker, goes for pride events or some construction purposes, and I think no more of the Krydor centennial that I attended this summer, a small community, Mr. Speaker, that used to be a little larger. They used to have three elevators and a number of stores there. And through funding from the community initiative grant, they were able to put on just a fantastic centennial celebration and a whole host of people came back to celebrate there, Mr. Speaker. And I can't think that that may not have been possible without that funding through the Community Initiatives Fund.

We've had investment in our roads, in our bridges, in our culverts, Mr. Speaker. And this last spring in the area of Mont Nebo, we had a significant size pothole show up, about 50-foot banks, Mr. Speaker. And the culvert gave way, and it washed the highway away, and the highway needed to be closed down. And I can't say . . . I cannot commend the Ministry of Highways and the contractor enough for the effort that they made to get in there and get that fixed in as expedient a time as they possibly could, Mr. Speaker.

It was a creek that came through. It had backed up a significant amount of water, and they were able to get the water through and install not only that culvert but where it crossed half a mile down the road. And there was a 10-foot by a 100-metre culvert. It was a tremendously large job with about 40 feet of overfill. And they did not one, not two, but three of those culverts within about a 1-mile span, Mr. Speaker, and did it in an expedient job. And the people had mentioned they were very thankful for the effort that the contractor made and the Ministry of Highways made to get them out there in as quick as fashion as they could.

I'd like to speak a little bit about the maintenance on our Petrofka bridge, south of Blaine Lake on Highway 12, Mr. Speaker. It's a bridge that's a similar vintage to the one in Prince Albert. And they were out this summer and did the maintenance that was required on it. It's a bridge that most of the constituency travels through, in Rosthern-Shellbrook, to get to Saskatoon. And the maintenance is done, Mr. Speaker. It was down to one lane for some time this summer, but people appreciated that the maintenance was done and that the bridge is in good shape as we go forward.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I've heard good compliments with regards to the Ministry of Highways and the maintenance that they're doing on our major infrastructure out in the country. It's a main grain-haul route. It's a main export route, Mr. Speaker, for the products that we produce in Rosthern-Shellbrook, and it's appreciated.

We did a Laird access road in the area, Mr. Speaker. As well as I mention again, the commitment for the provincial share of the bridge in Prince Albert.

I'd be remiss if I didn't make a couple of comments with regards to health care in the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook. Mr. Speaker, there's been tremendous efforts in health care. In Rosthern we're operating with a full complement of doctors serving that community and the surrounding area. In Shellbrook they're operating with a full complement of doctors serving that community and the surrounding area with a new facility that's paid for, one of the 13 facilities that this government had committed to and has built, Mr. Speaker.

And in Spiritwood, I was at an event the other day where they have a full complement of medical professionals including three nurse practitioners, and a third doctor is showing up. And they're working towards opening their collaborative emergency centre, again a new initiative by this government, Mr. Speaker, and they look forward to opening that very shortly.

Mr. Speaker, one more point on health care that affects the region is the planning dollars for the Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert, which is significant as that's the hospital that many of us on the east side of the constituency visit with the west side heading to North Battleford.

A quick note on the STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] air ambulance, Mr. Speaker, and I know my colleague from P.A. Northcote had made a comment on a new long-range AW139 chopper that's servicing the North out of Saskatoon. And the appreciated investment of all of the sponsors — SARM, the PotashCorp, and all of the individuals that sponsor

STARS, Mr. Speaker, and the initiative of the government to have STARS operating. STARS has landed in the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook about 35 times in the last year, Mr. Speaker. It's significant. It's not something that you ever want to see, that helicopter coming, but when somebody that you know or somebody that you care about requires it, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, are you thankful that it's there — a true benefit to Saskatchewan and in particular rural Saskatchewan.

[21:15]

Mr. Speaker, as you know, earlier this spring or summer I was so fortunate to be appointed as Minister of Environment, and I'd like to make just a few comments with regards to that file and more specifically with the Throne Speech that was delivered here the other day. And first of all I had the opportunity as Minister of Environment to attend the grand opening of the Boundary dam 3 carbon capture and sequestration project. And it was truly an honour to be there, and it was truly an honour to see how many people from different countries of the world that came to see that project come online. Mr. Speaker, that project is removing 90 per cent of the carbon dioxide that's emitted from Boundary dam 3 and putting that into enhanced oil recovery operations. And just to ensure that it's on the record, that everybody has a perspective of what that means, that's equivalent to taking 250,000 vehicles off the road annually.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to enter on the record what a couple experts are saying about that project that had a look at it there that day, Mr. Speaker. And the first person I'd like to quote is Dr. Graeme Sweeney from Scotland, representing the European Technology Platform for Zero Emission Fossil Fuel Power Plants. And he had this to say, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

This is globally significant.

We dispel the myth that it can't be done. Saskatchewan has one and that's an enormously important step forward.

I would like to see Europe take inspiration from the fact that that can be done here to advance our set of projects.

Mr. Speaker, the second quote that I would like to enter on the record was from Dr. Julio Friedmann from the US [United States] Department of Energy, and they had this to say:

Projects like this show the world that this is not only a viable technology but a required technology.

All the projects around the world will face similar challenges and the more we can share that information, the faster and cheaper it will be to develop and deploy this technology.

Mr. Speaker, our government is going to continue to balance economic growth with Saskatchewan's environmental protection. Our province has seen unprecedented population and economic growth, and we have an increasingly diverse economy that provides jobs and opportunities to many, in particular our youth, Mr. Speaker.

Now with regards to *The Wildlife Act*, and I won't get into the

details of the Throne Speech with the individual changes that will be introduced here in some time. But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say this: that we're going to increase penalties for those that choose to hunt illegally in Saskatchewan. And what we have and what we enjoy in Saskatchewan in our great outdoors, whether it be skiing, whether it be snowmobiling, whether it be hiking, whether it be boating, whether it be fishing, whether it be hunting, Mr. Speaker, we're going to protect that for Saskatchewan people. And that's what this Act is about, and we'll get into more of that as we get into this session here.

And, Mr. Speaker, a couple notes on the Saskatchewan Environmental Code that was referred to in the Speech from the Throne. This has been a long process, but we are looking forward to the implementation of this policy. The results-based regulatory model, it will be the first of its kind in Canada, and it's been only undertaken after significant consultation with industry experts as well as stakeholders. This develops innovative solutions to meet environmental objectives while allowing the Ministry of Environment to dedicate more resources and more activities to those activities that pose greater risk. Like I said, Mr. Speaker, it's taken some time to get here, but we've done the appropriate consultation to get it right. And I did appreciate that the member from Saskatoon Nutana mentioned that she wanted to see some action on this issue, and she may get that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, just a couple notes on some of the weather events that we had here this last summer. I'll just maybe back up to the summer previous in the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook. We had a number of rainfall events, rainfall years, and high snowfall years that culminated I guess about 18 months ago in an extreme snowmelt that caused a lot of flooding in the area where I live, and more particular in Blaine Lake area and Leask area.

I think of one RM [rural municipality] there, thinking back, Mr. Speaker, that at one point in the spring had 130 roads washed out, 130 RM roads. It was significant and really made me appreciate the depth of what happened on the eastern side of Saskatchewan here this past summer and into the southeast and into the Carnduff area, Mr. Speaker, again where we've had a number of years of wet summers and higher than average snowfall and culminated with a July 1st event of just an unprecedented amount of rainfall that particular weekend.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been there in every way that is possible, with programs like the emergency flood and disaster relief program. I believe right now we're up over 600 claims in that program this summer, with another eleven and a half million dollars that has been applied to mitigation efforts in the province of Saskatchewan.

We have other programs that I'm sure will get spoken to by colleagues, such as the provincial disaster assistance program. And there was multi-ministerial visits to communities, Mr. Speaker, after the fact, with not-for-profit groups such as the Red Cross would spend days in the communities and set up shops there to ensure that the people in communities could have access to the resources that they needed in the days and weeks after the event that they had to deal with in their communities, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say this. With regards to the communities that were affected and the programs that were available to them, those programs pale in comparison of the effort and the coming together that those communities did. And each and every one has their own story, Mr. Speaker, and we will hear them. We've heard a few. I heard a few. I know there was a Minister of Government Relations and Highways and the Premier and member from Indian Head visited a number of communities and heard these stories. It is absolutely amazing what communities and people in those communities are capable of when they're faced with challenges, Mr. Speaker.

One conversation that has come out of the amount of rainfall and the flooding events that we had this summer, Mr. Speaker, was the conversation around drainage and agricultural drainage. Well, Mr. Speaker, what we have in Saskatchewan right now are some drainage regulations that are brought in in the mid-1980s. They're approaching 30 years old, Mr. Speaker. They've been around for a number of different administrations, and a couple of years ago the Water Security Agency, after this government formed the Water Security Agency, released a 25-year water security plan. In that plan, Mr. Speaker, is a commitment to look at agricultural drainage and update those regulations. And this started almost, about a year ago, Mr. Speaker, with online consultations where we had close to 500 submissions, and we're utilizing that information, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward to meet with stakeholders and look at updating those regulations.

So, Mr. Speaker, just in closing, I again would like to thank my colleagues for, you know, consulting with me and working with me, and I'd like to thank the constituents of Rosthern-Shellbrook for allowing me the opportunity to be down here and represent them. And I'd just like to add that I will not be supporting the amendment and I will be supporting the Throne Speech, and with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of the Environment has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to accept the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Tochor:** — I would move a motion that this Assembly now stands adjourned.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government Deputy 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 21:24.]





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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop  
Insurance Corporation

**Hon. Christine Tell**

Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing

**Hon. Gordon Wyant**

Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds