



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

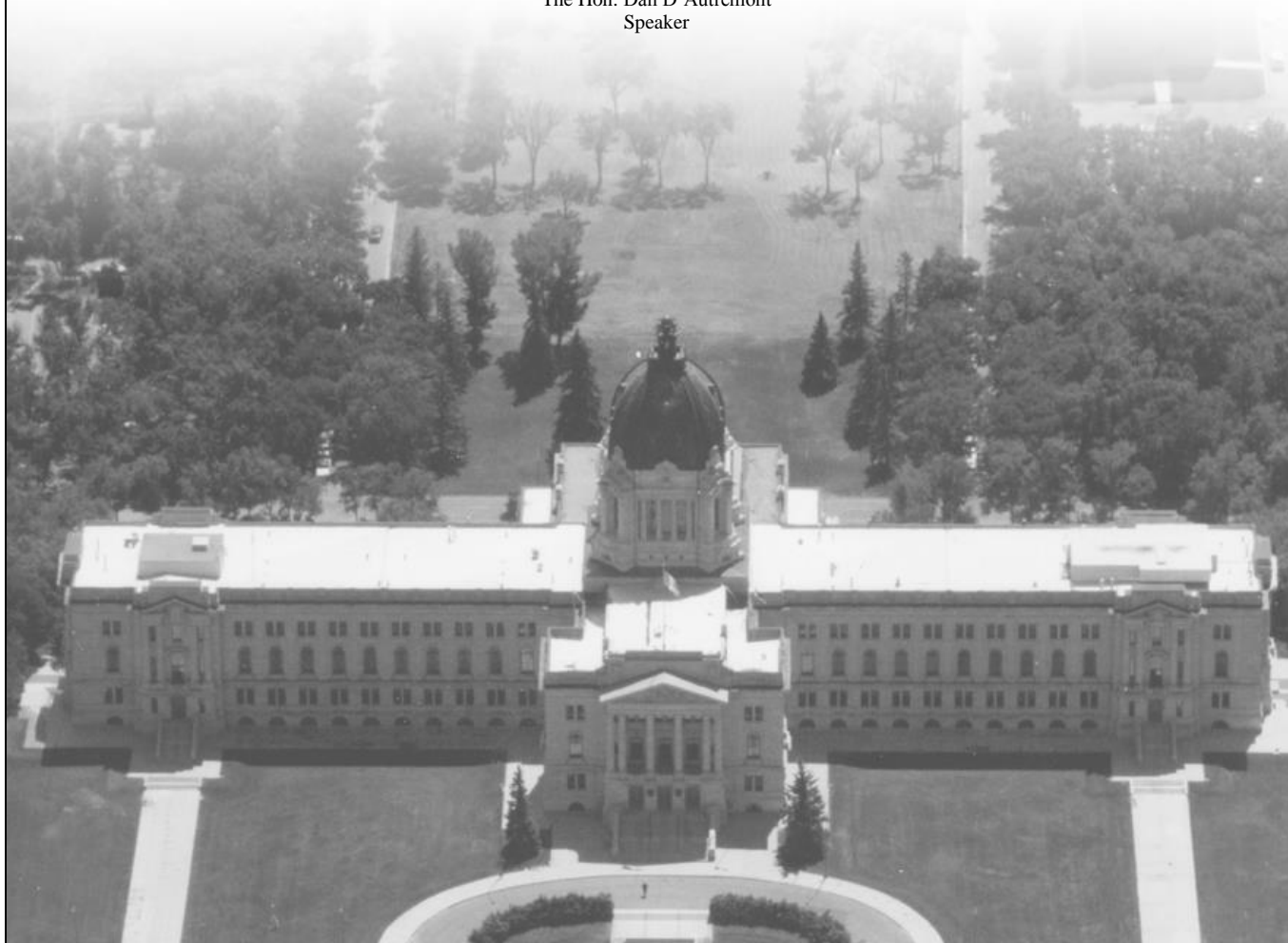
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
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
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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
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Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
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Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
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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
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Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
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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 met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Parks, Culture, Sport, Provincial Capital Commission.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to draw everybody's attention to sitting in the west gallery. Mr. Speaker, this morning I was pleased to announce the launch of the military heritage project, *Stories of Courage: Saskatchewan's Second World War Veterans Remember*. This oral history project was only possible through the generous gifts of memory by 17 Saskatchewan Second World War veterans who gave freely of their time so that future generations will be able to understand and appreciate that momentous period in our country's history and the history of the world.

Joining us today in this House are six individuals who stood up to be counted when our country needed them most. Mr. Speaker, may I introduce to you and through you to the members — just raise your hand when I introduce you here today, gentlemen — Robert (Chuck) Steen served in the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1943 to 1946 as a truck driver with the air evacuation unit. John Milani had a long career in the Canadian Army from 1940 to 1967. He was a command post officer during the invasion of Normandy. George Orton was also with the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1942 to 1946. He was a steward in the disciplinarian's office. Alex White served in the Canadian Merchant Navy from 1942 to 1946 where he was the radio operator on SS *Green Gables Park*; Reg Harrison, a pilot with the 431 Squadron, Bomber Command, Royal Canadian Air Force, 1942 to 1945; Ruth Bond-Martinson from the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Services, 1944 to 1945 with the HMCS [Her Majesty's Canadian Ship] *Cornwallis*. Joining them in the gallery is the former Chair of the Military Heritage Project committee, retired Lieutenant Colonel Larry Wong.

Mr. Speaker, it is because of their bravery, patriotism, and sacrifice, and that of thousands more in both the First and Second World Wars that we are free today and our province and country are united and strong. 2014 has been a year of commemoration, reflection, and a growing respect for Canada's military heritage. This year saw the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War, the 75th anniversary of the start of the Second, and the 70th from D-Day. With the recent events in Ottawa and Quebec, it continues to be a year of focus

on Canada's military.

Mr. Speaker, you can draw a direct line from the valour of those past generations to the spirit of the Canadian military today as we honour the lives of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo, killed last week, and we've seen that respect so clearly in the Canadian people with their outpouring of sympathy and patriotism here in Saskatchewan as well as across Canada.

Our military heritage is something to be proud of and to share with our children and newcomers. On behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, with the greatest of respect and gratitude, welcome to your House. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's truly my humble honour to join the minister opposite in welcoming these heroes to their legislature, those veterans that served in the Second World War. Certainly they join us here at a time, of course, for which we have paid our respects and our remembrance to those two recent members of the Canadian Armed Forces who so tragically, so cowardly, were killed last week. And we stand united as a province and a nation to pay our respects to their service and certainly in thinking of their families.

The story of those that have served in the Second World War is an incredibly important story. It's important to the people of this province, to the people of our country, and it's an important story from an international perspective. The service and sacrifice of so many, and certainly those that we're joined with here today, is something that should never be forgotten, something that should always be remembered. And we certainly appreciate initiatives and projects that allow that story to be told to next generations and generations beyond that.

As the grandson of a veteran that has now passed, but served in the Second World War, landed on the beaches, and was finally wounded in the battle of Moyland Wood in 1945, I know that story from a personal perspective. I know what it means to a family just the same as, I suspect, the story of service of each and every one of these members. I know that that story will be incredibly important to their families. It's not just important to their families, it is important to our province. And for their valour, for their leadership, for their sacrifice, it's important for us to be ever thankful as a province.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for paying respects here today. And it's our privilege to have them join us here today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, there's a delegation in your gallery for which I seek leave to make an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave to do an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, may I first join the minister and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in welcoming these veterans and this delegation to their Legislative Assembly today. This country truly is free today. We are the True North strong and free. There's thousands of reasons that that's the case. And we are visited by those reasons this very day, and we welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, later this month the province of Saskatchewan will be engaged in another trade mission to the country of India. We will leave in mid-November and return on the 23rd of November. We'll visit a number of regions in India. We'll visit with a number of government officials and with companies. We'll have businesses in our own delegation.

And, Mr. Speaker, among other things we will promote Canadian agricultural products, significantly pulses, and we'll promote Canadian energy, Saskatchewan energy, and uranium. Now with the new nuclear co-operation agreement with India and a very robust civilian nuclear program there, we hope to now sell uranium from Saskatchewan into that great country. And, Mr. Speaker, we'll also be talking about fertilizer. We'll want to be able to promote the sale of potash in India.

And we'll be doing all of those things as well as promoting exchanges back and thanking India for the great trading partner they are, and for the fact that of all of the source countries from which we draw newcomers to help build the new Saskatchewan, India is now number two, Mr. Speaker, just behind the Philippines.

So I want to welcome a delegation that is joining us today. We had a great meeting this morning. I received some very good advice and counsel as to the direction of the government with respect to the Saskatchewan-Indian relationship beyond its commerce relationship and more to the matter of the people-to-people relationship that we have. And I want to thank them for this meeting we had.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I hope these names are all right and correctly pronounced, Mr. Speaker. And may members welcome here the president of the India-Canada Cultural Association. Sunil Sohani has joined us. Maybe you could just give us a wave, each member as I introduce them. Kumar Balchandran is also here. Welcome, Mr. Speaker, to Gary Grewal, Rakesh Halari, Krishan Kapila, Jay Shah, Daksha Shah, Isha Srikumar, Murali and Rupa Krishnan, and Dr. Venkatesh Meda as well, Mr. Speaker. I apologize if I have missed any. I know some have had to leave.

Mr. Speaker, again we want to thank them for their great contribution to our province and to our country in just very many facets we found out about today, and thank them as well for their advice to the government with respect to the upcoming trade mission. Would all members please join me in welcoming these delegates, these citizens to their Legislative Assembly today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to

join with members who have already welcomed the veterans that are with us here today. As we enter the season of remembrance with Remembrance Day coming in November, Mr. Speaker, I guess our challenge and our duty as Canadians is to not have it as a season but to have it as a constant state of remembering and giving thanks for those who have brought us our freedom. So welcome and thank you to the veterans who are here today.

And I want to add my words of welcome to those of the Premier in welcoming the group of Indo-Canadians who are here in the Assembly. The contributions that the Indian community has made to Saskatchewan are immense. Whether it's in business or education or medicine or on our university campuses, Mr. Speaker, the Indo-Canadian community throughout Saskatchewan has made a huge contribution. We look forward to the outcome of the trade mission that will go on in strengthening that relationship and making it even stronger here in Saskatchewan. So I join with all members in welcoming this delegation to the Assembly today.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition that calls for greater protection for Saskatchewan citizens from developers defaulting on fixed-price contracts. And we know in September this year, this government walked away from a new, 48-unit, low-income affordable housing project in Regina, allowing a private developer to instead take control of and rent the units at full market price. And when asked to explain this government's decision to allow the private developer to back out of our fixed-price contract without any penalties, the Minister of Social Services said, and I quote, "You're assuming that there's these desperate homeless people," showing how disconnected this government is from the realities within our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to recognize that there are indeed desperate homeless people in our province, and to immediately reverse its policy of now allowing private developers with whom the government has close relationships to default on fixed-price contracts for affordable housing projects.

Mr. Speaker, these people signing this petition come from Humboldt and Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens as it relates to the unacceptable danger created by that government on Dewdney Avenue by way of the heavy-haul truck traffic that they failed to adequately plan for, and certainly call on this government to urgently take action to bring safety to Dewdney Avenue. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting the heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Regina. I so submit.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition opposed to lucrative lean contracts. The petitioners point out that whereas many aspects of health care and seniors' care are getting worse under this government, Mr. Speaker, that this government is failing to fix the basics in health care and seniors' care, including rejecting 8.5 million in urgent requests from care facilities for desperately needed staff and equipment and repairs, and that the government is failing to properly listen to front-line health care workers, patients, and their families. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel its lucrative contracts with out-of-country lean consultants and instead focus its resources on actually listening to front-line health care workers and fixing the basics in health care and seniors' care.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I so submit.

[13:45]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am rising to present a petition in support of better health care in Saskatchewan. And the folks who have signed this petition want to bring to the Assembly's attention the following: emergency room wait times in Saskatchewan have doubled since 2010, the government's own statistics show that patient safety is getting worse, and the government's own survey showed that the majority of doctors, nurses, and other front-line health care workers are frustrated with the quality of health care; the government is spending untold millions of dollars on its lean project, including a \$40 million contract with an American consultant and flying in Japanese senseis for \$3,500 per day.

In the prayer that reads as follows:

The petitioners respectfully request that this Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to recognize health care is getting worse under its watch, and to begin fixing the basics by listening to health care workers, patients, and their families, properly maintaining hospitals and care facilities, and focusing its resources on front-line care instead of spending millions on its lean project.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit this, and the folks that have signed this particular petition are from my own community of Saskatoon Nutana in Saskatoon. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Military Heritage Project Launched

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I had the opportunity, along with the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport and many other colleagues, to attend the launch of the new military heritage project video series, *Stories of Courage: Saskatchewan Veterans Remember*.

These videos present personal stories of courage from Saskatchewan veterans about their experiences in supporting the war effort during World War II. Interviews with 17 Saskatchewan Second World War veterans from all branches of service are included in this project.

Our government recognizes that people from Saskatchewan have made significant contributions to Canada's military history. It's important to preserve and share the personal stories of our senior veterans before these memories are lost. These videos have been created to commemorate their service and educate present and future generations.

Saskatchewan residents will be able to access the project through the government YouTube site, the Western Development Museums, Heritage Saskatchewan, and Royal Canadian Legion offices. The military heritage projects reflects our government's commitment to enriching our quality of life by connecting our past to our present and future.

Mr. Speaker, the bravery and sacrifice of our military personnel who served in the Second World War must never be forgotten. I invite all members to join me in celebrating the launch of this new military heritage project video series. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is a disease that affects many families in our province. I think that all members here today can think of a friend or a family member who has been touched by this heartbreaking disease. One in nine Canadian women will develop breast cancer during her lifetime, and although survival rates are improving, too

many women have lost their battles with this disease.

Each year the CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce] Run for the Cure in Saskatoon and Regina raises thousands of dollars for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, which funds research and advocates for the breast cancer community. Although this disease continues to disrupt many lives, there is cause for hope. Innovations and treatment have led to significant decreases in deaths since 1986. With better screening and technological improvements, we have more survivors today than ever before.

Mr. Speaker, with important initiatives like Breast Cancer Awareness Month, I hope that we can continue to increase awareness, fund the critical research, support our loved ones when they need us, and eventually create a future for all women and girls that is free from breast cancer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Health Care Providers Week

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize October 26th to November 2nd as Health Care Providers Week. We are very proud of our health care system in Saskatchewan, and we are grateful to the people who make it work.

Health care providers are dedicated, caring people who keep the health system focused on the patients and the families it serves. We have all seen these compassionate, professional, and caring people in action, whether during a visit to an emergency department, during an annual checkup at the family doctor's office, or while visiting friends and relatives in long-term care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, health care providers play a vital role in our province. We are grateful for their contributions in all areas of the health care sector. Mr. Speaker, we are working to ensure we have the right mix of health care providers to offer the best possible care for our province.

Under our government, Saskatchewan has seen significant increases in the number of physicians and nurses working here. There are 423 more physicians working here since 2007 and 2,600 more nurses. We are committed to ensuring we have the many other providers we need: therapists, care aids, dietitians, and laboratory technicians, just to name a few of the hard-working people providing the care we've come to rely on.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in thanking our health providers for their ongoing commitment to high-quality, patient-first care.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

The Jam Man

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in this Chamber to talk about a remarkable accomplishment of an outstanding northern resident named Charlie the Jam Man

Squires.

Charlie has been selling his jams and jellies in the Prince Albert area for more than seven years and has donated all of the proceeds to various local and national charities, and conservative estimates pin his contributions at more than \$10,000. Charlie's accomplishments are impressive enough on their own, but the fact that he is now nearing his 90th birthday makes his contributions even more extraordinary.

Charlie exemplifies community spirit and volunteerism, and he told CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] Prince Albert, and I quote, "I'm at the stage where if I'm helping one single person, I am doing something." Truly inspirational words, Mr. Speaker. Charlie held his final jam sale this fall but won't be putting his pots and pans away for good. He'll continue making his sweet treats for close friends and family.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that you and all members of this Assembly will join me in thanking Charlie for his years of community service and wish him all the best as he retires from his career of jam-making excellence.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society Fleet Expands

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On September 10th I had the opportunity, along with the member from Saskatchewan Rivers, to tour the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society's — or STARS' — new AW139 helicopter in Prince Albert.

STARS landed its newest helicopter near Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert as part of a training and outreach exercise. This training is taking place in many communities across the province to best serve the people in this province in their time of greatest need. The new AW139 helicopter will serve Saskatchewan people from the STARS Saskatoon base alongside the existing fleet of BK117 helicopters.

This new helicopter is larger and faster than the others in the fleet. It also has added features that will allow STARS to fly further without refuelling, to fly at night, and to fly in below-freezing weather conditions. Extra space is also available in this helicopter to provide paramedics with the room to provide better patient care.

Mr. Speaker, PotashCorp was a major contributor to STARS' fleet expansion, donating \$27 million for the purchase of the new \$16 million helicopter and the development of its Saskatoon base. This new addition to STARS' fleet will allow it to continue to expand and better provide air ambulance services to Saskatchewan people.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating STARS on the addition of the AW139 helicopter to their fleet, and thanking them for the important service they provide in our province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Carlton.

Social Housing Development Opens in Prince Albert

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House today to talk about a new social housing development that opened in Prince Albert on October 24th.

We have a responsibility as citizens of Saskatchewan to keep our neighbours strong and to look out for those who may need a hand up, not a handout. That's why our government committed in our plan for growth to sell up to 300 of its single family dwelling units in Regina, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert to create more modern and energy-efficient multi-unit housing. Not only will this help sustain Saskatchewan Housing Corporation's portfolio; it will also make housing less expensive for the tenants, cheaper for the taxpayer, and create entry-level home ownership opportunities. By selling existing social housing to people looking for entry-level homes, we can reinvest the proceeds of those sales to develop new housing in these communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud that our government invested \$5.6 million in this initiative to help keep Prince Albert and Saskatchewan strong. Like other communities in Saskatchewan, Prince Albert is growing.

Our priority is to assist those in greatest housing need and to make housing more affordable. Mr. Speaker, this project in Prince Albert, and others like it, supports our government's vision of making life affordable for all Saskatchewan people. We can help our neighbours in greatest need while keeping a balanced budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

New Magnetic Resonance Imaging Unit in Moose Jaw

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the Minister of Health announced that the new regional hospital in Moose Jaw will be home to a new magnetic resonance imaging unit, an MRI. The Moose Jaw Health Foundation has committed to raising the \$3.3 million for the MRI unit, additional building space, and installation. The Ministry of Health will fund the operational costs of the new MRI unit which is expected to be operational in 2016.

Mr. Speaker, this will be the seventh permanent hospital-based MRI in Saskatchewan and will provide closer to home diagnostics imaging services for patients across southwest Saskatchewan. This new MRI will assist in providing sooner, safer, and smarter health care for the people of Saskatchewan.

The number of patients receiving MRI services in Saskatchewan has nearly doubled since 2008, and this new unit will be important steps toward reducing the waiting time for medical diagnosis and treatment. It's important that all Saskatchewan residents have timely access to diagnostics and health care services. And, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to acknowledge the work of the Moose Jaw Health Foundation, the Five Hills health unit region, and the Government of Saskatchewan for improving health care and diagnostic service and reducing wait times for Saskatchewan patients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Costs, Benefits, and Contract Terms for the Lean Initiative

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week we learned that this government ignored scathing criticism from senior health administrators about its lean pet project. They said that John Black tattles on leaders who dare question, that his training is so irrelevant that it's insulting, that it's a bunch of dogma that doesn't actually encourage new analysis, that the flying in of senseis, Mr. Speaker, from Japan to Saskatchewan is a massive waste of money. They said this: "Getting out of this will be an improvement."

Well, Mr. Speaker, last week, first the Minister of Health said, well he actually hadn't heard these comments and wasn't sure if they had been passed on to the ministry. Then he changed his story and said, oh he had heard these criticisms, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Premier: what is the truth? When did the government learn that senior health administrators say that it would actually be an improvement to get out of this contract with John Black?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the opposition has been raising concerns about this project, about lean, for some time, as it is their duty to do. And, Mr. Speaker, we have responded through the minister and the ministry and health regions.

And I think I said the same on occasion here in the House, that we would listen carefully to what was being said by health care workers across the province, by those in management as well, and by stakeholders in the system and seek to improve lean, Mr. Speaker. And throughout the summer, we received some of the information that the Leader of the Opposition is quoting. There was other positive comments that we received then. In fact yesterday at treasury board, where the health regions were reporting to treasury board and presenting, we received input that lean must continue for all the reasons we've canvassed here in the House already.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we took the input seriously, and the Ministry of Health renegotiated the contract. Mr. Speaker, the length of the contract's been shortened. The cost of the contract's been shortened. There's been adjustments to now use Saskatchewan examples on that first orientation day and to remove some of the things that were bothering our health care workers as a part of that orientation. Those changes have been made. The number of any out-of-province consultants to be used throughout the lean process will also be minimized as a result of the adjustments.

But in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, savings to the system will continue, now approaching \$60 million on a \$35 million contract, yes, because of these recommendations. Improvements in terms of the appointment process for mental health, those improvements have already been sustained to the health care system. Mr. Speaker, reductions in wait times in terms of

pediatric care in the province — those attributable, yes, to lean and, yes, to this contract, Mr. Speaker — those improvements have been sustained in addition to the money being saved. The adjustments were made because we listened to health care workers, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue with lean in Saskatchewan.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, if they had been listening to the advice from health care workers and from health care administrators, they would not have renewed the contract with John Black.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] senior bureaucrats who can't stand lean. On June 27th, there was a meeting of 11 senior leaders from the Ministry of Health, from the Health Quality Council, and from the health region. Here, Mr. Speaker, are some of the quotes that are provided by these senior leaders: "Coaching has been sporadic and inconsistent." "This is not going well." "We need to incorporate adult learning concepts." "We are investing a lot of money for a program that appears to have no defined objectives." This is the feedback given by senior bureaucrats in our health care system, Mr. Speaker. It sure doesn't sound like it's worth \$40 million, the contract that they have signed with John Black.

My question to the Premier: how much scathing criticism does he need to hear before he will end the toxic and the wasteful contract with John Black? Stand up and answer that question.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I don't know why the Leader of the Opposition is so angry about saving \$60 million in the health system or about improving the front-line care experience for patients.

Mr. Speaker, he wants to talk about quotes in the House. Here's a quote from a mother who helped design the children's hospital, at the children's hospital unveiling. Here's what she said:

It's not because I stood up for something but because with one adjustment in attitude a culture was changed. Those people in that warehouse that morning [this was the warehouse where they planned the production preparation process for design that's very much a part of our lean] proved that radical and rapid change is possible, that lean [I'm quoting] modelled in any capacity has the power to be successful.

Mr. Speaker, how about Rosalee Longmoore, former president of SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses]: "A focus on patient and family-centred care using best practice evidence and lean principles will improve the patient experience." How about the cancer agency: "As a health care sector, for the first time we are finding ways to work together and make a difference in a system that is transformation at its best."

I can read a number of quotes, Mr. Speaker. The bottom line is we listened to criticism, adjusted lean. But we're also listening to those health care providers and patients and mothers who are saying, don't stop, continue. This means better care and it means efficiencies. Why in the world would the NDP [New Democratic Party] be opposed to that, Mr. Speaker?

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, for this Premier, for this Health minister to suggest that it has actually listened to the criticism that they've heard and that they have adjusted is a complete joke, Mr. Speaker, because they are plowing ahead with the same agenda.

Here's what senior health administrators say, "The orientation to the kanban process within RQHR by the sensei had little added value." But guess what, Mr. Speaker? This government, this Premier is stilling flying senseis from Japan to Saskatchewan and paying them \$3,500 per day. And here's an ad, Mr. Speaker, that ran in *The StarPhoenix* just over the weekend:

Japanese interpreters wanted. LMN America is seeking professional interpreters to work in the Province of Saskatchewan, assisting Japanese Kaizen/Lean consultants in hospitals in Regina, Saskatoon, and other health regions during workshops on a weekly contract basis. Compensation is \$600/day.

My question to the Premier: why on earth is he still flying senseis from Japan, recruiting interpreters, Mr. Speaker, through an American consultant, paying \$3,500 a day for the sensei, \$600 for Japan, when the health administrators, Mr. Speaker, say they don't actually add any value? Why is he doing that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we're using the model that's been prescribed by this one consultant which certainly, at the outset of the lean initiative, involves consultants that come from Japan where this was pioneered in the first place.

In the new contract, we are seeking to minimize the need for these out-of-province consultants and in fact build capacity right here in the province of Saskatchewan. Why would we do this, Mr. Speaker? Asked and answered: we've already saved \$60 million. We have patients and mothers, in the case of the children's hospital, and front-line health care workers who are saying, you must continue this. This is a worthwhile process. We have the Cancer Agency, an agency we've increased funding to by I think by 98 per cent, saying you must continue this, Mr. Speaker. We have former front-line workers, current front-line workers saying, there is value in this.

We listened to the concerns. Adjustments have been made. The contract has been less in terms of time and value, and there's adjustments to that first-day orientation. But, Mr. Speaker, we said it in the Speech from the Throne. We will continue with this so long as it's delivering results for patients, results for the system, and saving money, to date almost \$60 million.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, they're not listening. Something's getting lost in translation from the advice and the words that front-line health care providers and health administrators are giving and what this government is actually doing, because they're plowing ahead with the same agenda, the same heavy kaizen, lean Japanese agenda that they've had since day one through John Black.

So the Premier and the Health minister can say that they're listening, but what front-line and senior administrators say, that it is irrelevant and insulting, the training. Advice from senior leaders say it's sporadic and inconsistent, that it's a bunch of dogma that doesn't encourage new analysis, that the senseis who are flown in from Japan to Saskatchewan are a waste of money and don't add any value. Yet this government, this Premier, Mr. Speaker, plows ahead with the agenda. They're still bringing in the senseis and bringing in the interpreters so the senseis could be in Saskatchewan hospitals. It makes absolutely no sense. And they're paying, Mr. Speaker, \$3,500 a day for each sensei and \$600 a day for the Japanese interpreters.

My question to the Premier: why on earth, if he claims he's listening, is he plowing ahead with the heavy Japanese program?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the spring I did instruct the Deputy Minister of Health to look at the remaining time that we would have under contract with John Black and Associates and look to make changes to the contract to reflect concerns that had been raised. We specifically went out to the health regions to tell us what was working well and what needed to be changed as we moved into changing that contract.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of what was said by health regions, I'm happy to say that we have made adjustments to the contract. The Leader of the Opposition has pointed out some of the information that had been provided by health regions. What he left out from, for example the Marlene Smadu briefing note, and I'll quote this, it's on the second . . . on page 3:

It is a hugely important initiative, that if we stick with it will indeed have a transformative impact on our health care system and allow us to achieve patient safety and quality targets that we would have otherwise thought impossible.

Mr. Speaker, what we've seen in Saskatchewan is transformative work through the incorporation of lean as one tool, but only one tool that we need to ensure that we fully deploy across this province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government claims it's listening. It claims it's hearing the criticism and changing, but it's not. It's running an ad, Mr. Speaker, this weekend, for interpreters for the Japanese senseis. That makes no sense.

Now here's a quote from the senior health administrators, “. . . this offers an important opportunity to keep whatever benefits there may be from lean and be free of the rigidity of JBA.” But for some reason this government didn't take that opportunity, Mr. Speaker. It did not cancel the contract with John Black. It renewed the toxic and wasteful contract here in Saskatchewan Health.

Here's a quote. Here's what the Health minister said on Thursday: “Once we transition away from JBA, it will allow us to tailor lean more specifically to Saskatchewan's health care system.” Well, Mr. Speaker, why on earth are we paying \$40 million when front-line health care workers say that it's not working, when senior health administrators, Mr. Speaker, say that they can't stand it, when the Health minister himself, Mr. Speaker, says the \$40 million American consultant can't even tailor what he is doing for Saskatchewan's context? Why would the Premier insist on flying in more senseis, recruiting more interpreters, all at a time when the evidence says he should be doing the opposite.

My question to the Premier: When will he clue in? When will he listen to what's being said on the front lines and cancel the John Black contract?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we specifically asked regional health authorities what was working and what could be changed as we moved forward with the final year of the John Black and Associates contract.

Mr. Speaker, I have the observation memo that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to, and I think it's important that everybody know that there are four columns. It's got the area that they're talking about. The next column is what is working well. The next column is what needs to be changed, and then a summary after that. He speaks about, in his question, the preamble of his question, about tailoring the lean project for Saskatchewan.

Here's from the what's working well, from Saskatoon Health Region. Under lean depth study: good experience and many learnings from our first effort, customized tools for Saskatchewan and Canadian context, Mr. Speaker. It shows that we have already begun work to tailor the lean deployment for Saskatchewan's context.

But, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that one other important change that I think the people of Saskatchewan would be interested in is the fact that who has signed onto our lean fellowship program to learn what we're doing here in Saskatchewan? The Mayo Clinic, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the most common irritant, the biggest frustration that we hear from health care workers, we hear from administrators around lean, Mr. Speaker, is the adherence, the religious adherence to the Japanese terminology, the senseis being flown in, and all of the lean kaizen basic stuff. You would think, Mr. Speaker, that would be an area where this government would change, try to salvage a little bit of the good

maybe and get rid of the bad. Why is this government continuing with the Japanese senseis and recruiting the language interpreters? Why?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we certainly agree that as we transition away from JBA and as we look to improve stuff, that we need to do it within a Saskatchewan and a Canadian context. In fact Marlene Smadu in her memo put, and I agree with this: “It’s time for us to put our own stamp on the Saskatchewan lean management system.” That to me doesn’t say that we’re going to move away from the Saskatchewan lean management system. It means that we are going to transition away from JBA but ensure that lean continues.

Mr. Speaker, I think it’s important to note that this has allowed us, Mr. Speaker, to reduce wait times. It’s allowed us to improve patient flow. It’s allowed us to ensure that people are receiving more timely access to care in this province. We know that we have more work to do. We know that the examples of other health care systems show that this is not just a one- or a two- or a three-year project. This is a continual cultural transformation.

We are dedicated to that in this province. I believe our senior administrators are. I believe our front-line staff who have been engaged in this are as well. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that this will serve the patients well long into the future in this province.

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

Search for Chief Executive Officer for Saskatoon Health Region

Ms. Chartier: — We learned yesterday that there will not be a proper search process for a new CEO [chief executive officer] for the Saskatoon Health Region. Instead the government has people in mind and will just recruit from within.

This position oversees the largest health region in the province, a budget of \$1.14 billion, 13,755 employees, and over 1,000 physicians. The wage for this position is \$400,000. To not have a proper search process for such an important position is completely unacceptable and irresponsible. To the minister: how can this government justify not having a proper search process?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The board Chair, the board of Saskatoon Health Region through the Chair, have indicated that they first want to look at internal candidates within the Saskatchewan health care system or individuals that have experience in the health care system. If that does not prove to be successful in finding a new CEO, then they would look to do a national search. But, Mr. Speaker, I think that, in this case, it’s a proper course of action that they have decided to take. We’ll see if it does lead to a national search, but at this point the board Chair has indicated that they’re going to look to see whether or not there is a competent

candidate from within the system or within the province that can serve in that role.

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

Ms. Chartier: — In the Saskatoon Health Region, just 22 per cent of employees and 18 per cent of physicians say they see strong evidence of effective leadership from health region leaders. In other health regions it is not much better. Just 25 per cent of employees and 28 per cent of physicians across the province say they see strong evidence of effective leadership from health region leaders.

When over three-quarters of employees say the current leadership is not effective, would it not make sense to cast a wider net and not just recruit from within? It’s more than strange that newspaper ads have been running for almost a week, searching for Japanese interpreters to work with senseis, yet this government does not see fit to run a proper competition for the CEO of the province’s largest health region.

To the minister: how can he justify such a narrow, weak search?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, regional health authorities will decide to take different approaches when doing executive searches. Certainly I know the board Chair has indicated that whether that be within Saskatoon Health Region itself or within the greater health system here in Saskatchewan, or individuals that do have experience in the health care system that may no longer be in the province, they are going to turn their attention towards a list of candidates that they’ve been compiling, go through that process. And if at that time it’s determined that a national search needs to be undertaken, which is not an inexpensive process and can be a timely process if that would be the case, but first they’re going to look to see whether or not they can fill that based on interviewing some prospective candidates.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Just 27 per cent of health workers across the province say senior leaders are open and honest in communication. Just 25 per cent say senior leaders make good business decisions. Just 24 per cent say senior leaders make them feel positive about the future of their health region. Just 18 per cent say senior leaders act on employee feedback. Again, this is scathing, Mr. Speaker. When this is the perception of the current leadership, this government should not be recruiting from within and it should not just be looking for someone with depth and passion in lean.

To the minister: wouldn’t it make sense to do a proper national search for someone with a proven track record in, say, employee engagement and patient safety? Shouldn’t those be the priorities?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we want to ensure that we have the best candidate possible to take over for CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region, our largest health region, one with a budget of over \$1 billion a year, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the board and the board Chair haven't ruled out doing a national search, but their first point is that they want to look at whether or not there are candidates within the health system in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the engagement scores, certainly we know that we need to do a better job of engaging our employees. We also need to do a better job of ensuring that our employees are filling out the survey because even our turnout numbers in terms of those that do complete the survey are low and give us only a piece of the picture.

But certainly, Mr. Speaker, the board Chair hasn't ruled out doing a national search, but first they want to look to see whether or not there would be internal candidates.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Internet Fees for First Nation Schools

Mr. Vermette: — Over a month ago, Grand Chief Ron Michel wrote a letter to the Crown's minister and the Education minister to raise concerns about a new 10 per cent admin fee for Internet services for SaskTel that SaskTel is charging for First Nation schools. Prince Albert Grand Council has not received a response from this government. To the minister: why is this government charging a new 10 per cent SaskTel administration fee to First Nation schools?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the hon. member, and I can inform him and inform the House that SaskTel is not charging that fee, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — There's a quote from the letter: "We are concerned that SaskTel as a corporate entity is setting a precedence that . . . [difficult] rules/rates apply for various stakeholders." We know that First Nation schools already receive much less funding than other schools, and the Prince Albert Grand Council is worried about the impact of this new SaskTel admin fee.

Grand Chief Ron Michel says, "Our schools cannot afford to cancel or reduce school programs . . ." To the minister: how can this government justify charging extra to schools that are already struggling?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Speaker, as I just outlined in my previous answer, I am familiar with the issue, Mr. Speaker. It's with respect to the CNET [CommunityNet] system for on-reserve schools and those involved with the Prince Albert Grand Council. The schools that the hon. member is referring to

are not involved in that particular situation, Mr. Speaker. There's no additional fees for those schools involved in that situation.

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

Agreement With Smart Meter Supplier

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this government has been trying to claim that it's gotten its money back from its smart meter debacle, but nothing could be further from the truth. The \$8-million store credit with the company that provided faulty, dangerous meters is nothing more than a joke.

The minister claimed yesterday that the store credit was his only option, other than going to court and fighting for that money. To the Premier: how can this be acceptable to him and his government? Why won't he commit today to fighting to get those dollars back?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the deal that was made with Sensus to recover the taxpayers' dollars, there was a considerable amount of money that was refunded for it, \$27 million that was refunded for the smart meters themselves.

In addition to that there is a program that will be put in place to test meters here in Saskatchewan, approximately \$5 million for that, to make sure that they . . . If we ever go down that path again of installing smart meters here in Saskatchewan, they'll be tested under vigorous testing conditions here in Saskatchewan.

In addition to that, we have a credit with Sensus for \$18 million. We both use it for . . . SaskEnergy uses some of their technology, as well as SaskPower uses some of their technology. We also, it is known that Sensus's communications technology that they use as a part of Sensus meters are very, very high quality and are known around the world to be one of the best in terms of distributed power networks.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note, very important to note, that should we at the end of the testing procedures not agree with the installation of smart meters for whatever reasons, if they don't meet Saskatchewan's testing requirements, all of that money would be recovered.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Yes, the question was to get the \$18 million back from the private American company that provided faulty, dangerous meters that impacted and put people's lives at risk. That's the record of that company, Mr. Speaker.

Yet as the minister sort of referenced in cute language, that government not only accepted \$18 million of store credit with the same company, but that government actually gave a \$5-million bonus to that company. A giveaway, Mr. Speaker, a gift of \$5 million of hard-earned ratepayers' money, dollars to apparently help them to do the company's own research and development, I guess, about rain in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. This is wrong, and it's a waste of money of Saskatchewan

people.

To the Premier: how can this government possibly defend a \$5-million gift to the company that gave us faulty, dangerous smart meters? Will he commit today to working to fight to get those \$5 million back?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the \$5-million program will be to ensure the safety for Saskatchewan families. It will be to test under the most vigorous testing here in Saskatchewan, the most vigorous testing that possibly can be done. And what the member refers to in terms of a store credit, the least . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to this program, we recovered all of the money that taxpayers have put into this program, which is in great contrast to the members opposite. Did you get any kind of a store credit . . .

The Speaker: — Will the member for Regina Rosemont understand what it means to come to order, please? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, did the members opposite, when they were in government, did they get any kind of a store credit for Channel Lake? Or did they get any store credits when they spent money in Guyana? When they lost money at NST in Chicago, \$16 million, did you get one cent back then? Did you get any money back from Retx, \$27.4 million under that fiasco, under you folks opposite? Did you get anything back then? Not a dime you got back. You lost \$300 million of taxpayers' money, and they will never forget it.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 141 — *The Archives and Public Records Management Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 141, *The Archives and Public Records Management Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 141, *The Archives and Public Records Management Act* be now read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I

recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 142 — *The Archives and Public Records Management Consequential Amendments Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Archives and Public Records Management Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 142, *The Archives and Public Records Management Consequential Amendments Act, 2014* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — First reading has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 142, *The Archives and Public Records Consequential Amendments Act, 2014* be now read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 143 — *The Degree Authorization Amendment Act, 2014*

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 143, *The Degree Authorization Amendment Act, 2014* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved Bill No. 143, *The Degree Authorization Amendment Act, 2014* be now read for the first time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting. Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To move a motion by leave regarding the absence of a member.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to move a motion regarding the absence of a member. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Leave of Absence

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By leave of the Assembly:

That leave of absence be granted to the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley for Monday, November 3rd and Tuesday, November 4th, 2014 to attend the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians special outreach in Ottawa, Ontario on behalf of this Assembly.

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

That leave of absence be granted to the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley for Monday, November the 3rd and Tuesday, November the 4th, 2014 to attend the Commonwealth Women's Parliamentarians special outreach in Ottawa, Ontario on behalf of this Assembly.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I have to say it's my honour to have the privilege to rise for the fourth time already to reply to a Throne Speech from this government. It's a bit of a déjà vu feeling, Mr. Speaker, and I kind of was wondering why, but as I read through the Throne Speech I realized that much of it is just, as our leader would say, rinse and repeat. There's a lot of repetition and a lot of reannouncements in this particular Throne Speech that I feel

actually leaves a lot to be desired.

You know, I always sort of go to the Internet to see what exactly are these procedures that we're going through here. And what we know from Wikipedia and Google, which is kind of the go-to source for me, the idea of a Throne Speech is to introduce the government's agenda for the coming session. Sadly I don't think there's much in this Throne Speech that tells us exactly what new ideas and fresh thoughts that this particular government has.

[14:30]

The Throne Speech is supposed to outline the legislative program of this government. If you look in this Throne Speech, you will find reference to new legislation only on two pages. And I think . . . How many pages is this Throne Speech? I think we got up to 20 pages. So there's only reference to legislation — excuse me for my cold, Mr. Speaker — on two pages out of 20. So there's not much of a legislative program that we can look forward to coming from this government either.

The other thing that's suggested in much of the literature on the role of the Throne Speech in Westminster legislative assemblies is that it should identify initiatives that the government intends to use to accomplish their goals. Well first of all, try and find the goals of this government in this Throne Speech. I've identified a few, and as I go through it, I will point those out. But there weren't a lot of goals in this Throne Speech, and I would suggest there's a paucity of initiatives as well.

So overall I'd have to say that, as I went through the speech, I found it to be very uninspired and quite flat. To be frank, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of recycling. There's a lot of reannouncing. There are a few new things in there, and that's what I'm going to focus my comments on today. But overall I would have to say I felt déjà vu, and I think there's a lot of reason for that, as I'll point out in my comments.

On page 3 the government talks about one of its goals, and again this is almost a platitude. It says it's going to work hard to keep Saskatchewan strong. That's a very trite statement, Mr. Speaker, and I think what underscores that is what strength really means. And I think when you look at the definition of strength, strength is always determined by the weakest links.

This Throne Speech doesn't talk very much about the weakest links that we've certainly identified and what we were looking for in the Throne Speech, and I'll get into that as well. For example little to no mention of our northern communities and the struggles that they're facing right now with lack of infrastructure and lack of economic support. Certainly very little discussion about affordability and the problems that a lot of the people in my riding are facing.

When you look at the number of seniors that are on fixed incomes, who are facing such a big hit with the cost of living in the last few years, I'm really worried about a lot of the people in my riding. In fact right across from my office, Mr. Speaker, there's an apartment building called Nutana Towers, and that was a building that was owned by some local people for 30 years, and there were seniors in there on fixed incomes and on social assistance who were living in the community and doing

their part. Now that building has been sold. It's been gutted. And every single one of those folks that were on fixed incomes had to leave the riding. They can no longer afford to live in their home of the last 30 years, and I just find that that's really troubling.

When you look at the consumer price index in Saskatchewan, since 2009 alone, the cost of living has gone up over 12 per cent. The cost of food has gone up over 15 per cent. The cost of shelter has gone up over 15 per cent. And that's since 2009, Mr. Speaker. If we went back even more, it would be much higher. But the concern I have is that the income that these seniors are living off of has not gone up at all, or negligibly. It hasn't gone up by 15 per cent. And they are now using a lot of their income to pay for their accommodation. I think that's really, really disturbing.

When we were in Lloydminster awhile back, we met with the Métis housing authority in Lloydminster. They're very, very concerned about their housing units and the affordability of those housing units, particularly because the federal funding, we know the federal funding is disappearing. It's being grandfathered. And pretty soon these housing authorities are going to be in desperate straits, and they're going to have to double, if not even higher, raise the rent for their tenants, which means many of their occupants will no longer be able to afford to live in those units. They're very proud of the units that they have, and it would be devastating to see them have to evict some of their tenants who are working very hard to get their lives together and put together a life together for their children. So these are the things that we don't hear about in this Throne Speech, and I think it's very concerning.

I do want to speak though with great appreciation and thanks to this government for its announcement that it will introduce a poverty reduction strategy. That's a critical piece. It's one that we've been calling for for some time. I applaud their efforts to work with groups like Upstream and Dr. Cory Neudorf from Saskatoon who are strong, strong advocates for this kind of strategy.

I also want to quote a little bit just to give some more detail about the work that Upstream and Dr. Ryan Meili does. It's really important work, and we're very proud of the work that they do. And in fact, one of the pieces was written — it's the comprehensive poverty reduction fact sheet — it was written by Charles Plante from Upstream who's one of my constituents and a supporter. And there's a number of targets that we want to see. And I'm just putting this on the record, Mr. Speaker, so that when our minister comes out with this reduction strategy, we're going to see the right elements in it, because that's what we're going to be watching for now.

We want to see first of all targets and timelines. That's critically important to any successful strategy. Secondly, it must be comprehensive. Thirdly, it must involve the community. Fourthly, it needs to be unique. Fifthly, it needs to be non-partisan. And sixth, it requires a commitment. And so those are just some of the basic facts.

There's a lot of really good information out there on a poverty reduction strategy, but obviously number one is affordable housing. And that's something that I think we have seen this

government fail in miserably, and there's really not a lot in this Throne Speech to give me any confidence that we're going to get anywhere there.

Another goal that they've introduced that I found was very, very, very interesting — actually it's an old goal that's reintroduced — that's on page 4 of the speech, it says, "To help [me] meet my government's goal of doubling exports by 2020 . . ." That's an old goal, but there's a new incentive. And interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, it's a new-growth tax incentive tied to the creation of new jobs. If it had stopped there, it would make a lot of sense. But no, it goes on to limit this tax incentive only to manufacturers and processors who are expanding their sales outside Saskatchewan.

And what this is in stark contrast to, Mr. Speaker, and directly opposite to actions of this government in another area, and that's the film employment tax credit, where we had manufacturers of film and processors of good cultural products who were creating jobs in Saskatchewan and expanding their sales outside Saskatchewan, and this government yanked the carpet right out from under an entire industry.

We are hearing stories of people that have now had to move away. There's a lot of people in Saskatchewan who are trying to find work elsewhere, but they're overqualified. And this is a weird thing for this government to do is to focus on groups, specific groups like manufacturers and processors, when they did the complete opposite to an entire industry in the film industry. So I think this is something that's really, really concerning.

They go on to say on page 4, just a couple of comments here, the government's going to undertake trade missions. Well, Mr. Speaker, governments have been doing that for decades, so I'm not sure what's new about that. They talk about the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership. Well that was introduced in 1996, Mr. Speaker, so that's not new either.

They say they're going to encourage railways to make railway capacity a priority. That hasn't worked too good for them so far, Mr. Speaker, but let's hope that perhaps the cheerleading will get a little more enthusiastic and we see some changes in the ability of this government to change the mind of the railways. Something I'm looking forward to is the strengthening in the shortline network. We're certainly looking forward to that and hope that that is successful. Also something I'm supportive of, and I think we want to work with the government on this, is to enhance rail linkages to Canada's coastlines and of course to the United States, and that is definitely something we need to do.

On page 5 the government is talking about continuing working to reduce international trade barriers such as the country of origin labelling. We've seen some progress in that area although that's at the good work of the folks, the farmers, and the producer communities. So again we want to see that happen, but this is not anything new, Mr. Speaker.

The Throne Speech talks about opening up trade between provinces, but I know that one of the things we called for prior to the Throne Speech being released was more of a focus on proper procurement policies and not necessarily the lazy

procurement policies that this government has where they just give the contract to the lowest bidder. There are a number of different ways that we can improve our procurement, and this Throne Speech doesn't even address some of those concerns.

We have a new body. It was introduced in September actually, prior to this Throne Speech, called Priority Saskatchewan. This government really likes to create agencies with the Saskatchewan tag at the end. So we all remember Enterprise Saskatchewan. We now see Tourism Saskatchewan which took over from a very successful tourism agency. And now we have Priority Saskatchewan which is going to lead a cross-government review of tendering practices. So again looks good on paper. We'll have to take a look at it and see whether or not that is going to be as successful as Enterprise Saskatchewan, for example.

Page 6, in terms of the skilled workforce, we do support the initiatives in the adult basic education services, and we want to totally support increasing the number of seats of ABE, adult basic education. And we are looking forward to seeing more Saskatchewan people getting the training they need to be responsive to the needs of the workforce and the job deficiencies that there are.

There's a lot of talk about P3s [public-private partnership] on page 6 and 7. We've been on the record often saying we need more accountability in this process. We also know that this is a way to defer debt. And with a government that is spending record revenues, we wonder why it's necessary to defer debt in the way that they're doing with our schools, our highways, and our long-term care facilities. So that's really, really concerning, Mr. Speaker, that tendency of this government to defer debt in the P3 process.

Another recycle that we find on page 7 is the reintroduction and expansion of the Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative. This is again something that we support and are pleased to see it being expanded to some First Nations who are positioned to take advantage of that. So that's something that is positive, although it is again a recycle.

On page 8 they talk about private liquor stores. And it's been interesting to hear some of the members opposite wail and gnash their teeth about, you know, the scary fact that we actually might put some money into a liquor store. And what's scary about that, Mr. Speaker, is that their thinking stops there, and what they fail to do the math about is that every dollar that's invested in a liquor store actually brings extra money into the coffers.

So the thinking is extremely flawed on the part of some of the speakers previous to me, and we know that the liquor stores have been very profitable and have brought lots of revenue to the province to deal with things like hospitals, infrastructure, and also addictions treatments. So the thing that's scary about all this, Mr. Speaker, with Halloween coming, as the member opposite mentioned yesterday, is that the math is simply not being done by some of these members. We are saying SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] is appropriate but it needs renewal and it needs renovation. It needs modernization. But to throw the baby out with the bathwater, to throw away good revenue is something that doesn't make any

sense at all.

In highways we don't see any new initiatives except the fact they're evaluating a proposal from SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]. So we'll wait and see how that goes.

In efficient government there's no new initiatives.

In health care there are no new initiatives.

And one thing I do want to speak about a little bit, Mr. Speaker, is the comment about, we need to do more to help people dealing with mental health and addiction problems. And what I really want to share is a story. Out door knocking the other day, I came to a home of a woman that I actually have met through music, and I said, do you have anything you want to talk to me about? And she said, actually I do. And she is a mother of a young man who has schizophrenia. And we talked for about half an hour about her situation, and her advocacy groups are suggesting, talk to your MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] whenever you get a chance. So she told me her story, and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that illness has destroyed that family's ability to enjoy life in any way, shape, or form. As parents of an adult son with schizophrenia, they do not have any respite whatsoever. They are constantly on alert for their son's health. And one of the phrases she left me with, and this haunts me today and will continue to, is the fact that she says, we have to endure in silence.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's not a strong Saskatchewan. That's not a Saskatchewan that we want to leave people suffering these kinds of daily lives. And I look to this government and plead that this government will take account of those sort of situations that people with mental illness and mental health problems in their families are dealing with. We know that the 10-year mental health and addictions action plan is coming forth soon. We're looking forward to that, and we're looking forward to a swift and efficient implementation of the recommendations in that plan.

We do see some of the new legislation coming forward. On page 10 there's things to strengthen patient privacy, modernize the organ donation and transplantation processes. We support those initiatives, Mr. Speaker. We do wait to see the legislation itself to see if it meets the goals that are going to be dealt with.

[14:45]

But on the health care front, we're not seeing really anything that we called for in the Throne Speech. We don't see this government getting rid of John Black and Associates, despite the scathing criticisms that senior leadership in the health industries are raising. We asked to close the kaizen promotion offices. No sign of that happening. In fact they're still hiring translators, Japanese translators to help with that specific, language-specific aspect of lean.

We are looking for a way to deal with waits, the extra long waits in emergency rooms, the short-staffing, and overall I think, Mr. Speaker, we were really looking forward to initiatives and goals and objectives dealing with the plight of long-term care in Saskatchewan. And it barely rates a mention

in this Throne Speech, so very disappointing.

Education, there are no new initiatives there. We had called for more educational assistants, and inequities, addressing the inequities for First Nations children in schools. And that's really disappointing that we don't see more in the educational front.

In innovation there's a mention of the carbon capture and sequestration project down at Boundary dam 3. We know that this has been an incredibly expensive project, and it is going to deal with less than 2 per cent of the emissions that this province is currently creating in carbon. So we'll be asking more questions about that, Mr. Speaker.

But really, we're not sure. First of all, it's not clear to us who owns the technology. Apparently this technology is now owned by Shell or one of its subsidiaries. We're not clear what kind of deal this government got in terms of the sale of the liquefied carbon to Cenovus, but all indications point that it's actually . . . we are selling it for a song and we're losing out a lot of money on the sale of the liquefied carbon. And then finally, well we don't own the technology itself, so we've put \$1.5 billion into a project that we don't own and that we're underselling for profit in the long term over the 20-year period. So we're just starting to gather some of that information, but we're really not sure what's going on there, and we're going to be asking a lot of questions.

We also are concerned about the deal with Northland Power. As we see prices drop, we see oil now under \$80 a barrel. You don't hear much about that from the government. We know that natural gas is bottom-of-the-barrel prices right now. So how's Northland Power doing and what are we paying actually for the power that they're producing? We have a number of questions in that area that we'll be looking for answers to.

And agriculture, again there's a page, on page 14, that sets out some of the accomplishments of our producers and that's certainly . . . as my brothers are farming, and they had a good year. We're very proud of our producers here in Saskatchewan and we want to wish them the best and the hope that they are able to continue their exports and increasing the exports to the rest of the world, and we will continue to feed the world.

What's really interesting though is that Saskatchewan's going to host a transportation market access summit in the next few weeks. But, Mr. Speaker, no one from this government even showed up at the summit that was held last year. So I just don't get the actions of this government sometimes. It just doesn't make sense.

There's a number of initiatives and legislation identified under the heading of safe communities. Again, we support the Hub model of crime prevention and are pleased to see it being expanded to Meadow Lake and Melfort. Those are certainly . . . That's good news in this Speech and I think an initiative that's worth supporting.

And in social services, we see some goals here. The one goal that I think is a goal that any government will want was to ensure all children in the province can live with their families in safety. And we see an initiative here, that there will be a review

of child welfare legislation. And we see that there will be legislation introduced to strengthen *The Child and Family Services Act* and *The Adoption Act*. And that's certainly, certainly goals that we think are a laudable goal, a laudable initiative, and certainly laudable legislation. Again the devil's in the details as always, Mr. Speaker, so we will need to make sure that the legislation actually meets the goals and the initiatives that are stated here in the Throne Speech.

Again, I talked about this earlier but it's worth mentioning again, the poverty reduction strategy and the work that's being done by Upstream led by Dr. Ryan Meili from Saskatoon and Dr. Cory Neudorf from Saskatoon. These folks are doing some really exciting work, and I'm pleased to follow the work of Upstream. And I think that's the leadership that we need to see in this province in terms of health strategy and poverty reduction strategy.

Where the rubber hits the road, Mr. Speaker, is once the strategy's complete I don't think the minister is going to need a lot of time, because the research has already been done by groups like Upstream and a number of other groups. The issue is putting meaning into the strategy, and that is going to cost. And we need to see a commitment from this government to make sure that affordability of housing, for example, is not such a nightmare for people who are struggling.

And I really need to mention one of my constituents, Mr. Speaker, who is going through a terrible time right now. He was a victim of a hit-and-run accident with a drunk driver and actually has a head injury and is unable to work. He suffers from a number of trauma-related mental illnesses right now and has a really hard time sorting through the paperwork and the bureaucracies and the administrative work that has to happen in order to access the programming that he's eligible for.

But what I found out . . . I actually went with him to apply for SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability], the SAID program, because he was so anxious and scared of being in a crowded place. So I actually went through the SAID application with him. And I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, as a fairly literate person who is in fairly good health and can basically understand forms, I was overwhelmed by the requirements that the SAID program placed upon this individual. I was overwhelmed by the fact that his social worker barely had time to help him fill out the form and that she was clearly under the gun to deal with a number of other clients. So he was not getting the help he needed.

And I was aghast to find out that the maximum benefit available to him under the SAID program was \$1,200 a month. His rent is \$1,000 a month, Mr. Speaker, and that's the reality that a lot of people under SAID are living with. And I think, as everybody knows, social assistance figures are even lower.

So if you look at any of the poverty reduction strategies that are out there, number one is a decent wage or a decent living cost, and I think that's something that this government needs to take a serious look at if they truly want Saskatchewan to be strong. We see billboards, and yesterday my colleague from Saskatoon Centre referenced a cartoon with our Premier featured in the cartoon, and there was an individual called the poster boy. And we've starting seeing a lot of poster boy posters up now with

these large billboards all over Saskatchewan. In Saskatoon we don't see pictures of our Saskatoon MLAs, like the member from Saskatoon Southeast, but we see big posters of poster boy who is featured strongly and prominently throughout our city.

So I don't know what the message is from the Sask Party to the voters of Saskatoon, but maybe it's that you don't vote for the MLA, you vote for poster boy. I guess that's the idea, that they might be ashamed of their MLAs maybe, and maybe they just want them to focus on their leader. I'm not sure.

In terms of the environment, which we find on page 18, there's again a mention of the Boundary dam project which again, as I said, is dealing with less than 2 per cent of the emissions from this province, so 1.5 billion for less than 2 per cent. We know that Alberta has rejected carbon capture sequestration because it's too expensive. We know there are other ways that are available to reduce our carbon emissions but . . . carbon dioxide emissions, CO₂ emissions, but there is absolutely nothing in this Speech from the Throne that deals with any of that at all.

And what was really strange — my sense of déjà vu really came out on page 18, Mr. Speaker — and there's a quote at the bottom of page 18 that seemed really familiar to me. And I'll share this quote with you. It says:

In the coming months, we will adopt a new results-based regulatory model that will improve protection of the environment and promote innovative management tools, including the Saskatchewan Environmental Code.

Now why did that sound familiar to me, Mr. Speaker? Well we did a little search, and we found this language in a news release from this government from April of 2009. That's five years ago. And it says:

Saskatchewan is adopting a new, results-based model for environmental regulation that will improve protection of the environment, while promoting innovative new tools in environmental management.

Mr. Speaker, that's three ministers ago. That's five years ago, and we still don't see anything. In the 2009 Speech from the Throne, "In the coming months, my government will move forward with plans for a new environmental regulatory framework." Well, Mr. Speaker, thank God I'm not holding my breath because I would have exploded by now.

This is shameful, Mr. Speaker. And with the chirping from across the way, you'd think they're proud of this fact, that they cannot get their act together and they cannot possibly introduce something that they've promised for five years. You've got to wonder what's going on over there, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think there's a lot of competency in the environmental area. It's just disappointing and I think it's disrespectful to the people of Saskatchewan.

We see again on page 19 a mention of a priority issue for the Saskatchewan water agency in terms of drainage. They're thinking of a new initiative introducing regulations to govern drainage. Mr. Speaker, this has been an issue for five years as well. And we have a fairly robust water Act already that has a number of provisions in it, but Sask water agency I'm told is

not even staffed sufficiently to be able to deal with a backlog of complaints they currently have, so the frustration in the farming community . . . I was out and about in Yorkton area and down south this summer, and there are a lot of tensions and frustrations.

And this government has been dropping the ball, including the former minister of Agriculture. I was in his riding this summer, and his constituents tell me that he is not to be seen and not to be heard on this issue, which is very, very disappointing. He's letting down his constituents. And I think this is something that this government needs to start paying a lot more attention to and actually have a plan and actually deliver the plan and actually act on it instead of all these platitudes like we see on this Environmental Code that was promised five years ago and we still don't see it. It's really shocking.

Mr. Speaker, I feel, you know, the privilege and the honour of being able to rise in this House and comment on the Throne Speech. I think that's part of the value of our democratic system. We've seen some challenges to democracy in the last week or so and some threats to our democracy, but I think through debate and through open discussion I think we really need to . . . We will expand these ideas and bring home to the people of Saskatchewan a better society and a better world. Mr. Speaker, I believe the people of Saskatoon Nutana, my constituents, deserve more.

I want to thank all my constituents. I would also like to thank my families, my supportive sons, and my supportive exes who help me on the home front. I want to thank my network of friends who are also there for me when I need them, and the world, the cultural world that gives me so much joy and pleasure in terms of music and performance. So I think, you know, on a balance, I'm able to present . . . keep myself healthy and also do the job that we're asked to do here in the legislature.

I want to thank my outgoing constituency assistant, Deb Aitken, who just took leave on Friday to have a baby in a couple of weeks. So we're very excited about this new baby coming forward. And I also want to thank my current constituency assistant, Mr. Cody Gieni. And some of you will remember him as a legislative intern here in the legislature. So Cody's already hard at work for me doing research and bringing forth some of the issues of Saskatoon Nutana.

We know that people in my riding, the seniors and the students, deserve an affordable place to live. Parents deserve accessible and affordable child care, and my low-income constituents deserve to find housing that doesn't swallow up more than half of their income. They deserve wages that allow them to put their kids in music lessons, to buy the medications they need, and to put healthy food on the table.

Mr. Speaker, we can't talk about how strong Saskatchewan is until we know that no child or senior is living in poverty, that hard-working people are earning decent wages in a safe work environment and they can afford to buy their own home, that schools are not overcrowded, and that seniors will live out their golden years in respect and comfort. That's the strong Saskatchewan we want, and we will continue to challenge this government to focus on the things that matter to Saskatchewan

people.

This Throne Speech is a disappointing, backward-looking failure. My Saskatoon Nutana constituents deserve better, and the people of Saskatchewan deserve better. Thank you.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and it's an honour for me to join into a Throne Speech today, the Throne Speech debate.

I want to say thank you very much to the Leader of the Opposition for allowing the member from Nutana to speak finally. She hasn't been on her feet for a long time, and it's nice to hear a different voice over there besides the member from Massey Place.

[15:00]

So, Mr. Speaker, as always when we start these Throne Speech replies, there's a few people in my life that I need to thank that allow me to do this wonderful job and be able to represent the people of Regina Walsh Acres.

First, as all of us have great constituency assistants, Heather Howell-Shiplack has been with me since the election of 2011, making sure I am where I need to be and I'm prepared for our meetings, our stakeholder meetings, our events throughout Regina. She does a wonderful job ensuring that the constituents that call into our office get great help right away. We've had many phone calls back about Heather's professionalism and how well she handles casework and how she gets back, gets the people in touch with the ministry people or with the information they need to make sure that their problems move along.

Mr. Speaker, first and foremost in my life, I have to thank my wife, Larissa Steinley. She is by far my greatest supporter and my greatest critic. She keeps me honest, Mr. Speaker, and whenever I need a grounding she'll give it to me to make sure that I keep my head from not from getting too big, which is a task sometimes for her, Mr. Speaker. And she is also the person that is my greatest support, Mr. Speaker, and she has done so much for me.

She looks after our son. She's an amazing mother, something that I guess I can't thank her enough for. Our little son, Nickson, is 17 months old now, and she has done such a great job with him. I know all of us spend a lot of long nights here, and for me session time is a bit more difficult. I'm out of the house before Nickson gets up and I'm back home only a couple days before he goes to bed. And I miss him a lot, but she is doing a wonderful job. And FaceTime is a wonderful thing. Technology is great. So every now and then we get to FaceTime and he gets to say good night to daddy, and it means a lot to me just to be able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, since Nickson came along, our lives have changed a bit and our perspective has changed a bit on our priorities, Mr. Speaker. And I think priorities are what the Throne Speech is all about. It set out the priorities of our government for this session, and I'm not surprised that our priorities differ from the

members across the way, Mr. Speaker. I think that obviously we're going to set a different agenda than they will, and I understand how they are supposed to oppose some of our priorities, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to go into a few of the things that I find very, very important in our Throne Speech, and one obviously is the theme throughout that is tied throughout all of our priorities — keeping Saskatchewan strong.

And I think through everything else, Mr. Speaker, the opposition probably can't disagree with keeping Saskatchewan strong. We're an ascending province. We're growing, Mr. Speaker. We're growing in population. We're growing in people working. That's why the amendment brought forward by the member from Rosemont was a bit confusing when his amendment was:

And that this Assembly condemns this government for primarily working to benefit a select few while dismissing the most important things Saskatchewan families want and need, especially in the areas of health care, education, and the rising cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, that's a very confusing statement because we know that in June our employment hit a record high of 577,000 people working in our province. So if there's 577,000 people working in the province of Saskatchewan, how would you be able to say that this government is just working for a select few? That doesn't make too much sense to me, Mr. Speaker. I also wonder how the opposition say we're working for a select few when our wages are the highest there have ever been in the province.

So there's more people working in the province than ever before. There's more people making more money in the province than ever before, and we've had the lowest unemployment in the country for 23 consecutive months . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . That's probably a record. Thank you, my member from Wakamow.

So putting forward an amendment just for the sake of putting forward an amendment is a practice that the opposition has used for many, many years. And I don't really understand the amendment, but I do understand how they oppose some of our priorities because our priorities will be a lot different in the next 18 months I believe.

For example we have a growth plan. We have a 2020 growth plan of where we want to go into the future. That would be different because, as the member from Rosemont said in his speech, "Of course there's an important place in our parliamentary democracy for the role of advocacy on the floor of this Assembly as well and . . . [there's a role for the] opposition to oppose and yes to propose." This really struck me funny.

So oppose and propose, which I totally agree opposing and proposing is a very important role within opposition. And they have the opposing down pat. Very good. The proposing leaves a little to be desired. Like if I was going to propose policy, I would put it on our website. If you google — the member from Nutana was a fan of googling things in her speech — if you google the NDP Saskatchewan website, there is no policy. There is no plan. So for the member from Rosemont to say it is

very important for the loyal official opposition to propose policy and then really have nothing to offer the people of Saskatchewan . . .

Let's not forget we're 18, possibly 12 months out from an election. So how do you go to the people of Saskatchewan, which I'm sure all the opposition did for the whole summer? I'm sure they were all out there door knocking to ensure that they maintain their seats, the nine seats they have hopefully.

An Hon. Member: — No they weren't.

Mr. Steinley: — No. Oh well the member from Sutherland said no, they weren't out there at all. But if I was going out to go door knocking, which we did on this side of the House, I would want to put forward ideas to the people of Saskatchewan.

Like for example I would have targets. I would have targets for population like 1.2 million by 2020. That's a target. That's a policy with a target base. I know the member from Massey Place was a former policy analyst, so he should know to formulate policy. And maybe it's just taking him a little longer than expected, Mr. Speaker.

Another comment from the member from Rosemont which . . . The member from Rosemont is an interesting guy, and he always has a few interesting statements that he makes in his speeches. And he talks about people doing better, not the province doing better, which we'll get back to later. It doesn't make a whole bunch of sense. If your province is doing poorly, the people in the province will probably be doing poorly as well, as we saw with them for 16 years. The province wasn't doing really well, so the people weren't doing well so they left.

But the member from Rosemont, and I'll quote his speech from Thursday:

And these are the companies, Mr. Speaker, who have skin in the game, who have stuck through more challenging times within this province, who deserve, who deserve to be part of the projects right now, with workers . . .

Interesting statement, Mr. Speaker. So the member was on a rant about a Sask-first policy, which we're working on with our Sask priorities for different . . . for reviewing our tendering policies. So he is very concerned that the companies within Saskatchewan deserve to be doing better right now.

Well my question would be, what would have been the more challenging times that the member from Rosemont referred to? When would there have been more challenging times? Because as the natural governing party, as they like to call themselves, I would assume that more challenging times would be further than seven years ago. So that would probably be within the 16 years that they were in government would have been these more challenging times for the businesses that he was speaking of.

And I remember this, and probably one of the better speeches that I've heard in this Assembly was when the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford stood up and said, I'm a survivor. I survived the lean, lean years as a businessman under the NDP. Very poignant words from my colleague from Cut Knife-Turtleford, which we're looking forward to hearing from

him again.

So, Mr. Speaker, talking about these challenging times from the member from Rosemont, obviously he's talking about the times when his party, the NDP, were in power. So I guess he would feel that the socialism that they would have evoked probably was not working very well for the business people of Saskatchewan, and possibly you remember there was a job-killing monster legislation that they brought forward too, which I think the businesses didn't really like that either. I'm not sure if that was ever really proclaimed because I think they pulled that back — rightly.

An Hon. Member: — They didn't get it through.

Mr. Steinley: — They didn't get it through? Yes. So I'm guessing those lean times were, they're talking about when the NDP would have been in power, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to talk about, and the member from Athabasca who's been here for a long, long time on both sides of the House and for . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Belanger: — To ask for leave to do an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member for Athabasca has requested leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand today and to recognize in the east gallery two great friends: Greg Fofonoff, who's with SNEDCO [SaskNative Economic Development Corporation] or SMEDCO [SaskMétis Economic Development Corporation]; and also Louis Gardiner, who is the member of the executive of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan.

And to point out, Mr. Speaker, the two individuals that are here today, Louis was one of our premier hockey players when he was a younger lad. He played with the Flin Flon Bombers when they were in the WHL [Western Hockey League] and really inspired a lot of young, young children and young adults during his time to play hockey, and he's really the premier hockey player in his time for our area. And as well, Greg Fofonoff who I believe is the CEO with SNEDCO, the Saskatchewan Native Economic Development Corporation, or the Métis economic development corporation, and Greg's been a champion for many Métis business people throughout his time. And I would dare say today that Mr. Fofonoff and his team at SMEDCO are the premier Métis lending institution that does a lot of work through northwestern and northern Saskatchewan as a whole, and of course the province as a whole because their mandate certainly involves the entire province.

So SMEDCO, SNEDCO, they have a number of different areas

that they have a responsibility for. I would say today that they are the best Métis business lending agency out there, Mr. Speaker, and I wish Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Fofonoff continued success in building a strong Métis economy for the people, the Métis people of Saskatchewan. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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.]

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I join with the member in welcoming. It's always good to have people from the public come in and take in the proceedings, and have a tour of their Legislative Building.

So, Mr. Speaker, I was going to talk about the member from Athabasca for a minute or two because there's a lot of myths that I've heard from NDP members, NDP MLA, the few NDP supporters that are in Walsh Acres when I get to knock on the doors. Because it's always good to talk to everyone in Walsh Acres — NDP supporter, Green Party supporter, Sask Party supporter. It's good to learn from each and every one of them, Mr. Speaker. But I always hear this, and it's quite amazing to me to hear some of the not-so-factual information that may be derived.

So I took a look in . . . I am a political nerd, Mr. Speaker, so I read the speeches from the members from Regina Rosemont and Regina Athabasca the other night just to try and learn a little bit and see what point of view they're coming from. It didn't work. I don't know where they're coming from. But Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca goes:

. . . it's a huge disappointment for many people throughout Saskatchewan. Despite given a huge surplus, a booming economy, and a growing population, Mr. Speaker, they can't figure out where they're at, and what they're going to present to the people of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, and I've heard this a lot from the member from Athabasca, the member from Rosemont, the member from Riversdale, about the huge, huge economy that we inherited from them in 2007. And I've heard time and time again that Saskatchewan became a have province in 2003, time and time again, especially from the member from Athabasca and Saskatoon Riversdale. And we've had conversations about this, and she just doesn't really . . . I don't know. I sent her the link.

So I went up on to the Government of Canada's Finance department because I guess if you're getting equalization payments, you're probably not a have province. You can probably make those two points and figure that out. So I have

here, right here, federal support to Saskatchewan from the Government of Canada: 2005-2006, equalization payments, \$89 million; 2006-2007, \$13 million; 2007-2008 . . . Wait a minute. 2007-2008, \$226 million. So, Mr. Speaker, if you're receiving equalization payments and you're getting them from the Government of Canada, that would be, the basic assumption there would be that you're not a have province.

So let's go on and see the next couple of years. I wonder how much money Saskatchewan received in equalization from 2008 to 2014. Blank. Blank. Not one. So obviously the mystery can be put to rest. I can officially make the member from Athabasca aware that we were not a have province in 2003. That's a guaranteed fact of life. He's going to have to come to terms with that.

[15:15]

The next thing that he always spouts, he's like, oh yes there was a lineup of cars on November 11th, 2007 just waiting to come in as soon as you guys won, because he always figures . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well there probably was, Mr. Speaker, but I don't think that's the point the member's trying to make from Athabasca. He goes, our population was growing and growing and there was people coming to our province in spades back in 2003, '04, '05, and '06. So like the member from Nutana told us, I googled. I googled the Saskatchewan population from 1999 to 2008, so which is interesting because, according to the mythical speeches of the NDP, Saskatchewan is doing awesome. And the member from Lakeview will know this for a fact, but things were just fantastic in the early 2000s, population growing and obviously a have province, which is not true.

So like the population on January 1st, 1999 was 1,016,883 — over the million point. That's a pretty good target. That's kind of the magical number for Saskatchewan. January 1st, 2000, 1,011,141. That's a bit lower, so I guess we're not increasing yet. Well wait: 2001, 1,003,469. A bit lower again. 2002, 998,728. Under that magical million mark. So 2003, when the member from Athabasca and Riversdale and everyone says everything's going better now, 2003 is the time when it's our time to shine, 996,289. That would be lower again.

So my colleague from Estevan makes a great point because in 2003, 2004 . . . This is after the election and one of their senior ministers, and this, this is when I was paying a bit more attention to politics when I was a younger guy, and I remember this quote specifically from the NDP. I think it was Mr. Lautermilch, I believe, the Economy minister. "Well . . ." And it was during a scrum. "Well if more people leave, that just means there's more for the rest of us." How could you ever run a province with people like that and that ideology making decisions for you? There's more for the rest of us. That is just probably counterintuitive to any common sense you could ever have.

An Hon. Member: — Socialism at its best.

Mr. Steinley: — I think the member from Wood River said it perfectly.

So hold on. We're going back to the population because

eventually they say things are going to turn around under them. January 1st, 2004, 996,596 — that would be lower again; '05, 995,000 — that's their lowest point yet. But just wait. They can beat that. January 1st, 2006, when the economy's booming, the population's growing, according to the member from Athabasca and the other nine over there . . . Eight, sorry. January 1st, 2006, 992,242 people, and that is their lowest benchmark.

So, Mr. Speaker, after years and years — well four years — listening to their speeches over there talking about we inherited a booming economy, the population was growing, with two Google searches you put all their myths to rest. Their population in 2006 was 992,242. Absolutely incredible. It's not like in the fall of 2007 people just suddenly realized, hey, there's oil here; hey, there's potash here. It's always been here. But they had this idea that the more that people left, the more people left, the more that would be left over for the rest of them, not realizing that the more people left, the more they're going to raise taxes, the more they're going to drive people out. If they would have still been in, had been in power, Mr. Speaker, we'd probably be at about 500,000 people living in Saskatchewan right now. Alberta would have had about another 500,000 people, Mr. Speaker.

So what I came to realize is that maybe sometimes, sometimes — and I don't want to be too critical of our colleagues across the way — but it really, really surprises me that they can stand there in their seats and rail and rail about how great things were in 2000 and 2003. And then they'd talk to us and say, well what have you done for eight years? Well it was a good farming year for a few people, the member from Arm River-Watrous says.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think at some point in time you have to take a step back and take stock and say, you know, our fairy tales aren't working anymore. People probably aren't believing that things were really, really good in 2003, '04, and '05, or else we'd probably still be in government. Maybe it's time to look at some of our policies. Odd, we don't have any. Well that's probably been a problem with people. I think if you don't have any policies and you're not going to maybe take a step back and look at some of the things you've been doing, you'd probably have a whole bigger issue.

Mr. Speaker, all this summer was a great summer for us. The weather finally got better about June and July and we got on the doorsteps. I think each and every member in here was on the doorsteps talking to constituents. And I was on the doorsteps in Walsh Acres too. It was a pretty good experience, obviously. And obviously everyone's not going to be happy with everything we're doing, but that's why you go out there. You go out and listen to constituents and listen to what they think you're doing well and listen to what they think you can improve on. That's a part of our government's philosophy.

There's always going to be more work to do, Mr. Speaker. We're not going to stand up there and talk about the glory years of when things were just magical and everything was perfect. We're going to work hard to continue to make things better for this province, continue to seek growth, Mr. Speaker, and not just for the sake of growth, but for the sake of making each and every person in Saskatchewan's quality of life better. That's why this side seeks growth, Mr. Speaker.

So while I was door knocking in Walsh Acres . . . It was fantastic. I got to meet constituents. But then I have a neighbouring constituency which . . . It's going to be an interesting race come fall of 2015 or spring of 2016. So I usually go out with a couple of friends, and we were door knocking in Regina Rosemont. And the member from Regina Rosemont, he stands up here; he has petitions about this traffic on Dewdney. So we want to go and door knock right by Dewdney and see how things are going and talk to the people that are right there.

It's interesting because he's an affable young man. He says he's out and about a lot. But a lot of people really didn't even know who their MLA was, so that was a bit interesting. But when we were talking about the traffic on Dewdney, we also brought up the fact that our government's working on a west bypass and a couple of solutions to the problem, which is weird because they said they never really got any of that information from their MLA, whoever that was, in their newsletter. Which is interesting because if you're going to stand in your spot and present petitions day after day after day, you should probably also realize that there might be some solutions coming down the pike, Mr. Speaker.

Also when we were door knocking in Rosemont which . . . It was after the boundaries were redrawn. Part of the area of Regina Walsh Acres went into Rosemont, so I was able to door knock that area as well, and you wouldn't believe the reception we got on the doors in that area. People were happy to see us. They were happy with how things were going. The government, you always go and you say, well we're here. I want to know how you feel that we're doing, what we can be doing better, and what direction you'd like to see the government go in. And after a couple of short discussions, people would say, we enjoy what you're doing. People are making more money in the province. There's a few . . . We appreciate the priorities you've set out. You're making some commitments in health care. You're making some commitments in post-secondary education and education. What we don't want to see is you guys not in government.

We don't want to go back to what the NDP were doing eight years ago. We don't want to go back to people leaving the province. We don't want to go back to us having to pack up the van and visit our kids in Red Deer or Calgary or Edmonton because we did that for 16 years and we're happy they're moving home.

The proof in that is when I was graduating high school in Swift Current in 2000 . . . I get a look from a couple of members. Yes, 2000 was my high school graduation. It was fantastic to be done high school. You're excited, and then you get home . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member from Dewdney said I was 22 years old. That's actually incorrect. I was not 22 years old. I was a tall kid, but I was not 22.

But, Mr. Speaker, you're happy; you're excited; you go to your graduation. And most of us walked through the door, and our parents knew that we'd be leaving so there's a set of luggage there waiting because they were like, you don't got any opportunities here. You might as well pack up. So that was the experience we had in the high school, Mr. Speaker. We had the experience of having to leave this province to search for the

quality of life that we do have here now, Mr. Speaker.

And I think that's one of the biggest things that people on the doorstep have said to me and I think to many of our colleagues across Regina, across Saskatoon, that they're happy that they're . . . One of the things that they're the happiest about in our government's priorities is having the opportunity for their children to raise their families here. Not having to leave to visit grandkids. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's how you build a province. It's also through immigration and it's through welcoming new Canadians here, Mr. Speaker, but I think at that cornerstone is ensuring that there is the opportunity for young people. And that's some of our priorities, and you saw that in one of our first budgets. We brought in the graduate retention program.

And the members across can say, well all you're doing is repeating yourselves. You're repeating yourselves. Well, Mr. Speaker, sometimes if you're doing some things well, you repeat them because they're working. And then you listen to people and listen to the priorities of the people of Saskatchewan and then adjust to make sure that you're doing those things well, Mr. Speaker.

And when it comes to the graduate retention program, I think it was one of the best priorities our government set forward to ensure the young people, our talent, our best resource, our people have the opportunity to stay in Saskatchewan to live, to work, and to raise a family. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that sets out some of the priorities that are important to us — growing our province, growing our economy — which is what we set out in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, is that when you grow your economy, one of the most important things you have to do is grow your skilled workforce.

And we realize some of the things we need to do better. We face a skilled labour shortage, Mr. Speaker. Our government has invested heavily in adult basic education services, and we're working to eliminate that wait-list of the ABE. In the upcoming fiscal year, we'll increase the number of ABE training seats to 775, eliminating the 2012 wait-list and bringing the total number of seats to 9,355, an increase of nearly 60 per cent since 2007.

We do have some very strong priorities on education, Mr. Speaker. A few months ago, we were pleased to sign on to a Canada Job Grant agreement with the federal government. And I know this is really going to scare the opposition when you agree with the federal government. Because basically their economic platform was to go and sue the Canadian government for \$800,000 million and stay on the have-not list and try and collect welfare for 30 years and try and grow the economy that way, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't work. You have to make these agreements. You have to get along with your funding partners, be it federal, municipal, Mr. Speaker, and that's some of the things that we're focusing on. And our government is investing \$15.7 million in the program which will link training directly to the needs of employees.

Mr. Speaker, if you're going to have a growing economy, you're going to have to have the infrastructure to support that growing economy. And this year alone, nearly \$3 billion has been committed to renew and expand the province's

infrastructure. And one of the things that we fought for, Mr. Speaker, and that we were big proponents of in the city of Regina was the Regina bypass project, which will be the largest transportation project in Saskatchewan's history, Mr. Speaker. And that's a project where the municipal government came to play, The Building Canada Fund came into play, Mr. Speaker. And heaven forbid, it's going to be a P3.

Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that we get the most bang for our buck, so to speak, Mr. Speaker. We're going to need to leverage the dollars that we can to ensure our growing economy the infrastructure's going to keep up with it. And if you're going to go with a blind ideology where you can't use P3s, and you're going to leave money on the table, you're obviously not going to take advantage of the opportunities that was given to you. And that's why you can't be opposed to P3s just based strictly on an ideological rant.

Although the member from Athabasca is, to his credit, probably not . . . He probably didn't get very much credit when he went back into his caucus office, but he said, you can't leave money on the table. And, Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with him on that point. I don't know if his other colleagues did. But I think that's very important that at least he realized that, is that when you have the opportunity to leverage money, be it municipal, federal dollars, you have to take those opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

We're also leveraging P3s for a 225-bed Swift Current long-term care centre. It's under construction now, Mr. Speaker, and that's going to be a P3 also.

[15:30]

And although it's a program that was very successful in our first term, there is a program we're reintroducing which is the Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative. And, Mr. Speaker, I remember when I worked in this building when SIGI [Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative] first came into play. It was a fantastic project, Mr. Speaker. The municipalities from all over took advantage of that. And then we've actually expanded that, Mr. Speaker. And in the first iteration of SIGI nearly \$200 million in borrowing was approved, and 82 communities benefited from interest rate subsidies.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan First Nations would also benefit from SIGI. So that program will be open to those First Nations in a position to participate. Mr. Speaker, I think this is another initiative that maybe the member from Nutana said it was regurgitated, but when it went so well the first time that we rolled out SIGI, why wouldn't you roll it all out again, Mr. Speaker? And SARM does like it, Mr. Speaker, and I think that there's a lot of First Nations that'll take advantage of this, Mr. Speaker. And I think that it's a very prominent part of the Throne Speech this year.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that highways are very important to Saskatchewan, and they're an important part of our infrastructure. We realize that there's more that needs to be done on highways. We all travel the same highways, Mr. Speaker. But we're working hard to fulfill a gap that was in the highways for 16 years where no money was put into them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, health care is one of the most important things and important priorities that our government has in place. It's a huge budget item, Mr. Speaker. And we realize that the health care of our seniors is vitally important. They're the people who built this province, and we're working hard to shorten the gap that is there in long-term care, Mr. Speaker.

I think that it's very ideological. I don't want to throw that word out too much, but I think to believe that anyone wants to see poor senior care in this province is ridiculous. For them to say we're letting seniors go by the wayside, it's not true. They're an important priority to this government and we're going to work, we're going to work hard to ensure that the senior care keeps on improving under a Saskatchewan Party government.

We're going to work hard to ensure that there's more beds available. I know that there's an analysis being done in RQHR with long-term care to see exactly what the needs will be in the future. Because I remember that member from Lakeview saying that . . . just follow the plan they set out and you'll be okay. Well you can't follow those plans, Mr. Speaker, because their population numbers were not even close to what they are today. So their plan really is null and void at this point in time, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to take a few minutes to talk about education, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity, and I know members across the way aren't going to believe this, but I have some friends that are teachers, so every now and then we get together and have lunch and talk about how they would like to see the education sector move forward as a whole, Mr. Speaker. And talking with them, there's a few things that they would like to see. The investments, we have more capital investments in the education sector than the former NDP government did in 16 years, Mr. Speaker. Over the last seven years, our government has spent more than \$700 million on education infrastructure. That's a 260 per cent increase from what was done before.

And I remember when I, as a young guy, when I was going to school in Waldeck. I went to school there from K to 9 [kindergarten to grade 9], and I remember walking around the buckets when the rain was coming down, going to change the buckets because there was so much water being dripped in them that you had to . . . really couldn't get a whole class done before you had to go and pour the buckets out. And these are things that we're working on, trying to improve quality infrastructure for our young people. Because I think the cornerstone of education is our wonderful teachers, but also the infrastructure in which they have to go to school each and every day to learn in. They have to have a great learning environment, Mr. Speaker.

As a young person, as a young family yet, my son at four, three years now — that kind of flew by — he's going to be starting education. So I do have some very, very interesting . . . I do have interest in the education sector. And like I said when I was speaking with a couple teacher friends of mine and they were talking about the direction that education is going in Saskatchewan, and for the most part, Mr. Speaker, they said the direction is right. They're happy with the way it's going. All they need to do is have a bit more communication. And I credit the current, the Minister for Education, the member from Saskatoon Southeast because his communication with the

education sector, he's communicating clearly with them and they're happy with how that communication's been going.

So, Mr. Speaker, moving on to post-secondary education. I'm a U of R [University of Regina] alumni. My colleague from Saskatoon Northeast is the current minister for post-secondary education and I think he's doing a fantastic job. I believe the University of Regina is at an all-time high for enrolment. I go and attend as many events as I can at the University of Regina.

University of Saskatoon, how's their enrolment?

An Hon. Member: — It's up. Up again. Good MLA.

Mr. Steinley: — Up again? The University of Saskatchewan, sorry. I should be corrected there. The House Leader said it was University of Saskatchewan, right? It is a friendly rivalry here, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I talked about the graduate retention program already. And over \$130 million in rebates have been provided to more than 50,000 students, and those 50,000 students all chose to stay right here in Saskatchewan to start their careers.

Talking about the University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan, they are two of our wonderful jewels in the post-secondary education. But also there's the regional colleges, SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], the Gabriel Dumont Institute, and all post-secondary institutions that help to ensure that First Nations and Métis students have the supports they require to do their studies as well. Mr. Speaker, in post-secondary education, Aboriginal enrolment is ever increasing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which I think is very important to close that education gap which . . . we've talked about it many times, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Minister of Advanced Education will work with SaskTel to upgrade Internet access and speed at regional colleges, which again is talking about infrastructure to ensuring that students have the best opportunity to be successful in their studies.

Mr. Speaker, there's a few more things I would like to get on the record and one will be our support for communities. As a result of the province's predictable and sustainable revenue-sharing program, municipalities already know they'll receive record revenue sharing for \$265 million in next year's budget, which is more than double the amount from when we took over. See, there's a few more differences that we'll have between us and the opposition, looking back and looking forward. Looking forward, Mr. Speaker, they're able to rely on a reliable revenue-sharing formula. So they know how much money they're going to get, which allows them to be able to budget more clearly. On the other side, I think when they were in power, they clawed back money. I think they clawed back about \$600 million from municipalities over their tenure in government, Mr. Speaker.

So far, Mr. Speaker, I've covered many of the areas that we find as a priority in the Speech from the Throne. There's a couple more things I'd like to talk about and one is the difference between leadership. They talk about, they call it premier poster boy, which is interesting. I think what they should realize is that when you're proud of the job your leader's doing, when your

leader shows vision, when your leader has policies that he's able to talk about, you want to make sure that people know and see him. I think when you have a leader with no vision, no policies, no platform, no hope, I think that's probably why you don't see billboards up of the Leader of the Opposition.

There's a thing that the Leader of the Opposition says a lot which it's . . . doesn't make a lot . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . One of them, but that's not what I'm talking about. One thing that the Leader of the Opposition says and says a lot is, it's not about the province doing well, it's about people doing well. So I really don't understand that statement whatsoever.

So I think it's different because what I did is, I took a look back at the last session and who did most of the talking for the opposition. And it's very interesting how it broke down. The Leader of the Opposition, out of the total time allowed for question period, talked 44.2 per cent of the time. The members from the North — from Athabasca and from Cumberland — the member from Athabasca spoke 3.2 per cent of the time and the member from Cumberland spoke point nine per cent of the time. It seems like they don't have a high priority on the North. But I think and . . . I think I'm going to help the Leader of the Opposition out here. I don't think the slogan he's using right now is very correct. I think it should be, it's not about the NDP doing well; it's about the member from Massey Place doing well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think they may have some issues in that side especially when it comes to the North. Because when I also looked at their Throne Speech magical wish list, I didn't see very much in their wish list for the North either, not even from Prince Albert. Not even from Prince Albert. Not for the North. And I think that might be a problem for the member from Cumberland because I know of a young man who's just recently been nominated in Cumberland for the Saskatchewan Party named Thomas Sierzycki. And he's the mayor up there, and I think he's a pretty well-liked mayor.

So if I was the member from Cumberland, I'd probably go and talk to my leader right now, saying I might need a little more face time or there might not be a seat for the member from Cumberland on that side of the House because it's probably going to be on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm probably going to wind up here pretty soon, Mr. Speaker, but . . . Well if you want me to keep going, I can keep going for a while. But I was looking at the NDP's Throne Speech list of demands, which I don't know how you have a list of demands when you're in opposition because it should be . . . I guess that . . . [inaudible] . . . the combative words they like to use. But their demands are: stop ignoring urgent needs in care facilities for front-line staff, equipment, and repairs. So I would say that last session our government provided \$10 million to health regions for specific initiatives and an additional 3.7 million for ongoing programs. This funding will be used to purchase 700 pieces of equipment, hire additional staff, and support staff training.

Stop ignoring the \$2.2 billion in need of repairs for hospitals and facilities. Well since 2008, ministries, Crown corporations have spent close to \$16 billion on a range of capital projects. This year alone, 3 billion have been committed to renew and

expand the province's infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on with their list of demands. And the interesting thing is . . . Oh I'll get one more in because I really liked it when the member from Massey Place talked about eggs in a basket. So I'll talk about the economy for a little bit. Mr. Speaker, he always says, we need to diversify, we need to diversify. Well 577,000 people are working in the province today. That's pretty good. Unemployment's been at a record low in Canada for 23 consecutive years. And to diversify the economy . . . Months, sorry. Getting ahead of myself. Mr. Speaker, to diversify the economy, I think one of the biggest points that you could see and look at, one of the biggest pieces of data you can see is, where are the jobs being created? Where are the 577,000 more people working? So maybe we should break that down.

So over the past seven years, there have been 70,400 new jobs created in Saskatchewan. And fewer than 10 per cent of those jobs, 66,000 were created in the resource sector. Well where have they been? Because they seem to think we're relying on the resource sector. Construction, 18,000; health care, 10,700; resources, 6,600; science and technology, 6,200; education, 5,800; agriculture, 5,300; all other sectors, 17,800, for a grand total of 70,400 new people working in the province. I'm not too sure but that sounds pretty diversified to me. That doesn't seem like one sector's taking up all the jobs, all the new jobs in the province of Saskatchewan . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, well as the member from Yorkton says, that sounds like all kinds of eggs and all kinds of baskets. And I think that, Mr. Speaker, that's what happens when you have policies in place. I know that I keep going back to policies because . . . One more story about the member from Rosemont, Mr. Speaker.

I know that he went and talked to a University of Regina class a couple of weeks ago and the member from Coronation Park was there speaking with him, and he was going, the member from Rosemont was going on and on about what the NDP will do when they come back in government and what they'd like to do and what they'd like to see. So the member from Coronation Park goes, well we're all here and I bet you we all have smart phones. Why don't we jump on the Google, as the member from Nutana would say, and see what their platform will be and the party's policies are? Then you'll see exactly what they're talking about. That went over like a lead balloon with the member from Regina Rosemont because when all the students went to look at the NDP's website, nada, nada, nothing. It was very interesting and it was probably difficult for him to talk his way out of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I think at some point in time . . . And I'm very much looking forward to it because within the next 18 months, the people of this province are going to have a decision to make. They're going to have to decide on a party, a government that has policies, has vision, has leadership, has a team in place that wants to put Saskatchewan first, and they want to be able to go out on the doorsteps . . . And we'll be on the doorsteps probably from now, for 18 months total, Mr. Speaker. And I think that when we go to the doorsteps, people are very much happy to see a party with ideas. And I don't know but I'm very, very much happy and encouraged when I go to the doorstep and I hear, well the NDP were here and they don't have much to offer. And I think that that's probably what's going to happen.

[15:45]

And I feel pretty sorry for the member from Cumberland when he's going to go door knocking. In last session they reported in his paper that he asked four questions in the whole session. Maybe eight, sorry. It might have been eight questions. I apologize to the member from Cumberland. I think he got on his feet eight times, not four — my bad. But how he's going to go there and go door knocking in La Ronge and say, hey I asked probably 12 questions for you guys in the last year. I'm not sure if that's the type of representation they're looking for. And I think that that's going to be replayed a lot for members of the NDP across the province. And I'm very much looking forward to the next 18 months.

And I'm probably not going to support the amendment, which confused me to begin with because . . . Well I won't be supporting the amendment. Not probably. I won't be supporting the amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I will be supporting our government's Speech from the Throne. I will be supporting the direction our government's going. And I think that we're trying to do the best we can for Saskatchewan, making the priorities that we hear on the doorstep when we're talking to Saskatchewan people, and I think they see those priorities mirrored in what this Throne Speech brings. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Sutherland.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you to my colleague from Walsh Acres for his very, very good response in the Speech from the Throne and covered many, many subjects on there. But I think he particularly enjoyed talking about the member from Rosemont and some of the mistakes he's made inside and outside this legislative.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to start off as everybody does. I need to thank my family. I need to thank my wife, Leane, for everything that she has done for me in allowing me to come down here. I have to thank both my children, Courtney and Carter, and in the same breath I need to apologize to them because I'm not going to be there for some of these events, some of the hockey games and some of the special Olympic events that my daughter attends. But they understand why I'm down here. They know I'm down here to make Saskatchewan a better place for them to live in the future and to choose this as home as I did, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I also need to thank my stepdaughters, Kassidy and Keely, who are very supportive, make sure that they, that they're always around helping out in the house, that they understand why I'm gone. And it's very critical to have that support at home as everybody from both sides of the House know, that they have to have that support at home otherwise this job, it'd be very difficult.

In saying that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to thank my parents. I was encouraged to get into politics from my father, Ted Merriman who was a MLA 2003 to 2007, and of course my mother, Marie. Thank you very much for everything that you did for me. Both of you guys, you raised, I would have to say, a

great child. I have to do that. I have to say that. Two children. I'm sorry to my sister. But they instilled the values that I have which allows me to come down here and speak on behalf of the people of Saskatoon Sutherland. So again to my parents, I thank you very much for everything that you've done for me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's one other special person that I need to thank. Her birthday is tomorrow. Her name is Sophie Foster. She is my most active constituent, and I know I've talked about Sophie in here before. Sophie is turning 100 years young tomorrow, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm looking forward to celebrating her birthday. She has family coming from across Western Canada to be able to celebrate with her on Saturday. But 100 years, and I'm not sure if this is going to stir the pot within our ranks, but I believe that she is the oldest active member of the Saskatchewan Party. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again to Sophie I want to say thank you and happy birthday tomorrow, Sophie. I look forward to seeing you on the weekend. So thank you very much for that.

And again I need to thank my constituency assistant, Kendra Johnson, who just came to me this year and has done an absolute fabulous job of keeping me on track. It's a very hectic work and family-life balance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and Kendra's very good at encouraging me to make sure I make all of the meetings and do all of the greetings that I need to do on behalf of my colleagues, but also balancing that out with telling me to get out of the office and go home to spend time with my family to make sure I understand why I'm down here again, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And in lieu of the events — and I know we've talked about this; several people have talked about this — we had some of the veterans in, and I was privileged to hear the gentleman speak downstairs on his life in World War II from 1941 to 1945, some of the stories that he had. He got up there, was remarkable at 91 years old. He was saying everything like it happened yesterday. He was there. He remembered his friends. He remembered. He had survived, believe it or not, four plane crashes in a bomber, so he considers himself very lucky. And one of the things he said down there was that there are an average of 100 to 200 veterans dying that are from World War II that are dying every day.

We're losing our veterans, and I think everybody in this House and . . . We need to thank our veterans. When we see them on the street, when we see them in the Legion halls, we need to thank them. We have no understanding. And my colleague from Walsh Acres said, when we both walked away from that event this morning said, absolutely the greatest generation of Canadians that we have ever seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I want to very much thank them for exactly what they have done so we can enjoy the privilege of democracy here in Saskatchewan and across our great country.

I also want to touch base and thank Pat Shaw. He has been instrumental in keeping the security of this building, and his team and all of the first responders across Canada and especially here in Saskatchewan. With the events that happened in Ottawa, we need to be vigilant. We need to make sure that we are aiding and assisting in any way we can to make sure that this type of terror attack does not happen in our country again, the radicalism and the people that are choosing to do this. This

is something that they're choosing to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a country that bore them, that absolutely they grew up in. We went to school. And these people are getting radicalized, and it's very scary, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I want to make sure that all Canadians out there know that their governments at all levels are working to make sure that their safety is number one above everything else, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again I would touch base on the first responders.

And now I'll get into a little bit of the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I can't express it enough on what it means to be living in a strong Saskatchewan. It was the equivalent . . . When I moved out to Saskatchewan from Toronto in 1988, Saskatchewan had some potential. Then we turned into the dark years, and it was like this whole province had a flu, had a virus, and everybody was trying to get away from it. The kids were going. My friends were leaving. It was a very sad time.

And the government at that time, the member from Lakeview who's sitting here was in that government at that time, they were happy at best with the status quo. They did not want to grow the province. They did not want to build anything. They wanted to keep everybody's expectations low, and they wanted to be able to keep what their goals were even lower. They never tried to grow the province. All they would do is complain to the federal government, run out there to Ottawa with their hand out saying, please, sir, can I have some more? That's the sad state of Saskatchewan.

And my colleague from Walsh Acres talked about it a bit, about the member from Athabasca thinking that everybody was lined up in 2007. And absolutely they were. They absolutely were because they had . . . people were seeing a breath of fresh air come into this province. We were starting to work with businesses, not trying to own the businesses and the government control everything.

That's what amazes me about their whole philosophy over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is their philosophy is government knows best in all areas of the province, of business, any kind of business. And I'm going to get into the list of some of the businesses that they invested in, and it's just, you absolutely shake your head at it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But their philosophy is that they should be controlling everything. The government knows best.

And I can tell you, sitting on the government, there are absolutely some things that we do that are very good for encouraging things, but we don't get down to telling people what they should do, getting investing into different businesses. We shouldn't be doing that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because our role is to support the businesses, support the economy, and make sure that we allow it to grow. Not to try to stifle it, not to try to kill it. I mean it feels like that we were in a slow bleed for 16 years and finally somebody put a Band-Aid on us, and now we're actually healing and we're growing.

And the interesting part is now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I travel, either with work or with businesses, you talk to people. They've heard about Saskatchewan. They know about it. They know about our potash. They know about our uranium. They certainly know about our agriculture, and they know about our

oil and gas. Why is that that they didn't know about this the whole time? Why was Saskatchewan left off the world radar map forever? It's because they didn't want to explore this. They didn't want to grow the province, and that's very disappointing. And they still believe that. They haven't changed any of their policies from the last election.

We had the member from Lakeview actually stand up and say, well it was because of the snowfall or it was the weather; well it was something else. They have excuses. They haven't adapted or evolved into the new Saskatchewan. They haven't come up with any new ideas on how to solve some of the growth challenges that we're facing right now because they never had a plan for growth. They never wanted to grow. They absolutely wanted to keep this province as low as they possibly can.

And they didn't want our population to grow because they had a core base of supporters. And the more people that come into this province are the more people that have never seen the NDP govern this province. We have over 100,000 people that have come into this province that we need, as people who have been here through those dark days, remind them. Remind them of what it is to be under the NDP when nothing was going right, when it was an absolute socialism type of government that just controlled everything.

And I'm going to get into some of the losses that they talked about, or that they had over their term. But the Leader of the Opposition over there, he seems to keep dismissing this as, oh that was before my time. No, it wasn't. The Leader of the Opposition for the NDP needs to answer for everything that the NDP has done since the inception of the NDP. That's his party. These are the people. We have some core supporters over here of the NDP who love Tommy Douglas and are Tommy Douglas's people. And Cam . . . Sorry, sorry. The member from Massey Place, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Opposition seems to dismiss that. He seems to dismiss that quite a bit. And he seems to be the new vision of the New Democratic Party. But I don't understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as to how he has his own divisiveness in his party, but yet he seems to forget about everything that the member from Lakeview did while he was in cabinet, the member from Saskatoon city centre, and even the member from Athabasca. We're not actually quite sure what he did in cabinet, but he was there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know he was there because he had the honourable title for a little bit of time anyways.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I want to talk about is some of the things that I've been working on within the legislative community. I've been privileged to be able to be appointed by Premier to be the Vice-Chair for Public Accounts. Now a lot of people, when I tell them it's Public Accounts I'm sitting as a Deputy Chair, the Vice-Chair for Public Accounts, they're not sure quite what that is. So what it is is we look after . . . We look at all the auditor's recommendations that the government should be doing or some of the things that the auditor is suggesting that we should do — a whole wide variety of things.

And it's very eye opening, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When we have a recommendation from the auditor, we seem to act on it. We seem to work with the auditor and the opposition to be able to say yes, that's a good idea. We never thought of that one. Absolutely we need to implement that. And one of the best ones

that we've seen that working from the government and the auditor's office is moving from the GRF [General Revenue Fund] to summary financials. That was something that the auditor called for and that we worked with the auditor's office and to be able to make that happen so the people of Saskatchewan understand that we are working with the auditor's office. So Public Accounts is very interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[16:00]

But some of the things I want to touch base on other than that is immigration. Again I've been I guess reappointed or extended my appointment for Legislative Secretary for Immigration, and I've had the honour of going out and meeting people in the immigrant community. Now these are just people coming from the Philippines, from Ireland. These are people coming from all over the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the reason that they're coming here is they're coming here for hope. This is what our Premier said right after we won the 2000 election: hope beats fear every time. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, people are coming here because they have hope; they're not fearful.

The opposition would like to keep everybody in fear. But within, when you talk to the people coming in from all around the world, they're absolutely awestruck by the people of Saskatchewan, by the opportunities in Saskatchewan, and by all the excitement that's going on in Saskatchewan. They're talking about it all around the world.

And I've had a couple of opportunities. Just last week I was at the Skilled Trades Canada conference where they're planning on having 43 different trades. They're having a competition. This is a national competition that goes on every year, and they're coming to Saskatoon to be able to do this. Now this isn't what you would typically think of as the trades of construction, electrician. This goes everything into information technology, different nursing strategies, a whole wide variety, 43 different areas that are going to be . . . There's going to be a skills competition. They are very excited about planning this. There is thousands and thousands of volunteer hours that are going into this. And why are they picking Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Because this is the place to be.

The Premier has said it many times. It used to be the place to be from and I guess the only thing that I can say about the NDP and what they did was they were able to spread the Rider nation across Canada. I guess that's one good thing, so we can always go to a game and feel like it's a home game because everybody left this province for 16 years. But now people are coming back to this province. We have expatriates coming back to this province; we have immigration coming into this province; and people are staying in this province. The graduate retention program is one of our great programs that we have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in able to keep our young people here.

Again when I graduated high school a little bit earlier than my colleague from Walsh Acres in 1990 — 1990 and yes, I can do the math, thank you — everybody was gone. People were gone to Alberta. Some went to the United States. Some went to Manitoba, Ontario. It was a sad state of affairs to be able to say, it was our graduating class and 60 per cent of the people, 70 per cent of the people are going to be gone in the next year. And it's

difficult when you have friends, especially me just completing my last two years of high school here, when you have all of these friends and they're all gone and you lose connection with them. And it's too bad that at that time everybody was just bolting out of this province as quick as they possibly could.

But I want to talk a little bit about the citizenship ceremonies that I've been able to attend, and I know my colleagues have attended these as well. This is one of the great things that I've been able to do as an MLA and as the Legislative Secretary for Immigration, is when you have somebody coming to you and they are taking that oath and they get that certificate of citizenship and they choosing Saskatchewan, of all places to live. It is one of the most rewarding experiences that I had.

The first time I went, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I got up to speak and I had trouble speaking. I was choking on my words because of the pure joy. You hear the stories and the horror stories, and again we're so blessed here in Saskatchewan, but you hear the horror stories of what people went through to be able to get here to live, raise their family, and establish their roots and become part of the Saskatchewan mosaic culture. It is absolutely horrifying to hear what they had to say. But the reward was, this was the last that they were going to have to do. They did this for their kids, for their families, for their parents. Their parents' reward is that their child of whatever age got out of that situation, got out of that country, and can start a new life right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So it was absolutely fascinating, and I want to thank my colleagues who have been there who have absolutely shaken the hands of the new citizens. It's very critical for them to see because a lot of these people have never seen a politician in real life. They haven't. And for them to be able to stand up and you can say, welcome to Saskatchewan; welcome to Canada. Even if they have been living here for multiple years and waiting for their citizenship, now they're officially part of the Canadian citizenship family which is made up of immigrants from all over the world. With the exception of our First Nations people, we're all immigrants into Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think that's important for the people of Saskatchewan to understand, especially in Saskatchewan.

We're a very young province. We've only been around for just over 100 years and at best, again outside of the Aboriginal community, we're maybe fifth generation in Saskatchewan. So this is a new influx. This is like what was happening back when Saskatchewan was first forming. We were supposed to be the biggest, most populated province in Western Canada and well socialism happened, as somebody was asking. That happened and it absolutely stopped our province. It stopped it dead in its tracks.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very important for us to be able to get out and talk to people, talk to the people that are coming in and see why they appreciate it. It gives us a new appreciation of how lucky we are here. And I've had the opportunity to take my children to the citizenship ceremonies and I remind them we are, you know, in Canada we are the 1 per cent. We are very lucky here in Canada. We have the freedom of speech, freedom of religion. We have lots of freedoms that people can't even dream of around the world.

So I want again to thank my colleagues for that and thank the minister for allowing me to go and attend this. And I know he has been at some citizenship ceremonies and working with lots of the immigrant communities trying to find out how we can do things better, how we can help work with the communities to get people in Saskatchewan, to get them to settle in. We just don't want people to come in and fill jobs. We have a job issue. There is 95,000 expected jobs by 2017 that we need here in the province. We don't want them to come in and just work a job. We want them to come in, have a career, set down their roots, and become part of the Saskatchewan family.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that's important that all people realize that we need to welcome all of the immigrants coming around because they're here for the right reasons. They're here for the work. They're here to settle, and we want those people to come in here long term, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So in saying that, there's a couple of other things that I want to talk about.

Certainly I'll get to the Speech from the Throne. I'm just doing my 15-minute preamble, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I want to talk about door knocking, just going out in the province and talking to people. And I've had the opportunity to be in Saskatoon, and all the areas of Saskatoon. And it's interesting what we're hearing in question period down here and what the media seems to latch onto sometimes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether it's lean or SaskPower meters or whatever it is that's the question of the day. When you get out and talk to people on the streets, what are they talking about?

They're talking about schools, new schools being built in Saskatoon, Regina, and Martensville. They're talking about the children's hospital. They're talking about their roads and their highways, the investment that we need to have to be able to keep Saskatchewan growing. They're talking about the infrastructure. They're talking about the new bridge in Saskatoon. They're talking about the south bridge in Saskatoon, which our government was able to allocate \$98.5 million for that. These are what they're talking about.

Yes, there's going to be people out there that are not happy with everything. And I don't think as a government our goal is to make everybody happy on everything. We need to make the majority of the people understand that we're investing in their backyard. We're helping them out. We're keeping the property . . . We're keeping the taxes low. We're able to make sure that we have . . . which is our cornerstone, and it should be the cornerstone of every government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a balanced budget. That's the most important thing. Because if we start going into deficit financing, all we're doing is passing on that debt to my kids and I don't think that that's fair, and I don't think anybody wants to pass the debt on to their kids. But with the NDP, in their last campaign they wanted to shift at least 5 to \$6 billion more, was the costing of their election campaign. They wanted to shift that on to the next generation and to our grandkids.

I'm not a grandfather yet. Please don't let me be a grandfather for a little while. I'm not ready for that.

But I want to make sure that we reduce the debt. That's our job, is to reduce the debt, is to make sure that this is the best place. Not just that we have fancy bridges and that we have hospitals

and all that, but we have a way to pay for it now. We have a way to be able to finance that with multiple sources of income. We have uranium, potash, agriculture. We have oil and gas.

And the other thing that is interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is now we have a broader tax base. We've taken people off the tax. People with low income, we've taken them off the provincial tax. But now, we have 100,000, over 100,000 more people paying provincial tax. That's another source of revenue.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's great to be able to see that we have all of these different sources of revenue to be able to fund the projects that we determine that is important. And let me tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that decision does not sit on this side of the House. That decision of what we do and where we go and how we spend our money sits outside this House. It sits in our constituencies. It sits when we talk to the people on the street, when we talk to the business community, when we talk to the community-based organizations, we talk to the health regions, the educators. We talk to them and we get advice from them.

Everybody thinks . . . I think most people think that there's some inner circle of people that make all of these decisions. Where they get the information from is outside this building, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's no disrespect to the government. That's no disrespect to the legislative process. We need to get our information from the people that are actually going through the programs, that are actually driving down the roads, that are actually out there in the school system. When I go to pick up my child from school, whether it's my daughter from high school or my stepdaughter from high school or my son from elementary school, the teachers are there. They're talking to us.

When I have to go in and pick up my mother when she had surgery on her knee, talking to the health care people, I don't solicit. I don't say, hey I am from the government. I'm here to help. Tell me what to do. I just simply ask the question, how are things going? And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, nine times out of ten they say, yep, things are going extremely well. We're very happy with the way things are going in Saskatchewan. Is there any opportunity to look at this? Yes, absolutely. So we take that back. We funnel that through caucus, through cabinet, and if there's an expense item, then it goes through treasury board. It goes through its process.

But what the people of Saskatchewan need to understand is, there is a process. It doesn't start in this building. It ends in this building. That's where all of the different ideas from all of our constituencies that we represent and also the constituencies that we don't represent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they did have the opportunity to go knock doors in the Leader of the Opposition.

Interesting, two things that happened. Nobody mentioned lean. They did mention the schools, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But what they also did mention, which I found very interesting, was like the member from Walsh Acres said about the member from Rosemont is, they hadn't seen him. They hadn't seen the Leader of the Opposition knocking in his own area. They hadn't seen him out since the last election.

And that's a little disconcerting because we don't answer to the

people every four years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We answer to the people every day. And if we're not answering to the people every day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then we're not doing our jobs effectively. I think that, and that is probably why the opposition has lost touch, they really have. They haven't evolved, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they haven't evolved with what is the needs of the people of Saskatchewan. They still think that they know best: oh don't worry, we'll take care of you; we're the government.

See, what we do is we take everybody's ideas and formulate that into a plan. And I know this is something that the opposition doesn't particularly like to hear about because they don't have a plan. They don't have anything on their website. I've been told recently that they took, or actually it wasn't recently, it was probably about six to eight months ago where they finally took the *Regina Manifesto* off of their website. I'm not quite sure why they did that. I'm not sure if that's going back, if they're trying to lose their history. I don't understand that.

We're very proud of our history within the Saskatchewan Party. We're very thankful for our founding eight members who saw a bigger vision. And it wasn't about party lines. It wasn't about history of one party over the other. It was, we need to get together to be able to make this province better, and we can't do that if we're fighting each other all of the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[16:15]

A couple of other things I want to touch base on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I don't get too many opportunities to get up and speak other than the odd member's statement. So I did want to thank some of the colleagues, thank some of the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'll get to you there in a minute, mister Batoche. But I wanted to thank some of my colleagues that have decided to retire, have decided that they've put in their time. And they've done an absolute fabulous job at representing their constituents, representing the people of Saskatchewan, whether they're here in Saskatchewan or they're travelling around the world. I just want to put a quick thank you out to them.

And again, I've touched base on the founding members. I want to put a personal thanks out to the member from Melville-Saltcoats. Certainly from what I've been told, and again I don't have a whole lot of background in agriculture, but what I've been told — and no disrespect to the current — but the best agricultural minister that we've ever had in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again, I want to put out a thank you to a colleague and a mentor, the member from Wood River, who is a veteran. And again I want to thank you very much for your service. I want to say, you know, as one of the original members, not the founding members, but one of the first members of the party, it's absolutely great to be able to see that we have the longevity and the history to be able to bring members like the member from Wood River. And the nomination meeting — and again, we don't talk about this a lot within the House because of some strict rules — but it was absolutely fabulous to see so many people out at so many different of our nomination meetings across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We've had anywhere from 1,000 up to 12, 1,300 people come out for one single nomination, five or six candidates coming out to be able to be part of this. They want to be part of this experience. They want to be able to say, I did my little part to be able to move Saskatchewan forward.

Again, one of our founding members, the member from Moosomin, thank you very much for everything you've done as to be able to bring this party and represent your constituency. And I believe he's the longest-sitting member in the legislative. Thank you to him.

To our current Finance minister and Deputy Premier, the member from Canora-Pelly, our Deputy Premier, I want to thank him for his guidance, for his wisdom. And I've never experienced another Finance minister, so I have to say he's the best that we've ever had, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again, former Social Services minister from Kelvington-Wadena, what can I say? Just an absolute fabulous lady, very classy lady. Her speech yesterday was moving. She was extremely eloquent in being able to articulate what all of us were feeling about our members in our armed service. Great Social Services minister, great lady. But I think what's most important to her is, a great mother and a grandmother. And I want to say thank you to her.

And my member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton, my friend, well, well, well. I'm very glad to see that he's going back into his policing career. I hope I don't have to see him again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while I'm going up to the lake. I'd like to see him in a very social setting, but not in a very official setting. So again thank you to the member for P.A. Carlton.

The member from Greystone, who just happens to be my MLA, as I sit just outside of the constituency of Saskatoon Sutherland. As my MLA, I can go in and give him a hard time about what's going on with the government. And I wish him the best of luck in his future endeavours.

And also I wanted to put out a quick thanks to — and I think I can officially say his name — Tim McMillan, who has moved on to another career. And I wish him and his family the absolute best. Tim was one of the great guys that mentored me in a whole bunch of different aspects. And after the 2011 election, Tim was very excited because now there was some other — myself, the member from Regina Dewdney, the member from Walsh Acres — there was some other people here that were over six feet. So he was pretty excited to be able to have some other taller people in politics. So again to him and his family, I wish them the absolute best . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, I'm not talking about P.A. Carlton anymore.

I would like to talk just a little bit about some of the opportunities I've had, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as many people on this side of the House are aware that I sit on the board for Special Olympics for the province of Saskatchewan, which I'm very privileged to do that. The Minister for Advanced Education, past president of Special Olympics, we have a very good tie with the Special Olympics to be able to help them work with the athletes. And we need to recognize the athletes; we've had them in here before.

We have the best athletes in the world here in Saskatchewan, whether it's Special Olympians, hockey, dance, art, culture. Those people are just the absolute best, that work to represent. They wear the Saskatchewan flag with pride. And the Special Olympians are . . . It's an absolute treat to watch them. And don't kid yourself for a second, they're very competitive. This is highly competitive.

My daughter is a Special Olympian. She went bowling the other day, and she was just learning how to bowl. And the gentlemen that was two lanes down threw one ball short of a perfect game. As a special Olympian, he also happens to be on the national team. But that tells you the calibre that they have within the Special Olympics, that these people, the people that are working within the Special Olympics . . . And most importantly they wouldn't be able to do this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unless they had volunteers to be able to help them out.

So it's absolutely critical with all of that, with any type of program, the volunteers are there. And everybody knows that Saskatchewan is a volunteer capital of the world. Everything from Telemiracle down to the local bingo, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we volunteer. We get out. We help our community, and we make sure that the community thrives.

I touch base on a couple of other things. On the Ronald McDonald House, I had a tour of that. And I think this is something that affects everybody. Within Saskatoon we have an addition to the Ronald McDonald House. I just went on a tour of it, and what an impressive building. And this facility isn't being used by people in Saskatoon. Very rarely. It's being used by people in the North, South, East, and West. All over the province, people come in to Ronald McDonald House to be able to relax. They have everything from people staying there for over a year and a half to people that'll come in just for a day pass, that their child is in the hospital and they just need to get out, breathe, have a nap, rest while their child is being taken care of.

And the work that Tammy Forrester and the group at Ronald McDonald House are doing are absolutely fabulous. I got a tour of the rooms. I got a tour of the facilities. They have everything there from a games room for teens with an Xbox and a PlayStation, and whatever else that those kind of types of games are, to a playroom for the kids. They have an indoor and outdoor play area. They have a craft room. It's just absolute fabulous.

They have a room with literally a tree in it. They had this tree that they had to cut down for part of the expansion, and it's got to be at least four feet around. They took it, cut it into pieces, brought it down, and put it into a special area. That's when the kids get to leave, when it's their last day, they get to go into the special room, and they have fake grass on there. They get to climb up the tree and then they get the real surprises. They open up the next door and it's the toy room of all the toys that have been donated to Ronald McDonald House. And they can pick whatever toy they want.

And the joy that they say happens when that kid gets to pick a toy, whether it's their brother or sister in the hospital or it's them themselves that have just got out, and they come over and get to pick a toy, that's their way of saying that yes, this is

behind me. And I hope that they understand all of the volunteer hours that went into that. The parents do, and I think the children do as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[Applause]

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would be remiss, as the Leader of the Opposition seemed to be hammering on us a little bit today about spending, which we can't understand or I can't understand personally, is we're spending \$35 million on a contract to save over 60. I don't know why they don't understand that math, but sometimes as people . . . And maybe they don't know this because maybe not too many of them have actually run a business or been involved in anything, but as a business owner and people that understand on this side of the House, when we talk, sometimes you have to spend money to save money. And that's just the way it is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On the other side of the House, they didn't get that. They really didn't.

And the Minister of the Economy started touching on this a little bit in question period, and he of course has been around that he knows these facts. I have to read them off the sheet. But just for the record, I mean they're talking about a return on investment for \$35 million in taxpayers' . . . I have no problem in justifying that we saved \$60 million to date and that number is going to accumulate. It's only going to get more and more.

We've heard some positive feedbacks, and when I talk to nurses and when I talk to people in the hospital, they say it's great. Not everybody likes it and that's understandable. But when they say that things are more efficient, people are getting their surgeries done quicker, people are getting in to see the specialists quicker, that's what they care about. They really don't care about what happens behind the scenes. They just want to be able to get their treatment, get on the healing process, and move forward and get out of the hospital or get out of the treatment care centre. They don't want to be there. They just want the best service, the most efficient service that they can possibly get, and then move on with their lives. That's all that they're looking for.

Unfortunately the opposition is stuck on that we can't do it this way. And again I'd be remiss if I didn't hear the word sensei 15 times a day. I can't understand why they can't get past this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are looking for outside . . . We've been doing the same old. We've been doing, you know, with 16 years, put more money in. Throw more money in. Throw more money in, higher budget, higher budget. At some point you have to stop and say, is this working? Can we do it a better way, or shall we just be doing the same old thing that we've been doing forever?

Increase the budget. That's what they would do. Just increase the budget. Increase taxes. Increase royalties on potash or oil and gas so again all of these companies would leave. That's what they would do. They can't come up with an innovative idea. If they came up with one since I've been here . . . Three years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've been here. I haven't seen one idea come out of the opposition.

I don't understand why they can't do some policy. We're a year out from a potential election, and the province is growing. It's a

strong province. But what do they want to do? They want to take it back. They want to continue to take it backwards. They want to go back to the old days when there was just under 1 million people here, where businesses didn't want to invest, and it was a sad state for everything.

So let me . . . I just want to run through, and I know this has been read into the record probably 100 times and we'll read it 100 times more. Here's a quick list: \$15 million lost in Channel Lake, not one nickel returned; \$2 million in Guyana; \$16 million lost, NST Chicago; \$9.4 million lost . . . We had \$90.8 million lost in a BC [British Columbia] telecom company — \$90 million. We had \$10 million lost in Craig Wireless, a Manitoba Internet company; \$17.2 million lost in Coachman Insurance; \$35 million lost in SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company].

And these are some other ones, and I can't wrap my head around why government would be involved in this. We had two — and again it's not an insignificant amount — \$2.42 million lost in a pawn shop. How does a government even get involved in that? Why are we not looking at what's . . . highways, investing in our schools, investing in taking care of the farmers, taking care of all of the people? Why are they investing in . . .

And they talk about investing in an American company with John Black. Well I can see right here, they've invested in Atlanta dot-com, Nashville dot-com. They've invested in a Guyana . . . I mean Australian stock market gamble, Austar Communications. The bingo — again bingo — what the heck are we doing in bingo? Why would anybody in any government think that we should get involved and start doing bingos? Everybody loves bingo, but it's not something the government should be doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[16:30]

So it's just absolutely sad that we got into all of this as a government because I mean the quick total just at the end here is a total of \$303 million plus. It was the NDP who wasted that money. Could you imagine? With that loss they could have built the children's hospital in 2002, one of the things that they promised. They promised a health science building. They promised all of these things but never did it. But they could have done it if they weren't going on these little investment schemes — \$300 million.

And you wonder why everybody was bailing out of this province like rats off a sinking ship. It was absolutely ludicrous. Nobody had any confidence in that government. Nobody had any confidence in them, even themselves. They didn't. It was absolutely sad, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to talk a little bit about what . . . I had the honour of going down and representing our province at the federal-provincial-territorial meetings and talking about some things. We talked about Red Seal trades and how we're going to work on making sure that our Red Seal trades across Canada are recognized by each other, which is a very important thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But what we also talked about was breaking down some of the barriers within Canada that we have from province to province.

And I know the Premier has talked about this several times. How can we make sure that we are doing the best as a country and not looking out jurisdictionally in the province? We want to make sure because we understand here in Saskatchewan that in order for us to grow and develop, we need the provinces around us to do that as well. We can't just do it alone.

I mean first of all we're landlocked. We are rich in resources, but we have to be able to get that product to market. We have to work with our counterparts east and west and with our counterparts to the south, the Americans. We need to make sure that everybody is looking at the same picture, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that we're trying to maximize the potential within Saskatchewan. And that is freer trade. That is making sure that we can get our products to market and other provinces can get their products to market in the best, cheap, most feasible, and safest way to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And one of the other things that we talked about was a skilled workforce. And again I've been able to meet with the people at the trades and training centre, the apprentices, to be able to say, how can we move Saskatchewan forward? How can we make sure that our trades internally are recognized throughout the world?

And we're working on recognizing immigrants that are coming into Saskatchewan; that their accreditation is recognized here; that there's not a huge delay in process, in timing; that we can get them in and get them working as fast as possible, doing the trade that they do best now, whatever that trade is. And again it's not just all welding and construction. It's everything from nurse, from home care, to whatever it is that they're skilled in. We need to be able to recognize that. So we're working with our counterparts across the country to make that easier for people to be able to come into our country and maximize their trades.

One of the big things that we've done within our government is invest in infrastructure. We talked about, my colleague talked about the Regina bypass, and we were very excited up in Saskatoon to get funding from the provincial government — and thank you very much to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Highways — to be able to work on our north bridge. We have a south bridge in Saskatoon now we're working on with the federal government on a P3 project.

And I know the NDP . . . Well let me rephrase that. The local NDP don't understand P3s. The NDP in Manitoba do. Their federal leader, Thomas Mulcair, does. They all understand the benefits of P3s, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the provincial NDP here don't. Why? Again because they can't evolve. They can't move forward. They're stuck in the past.

We've done over \$16 billion in a range of capital projects — highways, hospital, education, infrastructure — that this province was neglected for 16 years. I've talked to the teachers. I've talked to the people in the hospitals. All they got was the bare minimum to keep them going. They only got just enough to be able to keep them to the next budget cycle.

There was no planning. There was no forethought as to what are we going to do two years out? It was like sticking a little pat on a leaky roof. Well we'll just stick a little Band-Aid there, and

we'll stick a bigger Band-Aid there, and eventually we get this infrastructure deficit. Now the whole roof is shot. It was probably maybe a \$10 fix then, and it's now \$1,000, and in proportion to whatever the project is. The cost of everything goes up incrementally because they neglected all of this infrastructure within our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I want to touch base again on health care. This is near and dear to everybody within Saskatchewan. And I want to thank the Minister of Health and the Minister of Rural and Remote Health and the former minister of Rural and Remote Health for their keen insight and to be able to look out what's best for Saskatchewan patients. Now that includes a wide variety of things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's a whole bunch of things that they have to look at.

They have to look at everything from the average person who is . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — With leave, to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Education has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to the member that I interrupted, I thank him for the opportunity to do this. In the gallery we've just been joined by Mrs. Edith Klassen, and friends and family of hers. She has come from Lanigan today and has received the Council of the Federation Premier's Literacy Award, an award that is given for people that have promoted literacy.

She has worked tirelessly in Lanigan over the last number of years, helping new Canadians not just with literacy and reading skills and language skills but also with adapting to living in a country where they might not have a driver's licence and may not be able to adapt readily. And these are people that have come over under the, some of them, under the immigrant nominee program.

So, Mr. Speaker, firstly I would like to ask members to welcome Mrs. Klassen and her family and friends to the legislature but also ask all members to congratulate her on having won the award. I expect the member opposite may want to speak as well.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Sutherland.

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.]

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again I want to . . . I'm going to wrap things up because we're getting close and I know some of my colleagues want to speak on this as well, but I want to be able to thank, first of all again, my family at home, but I also want to thank my family here, my colleagues here. I want to be able to thank them for everything that they have given me and the advice and the trust, the friendship, the relationships that I have built over the last three years. This is a great group of people to work with and to work for, Mr. Deputy Speaker, everything from the minister's office to the staff to the people in caucus. I want to be able to thank them for all the help and support that they've given me. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to close by saying that I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne and I will not be supporting the amendment. So thank you very much for my time today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise in the House to speak in favour of the motion regarding the Speech from the Throne. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week a number of my colleagues in this legislature and in legislatures across Canada have risen and spoken regarding the killings of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo whose funeral was earlier today. Mr. Speaker, I think it's commendable that Canadians have risen and expressed their horror, their revulsion with this. The outpouring of emotion is what makes us Canadians.

Unfortunately terrorism is now something that has come to Canada. I note that we're now in a position where we're looking at revised security in our legislature, and I'm sure that's something that's being taken place all across Canada. It is indeed tragic that that type of process has to take place and that we're now in a position where we have to adapt and consider carefully where we want to be as a nation with regard to access to what we used to think were buildings that should be open to the public as much as is possible. In any event, I have a great deal of confidence in the security staff in this building and would welcome the process as it goes forward.

We also have, Mr. Speaker, we recognized veterans earlier today and we have Veterans Day, Remembrance Day coming up on November 11th. People spoke a lot about their own families. My father had health issues and was not able to serve as an active member of the military. What he did instead — and I think a lot of Canadians that did not serve in active service chose to do other things — my father went to Thunder Bay and worked in an aircraft factory, assembling airplanes that were used overseas. And it was something that he took a great deal of pride in and at one point took me to a military museum in south Texas where he showed me the type of aircraft that he worked on the assembly line for and spoke, not just as somebody that worked on that, but as somebody that was doing something on

behalf of the war effort in both Canada and planes that were used by the United States as well.

Mr. Speaker, this is a time as well when people thank and make comments on their situations in their own constituency. I usually do this. I mention my mother who is now 93 years old, living in a LutherCare facility in Saskatoon, doing remarkably well, in good health. Tells me that she occasionally watches me on TV but often presses mute. Also says that she plans to live long enough to spend my entire inheritance, and I wish her every success in doing that.

My mother-in-law, Mildred Simpson, lives in Rosetown. She recently turned 90 years old, and any hope that I had for inheriting money from that side of the family appears to be not going well as well because she has recently purchased, not that long ago, an automobile so that she can drive down to the co-op store and continue spending my what should be inheritance there. And I wish her great success in that endeavour as well.

I should, Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank my constituency assistant, Gordon Rutten, who is part of my in-house recycling . . . [inaudible] . . . I'm joking about this. But he is past the age of 70, so he's passed where he's contributing to the pension plan and should be taking it out but continues to work and provides great service to the citizens of Saskatoon Southeast. And so I want to thank him and wish him as many years in that office as I continue to stay in the legislature because he's working out incredibly well.

I should, Mr. Deputy Speaker, recognize and thank my wife, Sandy, who works tirelessly at going to events, making sure that I'm doing what I'm supposed to do, and critiquing, very aggressively sometimes, my performance or lack of performance in the legislature when we go to events. So it's a time where we should all think about our families at home and the support and guidance and direction that they give us. And as much as we may make jokes, make comments and that, we would not be able to do what we do without the support of our families.

I note as well, Mr. Speaker, that this is Halloween week coming up this weekend and that we have a growing number of people planning Halloween parties, Halloween functions. I want to commend the staff at the Legislative Assembly for doing their best to do Halloween costumes. How do you decorate a dome? Well I guess you decorate it as an inland wheat terminal. So they've done a remarkably good job of doing that. I see that they will have likely railcars here coming. Anyway, pardon my poor humour at that.

I want to, Mr. Speaker, talk a little bit about our province, which in my view is the best province. We have seen some great things happen. Over the last number of years we've seen record high population, record low unemployment, record investments. In my home community of Saskatoon, we see a number of projects under way thanks to those record investments.

We have a state-of-the-art children's hospital supported by our government's investment of \$235 million. Over \$155 million to date for a number of school projects, including announcing brand new P3 joint-use elementary schools in Rosewood,

Evergreen, Stonebridge, and also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition's constituency, Hampton Village, which sadly and oddly was not supported by the Leader of the Opposition who indicated that he did not want a P3 elementary joint-use school in his constituency. And I think that's something that probably the constituents in his constituency should probably be made aware of, that their MLA did not support this joint-use P3 school for them.

[16:45]

And it's something that's very much needed. There's rapid growth in that area of the city. And, Mr. Speaker, regardless of what the member opposite wants or doesn't want, we are going to build that P3 joint-use school in his vicinity because we know what his constituents want. He may not know but we certainly do, and we're going to go ahead and do that.

Mr. Speaker, we also have in Saskatoon a north commuter bridge announced. It will have an estimated \$250 million cost, and we're going ahead with that process as well because the rapid growth in Saskatoon is making for some real traffic issues and we want to be able to support our city. Those are just a handful of examples.

In order to continue making investments in infrastructure in our province, our government needs to make sure that we have skilled workers. That's why we have committed to harmonizing labour standards between our New West partners. It's why we have committed to increasing the number of adult basic education training seats, and why we are boosting the number of apprenticeship seats. We need to do what we can to recruit and retain skilled workers. This Speech from the Throne provides for that.

Our government has taken a number of steps to support workplaces across this province. Earlier this year *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* was proclaimed and despite fearmongering from the members opposite, that piece of legislation spelled good news for Saskatchewan workers. The Act provides for something that was called for . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I hear the member, I hear the member from Saskatoon sort of chirping from his seat.

The member opposite has said, he's wanted minimum wage and he's talked about *The Minimum Wage Act*, something that hasn't existed in our province since 1969. But now, Mr. Speaker, we have *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, which calls for indexing of the minimum wage, something that has never been done in our province.

The member opposite went on at great length about wanting to have a minimum wage Act. I don't know where he was in the summer of '69, whether he was watching the moon landing or watching Woodstock on TV, but that was the year that the NDP did away with *The Minimum Wage Act*. We now have it embodied in *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* where it can be . . . [inaudible] . . . and the member opposite knows it's a good thing. And I want to encourage him to get out and tell his constituents what a great thing *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and indexing of the minimum wage are. And I know that he will because I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he believes in it and he is very supportive of that.

Mr. Speaker, we also have allowed for modified work arrangements to allow for more flexibility for workers, banking of overtime hours, increased accountability for unionized workers, improving the essential services process to ensure essential public services are being provided and collective agreements can be reached. It provides for additional leave provisions such as leave for citizenships or parental leave. It also creates safer workplaces, increasing fines under occupational health and safety, requiring a prime contractor to be designated on job sites, allowing summary offence tickets to be done.

I would be remiss if I did not thank, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our employers and employees who are working tirelessly to improve our safety records. We are making great progress but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we still have an unacceptably high injury rate in our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I go to sessions regularly with the member opposite who I regard as a friend and a colleague because we both believe in better worker safety. And we all go out and we listen to the same things, and we know that it's something as a province we have to do. And I thank him for his continuing support in that, and I wish he would support the Speech from the Throne as well because there's great things in this Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it also provides for a stronger education system. This Speech from the Throne is all about students. It's all about the things that we need for our students. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the one thing we need to do is focus on putting the student first. We talk about schools. We talk about a lot of other things. We talk about testing. But the most important thing we have to do is to focus on the students.

Over the past year, Patricia Prowse and Russ Mirasty embarked on a province-wide student-first consultation. They conducted over 120 engagement sessions that involved nearly 1,000 students, parents, caregivers, and teachers from across the province. The feedback that they received was insightful and honest and it helped shape our system. We will do everything we can to continue to put the student first. That's why this fall our government will be introducing legislation to ensure the safety of all students in the province by creating a new regulatory body for teachers in our province.

As I mentioned, this is about the safety of our students, but it's also about the integrity of our teaching profession in the province. Teachers are professional. This legislation will provide Saskatchewan teachers with the same authority and responsibility as other self-regulated professions in the province. We thank them. We recognize and appreciate the challenge and commitment they make to our children and to our students.

We know that our teachers are hard-working, dedicated professionals who work to put the student first every day. As a government, our job is to ensure that the education system is well supported. That means having the foundations in place so students can learn, and having the necessary resources available so the teachers and staff can support student learning.

We have made record investments in our classrooms. We've

increased capital spending by — and I hope the members opposite are listening — by 268 per cent. Forty new schools have been built or are in the planning stages. In contrast, the members opposite closed, during their tenure, 176 schools, on average about one school a month. If you lived in one of their areas, you would not want it. You would be living in fear for what was going to happen if you were the one that had to go down that month.

I've had the opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see first-hand some of the new facilities. This fall we've opened new schools in Swift Current, Regina, and White City. In the next several months more new schools will be opened in Lloydminster and Saskatoon. Major renovations will see like-new schools reopen in La Ronge and Lumsden.

We were left with a \$1.2 billion deficit in school capital when we formed government. This is as compared to a dismal legacy that was left by the members opposite of a \$1.2 billion deficit. We have come a long way, but we know we have more work to do and we want to continue to rise to the challenge.

Beyond the bricks and mortar, operating funding for education has increased. For school divisions we've provided an increase of over 26 per cent since November of 2007. The number of students enrolling in our schools continues to increase. This presents challenges, but they are good challenges to have.

In the coming weeks we will have this year's school enrolment for the province confirmed. We are already hearing preliminary numbers from many school divisions who indicate that their enrolments are up and are continuing to grow up. We have over \$19 million budgeted to support these enrolments.

In just seven years we have accomplished a great deal to improve our education system, as opposed to closing 176 schools, neglecting the schools that they didn't close. There was a horrible capital deficit that's there. They drove over 35,000 students out of our province. These are people that are now living in Alberta and elsewhere. Thankfully a lot of them are choosing to come back. They've underfunded . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They'd need a lot of school buses. He talks about school buses. They'd need a school train to take out all the students they drove out of the province. Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that those students are now starting to come back as opposed to leaving. It was a sad day when they were in government and the only thing you saw was tail lights leaving. Because when they were going to build schools, they needed to build them in Calgary or Edmonton because that's where our students were going to. We've got great students and they're coming back to Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have come a long ways. Under our government, the total budget line for education has grown by over 88 per cent. We've increased operating funding by 26.5 per cent, increased capital spending — and get this number — by 268 per cent. Increased child care spaces, 53 per cent. Increased pre-K [pre-kindergarten] spaces by 104 per cent. Increased early child intervention funding by 40 per cent. Increased operating grants to libraries by over 45 per cent.

We've undertaken a historic consultative process called student-first where teachers', parents', and students' voices

were heard. We've accepted the first ever education sector strategic plan created by and for this sector by all the school divisions working together, coming together, supporting it in conjunction with STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], in conjunction with all of the major sector partners. Mr. Speaker, this is going to be . . . was a great Speech from the Throne. It provides and will continue to provide supports for education.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close by thanking all of the members in the legislature on both sides of the House who continue to support and do good work for their constituents and for the people of our province. If not for the people in this legislature, the citizens would not have a direct voice and, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues in the legislature on both sides work hard and are committed to doing the best they can for the citizens of our province and I want to recognize what all of the MLAs do.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Speech from the Throne, this particular Speech from the Throne is something that I feel very proud of. I've looked at the things that are in there and I want to encourage the members opposite to sit down and take a long, careful look at the Speech from the Throne and decide whether this is something they should vote for. There's only nine of them. They know they're not going to be able to defeat it, so why don't they look at it and say, maybe there's some things in here we like? Why don't we do something different? We'll vote for this.

In particular, I would say that to the Leader of the Opposition, because the Leader of the Opposition would then be able to go back to his constituents and say, oh I was wrong before when I didn't support the P3 school that was coming into the constituency. He'd be able to stand up and say, I've changed my mind. I saw the light and I want this school for you. I want this school for the constituents. Rather than what he's doing now is blindly saying and stubbornly refusing to accept that his constituents want and need a school. They deserve a school. They're continuing to move there. We want those people to be well educated. We're going to do it for them, with or without them. But I'd sure like to give them the opportunity to come along with us on it.

Mr. Speaker, I will be voting for the Speech from the Throne. I will not be voting for the amendment and, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to encourage the members opposite to withdraw the amendment. It's something that is rather pointless. I think they should just say, no, we're not going to do it; we want to support it. It's the right thing to do. It's the right thing for Saskatchewan. It's the right thing for our citizens. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is an honour to enter into this, the debate, the Speech from the Throne for 2014-15. And as has been customary on I think both sides of the House when entering in this debate, specifically on this year, in this time, I really believe that it's my duty as well to thank those in the protective services — our RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and police services, fire services, but specifically those in our armed forces. And in light of the happenings of last week in Montreal and in Ottawa, it really is a

touching time of year, specifically because of Remembrance Day. But this year, I think many around the country will be also remembering those that gave their lives recently on home soil.

As was referred to by a few of my colleagues on this side of the House as well, an exciting announcement today. The military heritage legacy project that the Hon. Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport saw to this morning, this afternoon, stories of courage referred to earlier by some of the members.

Reg Harrison, a World War II bomber pilot, now 91, 92 years old, survived four crashes during his bomber command. I had a bit of a kinship with him. I saw a little excerpt of his story. Seeing that he trained in Yorkton where I'm from, the constituency I represent, and connection to that same airport, aerodrome back in the World War II days, is still active today as our municipal airport and I happen to fly out of quite regularly today. And some of the pictures that were shown in his video are reminiscent of what we see today. They're still probably one of the only hangars from the World War II era in that kind of condition, still usable, and utilized fully in Yorkton. And it is quite touching to hear his story and see his connection to my hometown of Yorkton.

But also again bittersweet in the wake of remembering Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and also the funeral of Corporal Nathan Cirillo today from Ottawa. So again sort of a bittersweet day in that regard. Thank yous to them.

And also, as has many around our side of the House have thanked family members, I'm very indebted to my family — my wife Leone, my daughters, Katelin who is finishing up her fourth year of a RN [registered nurse] program here in the city, soon to be practicing nursing in our province, and also my daughter Rayanne, newly married just over a year ago, a great son-in-law, Austin Krahenbil, and happy to announce publicly now that I'm going to be a granddad in April. And so she can let me . . . she's letting me say that publicly now. So I'm a bit goofy because it is my first grandchild. Grandma's really excited about it as well.

So looking forward to them helping to grow our province, especially in light of the fact that they moved back here from Ottawa. They had gone to Ottawa, Austin specifically for his training as a geologist on a hockey scholarship, and Rayanne working as a hair stylist out in Ottawa, managing a salon out there. But happy to report that they're both back here and living in the province and helping to grow our province one at a time. So that's great news.

Also thank you to my colleagues on this side of the House as well. We can't do this job without the support of our colleagues, along with the staff back in Yorkton, Laretta, Ingrid, and Rachelle, who have been with me for a number of months and years. Also the staff here in Regina, Michael, Selena, Chaelah, Brittany, and Ashley as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being 5 o'clock, this House stands recessed until 7 p.m. this evening.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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