



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

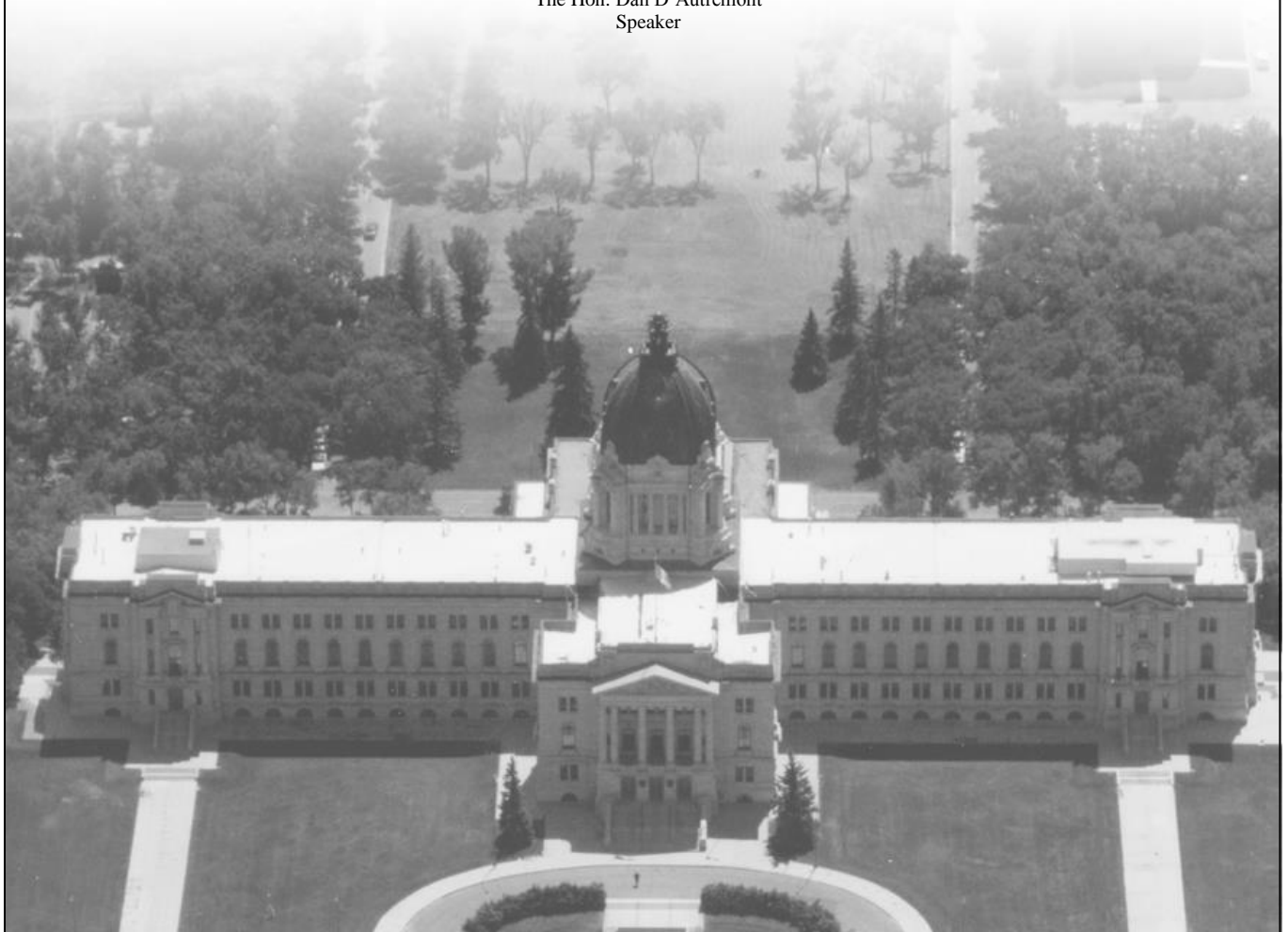
of the

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 |
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| Phillips, Kevin | SP | Melfort |
| Reiter, Hon. Jim | SP | Rosetown-Elrose |
| Ross, Laura | SP | Regina Qu’Appelle Valley |
| Sproule, Cathy | NDP | Saskatoon Nutana |
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| Tell, Hon. Christine | SP | Regina Wascana Plains |
| Tochor, Corey | SP | Saskatoon Eastview |
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| 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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I am pleased to introduce a number of guests who are joining us this morning seated in your gallery. And when I say their name, I'll maybe ask them to give us a wave so that we know who they are.

Mr. Speaker, this morning we have with us representatives of the pharmacy industry in this province. The Chair of the Pharmacists' Association of Saskatchewan, the board of directors, the Chair of the board, Christine Hrudka is here with us this morning as well as the executive director of the association, Dawn Martin; Dr. Roy Dobson, the acting assistant dean of pharmacy at the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition in Saskatoon; Spiro Kolitsas, the president of the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists; Justin Kosar, the vice-president of the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists; Ray Joubert, the registrar for the College of Pharmacists; Sue Mack Klinger, the program head of pharmacy technician program at Saskatchewan Polytechnic campus; and Jaris Swirovich, the president of the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists, Saskatchewan branch.

They're all here to hear the introduction, the first reading of amendments to *The Pharmacy Act* that will happen later today that will increase pharmacists' scope of practice to ensure that Saskatchewan people have greater and more timely access to health services in this province.

I want to thank each of them and the organizations that they represent for helping us to move these amendments forward and being in the position that we are in today where we will be able to hear first reading of the bill. And so I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to join with the minister in welcoming the delegation here to hear first reading on the amendments to *The Pharmacy Act*: Mr. Joubert, Dr. Roy Dobson, and a whole host of other people. And I look forward to actually hearing more about the Bill and connecting with these stakeholders to hear their thoughts. And we look forward to the Bill, and welcome to your legislature today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of introducing to you and through you, 29

grade 7 and 8 students from MacNeill Elementary School here in Regina. They're accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Alana Nelson. So everyone please give them a warm welcome here today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank you to all members. To you and through you, in the spirit of Violence Prevention Week which I proclaimed on Monday, I'd like to take a moment to recognize Dr. Jackson Katz who is seated in our gallery today.

Based in the United States, Dr. Katz is an internationally recognized speaker, author, and educator on gender violence prevention in schools, sports, and the military. He co-founded the Mentors in Violence Prevention program, the most widely used sexual and domestic violence prevention program in American colleges and professional sports. He's now part of a pilot program in the US [United States] Navy.

Dr. Jackson has also been creating a partnerships across the provinces and territories, between communities, corporations, and governments. He may be familiar with the BC [British Columbia] Lions, Be More Than a Bystander campaign. It engages men as allies to break the cycle and the silence of violence. He's speaking this afternoon at the University of Regina about male leadership in violence prevention, part of that institution's week-long look at violence awareness. Government officials will have a chance to meet with Dr. Katz as well while he is in the province.

Dr. Katz, we look forward to hearing your valuable insight, and I would ask that all members in the legislature join me in welcoming you to our legislature.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet I would be remiss if I didn't introduce someone special to me in the House. As everyone knows, behind every successful man there's a surprised woman, and she sits in your gallery. Joining me is my wife, Christine.

Many in the House will know Chris as a successful businesswoman, an excellent pharmacist, and a very, very strong advocate for her profession and the profession's role in the delivery of health care in this province. So I'm very proud of her, and I'm happy that she's joined us today. She's certainly the reason why I can be here today, and supports our family when I'm away. So I would ask all members of the legislature to welcome Christine to her legislature.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Minister of Justice in welcoming Dr. Katz to the Assembly. This is very, very important work, work which we are continually reminded of the importance of in combating and stemming violence that is gender based, Mr. Speaker. And so we welcome his role here in the province and wish him all the best in the work that he will be doing and fully support the initiatives. Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions as it relates to the unacceptable danger on Dewdney Avenue caused by the lack of planning by that government. Certainly this issue requires the immediate attention of that government to ensure safety. 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 and White City.

I so submit.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of better health care in Saskatchewan. The individuals who've signed this petition want to bring to the attention the following to this Legislative Assembly. Emergency room wait times in Saskatchewan have doubled since 2010. That's only four years ago. The government's own statistics show that patient safety is getting worse. Chronic short staffing is a problem throughout our health care system. Saskatoon City Hospital is underutilized, with patient rooms used as managers' offices, and an independent report shows that 2.2 billion of repairs are needed in hospitals and care facilities. And we know 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.

And so I'd like to read the prayer. The individuals that signed this:

Request that this Legislative Assembly take the following action: to cause the provincial government to recognize health care is getting worse under its watch and 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 pet project.

And, Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed this petition come from my riding, Saskatoon Nutana. And I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Screening Program for Breast Cancer

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As we reach the end of October, we would like to acknowledge the end of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed type of cancer for women in Saskatchewan, with an estimated 700 women diagnosed each year.

Mr. Speaker, we know that every woman screened is a potential life saved. Digital mammography equipment provides the ability to detect cancer in its early stages when the outcomes are better for the patients. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency provides mammography for more than 39,000 women each year through the screening program for breast cancer.

Mr. Speaker, approximately 30 per cent of the breast cancer screened cases are detected each year through this program. About three-quarters of the cases diagnosed through this program are in the early stages, affording women and their medical teams the most optimal ability for fighting this disease.

Because a doctor's referral is not needed, women can stay one step ahead by calling the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to make an appointment for this mammography. Mr. Speaker, I personally know this is not the most comfortable test, but I encourage all women to participate in the screening program for breast cancer because it saves lives.

To support our government's goal for better quality life for all Saskatchewan people, we approved funding of \$155.7 million in the 2014-2015 budget for Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to support enhanced access to cancer care and services. Mr. Speaker, we continue to put our patients first with top-quality cancer prevention and treatment services. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Nuit Blanche Saskatoon

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, on September 27th I had the pleasure of attending the inaugural Nuit Blanche Saskatoon. Nuit Blanche concept originated in Paris, and Nuit Blanche events have since taken place all over the world, including several other Canadian cities, but until this year the event had not taken place in Saskatchewan. Less than a year ago I remember Sean Shaw talking about how he wished Saskatoon could have a Nuit Blanche festival, and incredibly Sean helped make it a reality in just a few months.

Sean recruited several other individuals to the board: Heather Morrison, Mark Turner, Andrew Dickson, Chris Morin, Brett Suwinski, Kathleen Crowther, Trevor Pritchard, Nicole Lock, Sam Lock, Tara Reibin, DeeAnn Mercier, Thomas Dehod, and Rebecca Zakreski. This group of dedicated individuals with the assistance of many other talented volunteers created an incredible new arts and culture festival in Saskatoon.

Nuit Blanche took place in Saskatoon's Riversdale neighbourhood. It involved numerous dance, theatre, music, poetry, and art installations that entertained and wowed festival goers late into the night. Mr. Speaker, I know I am not alone in already looking forward to the second annual Nuit Blanche Saskatoon. I ask all members to join me in expressing our appreciation to the Nuit Blanche board and volunteers for bringing this new festival to our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

Official Opening of St. Louis Bridge

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am excited to announce that on October 24th the new St. Louis bridge officially opened. The original bridge was built in 1912 as a railway bridge, and the wings were added three years later to accommodate the automobile traffic.

The bridge was incapable of carrying primary weight loads and was the bottleneck that kept traffic from using Highway 2. Because it is in need of many repairs, it is now closed. Mr. Speaker, the new bridge is located 1.6 kilometres east of the old bridge on Highway 2 over the South Saskatchewan River.

This is a very exciting announcement, as the bridge completes the final link in a 683-kilometre-long primary weight corridor, which will allow the heaviest legal weights on Highway 2, from Assiniboia in the South, to La Ronge in the North. Its increased safety and dependability will benefit the entire province by encouraging trade and movement of goods and service, particularly for the agricultural producers in the area who frequently cross the river. The new bridge will also provide accessibility and growth in the community of St. Louis.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in celebrating the opening of the new St. Louis bridge and the completion of the Gateway to the North. Thank you.

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

Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to recognize that next month, November, is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. And, Mr. Speaker, it's that time of year when many of us start to grow moustaches for a great cause — Movember. Since 2003 people around the world have come together to raise funds and awareness for prostate and testicular cancer. To date the global Movember movement has raised more than \$574 million in 21 different countries.

I'm sure all of us can think of loved ones impacted by cancer or mental health challenges, which is why this is so important. Each year Saskatchewan people do their part, growing moustaches, raising dollars, and importantly, awareness. Movember isn't just about men's cancers. It now seeks to challenge the stigma many men face around mental health. This is so valuable. Men need to know that there's nothing tough about suffering in silence.

[10:15]

Mr. Speaker, members on both sides of this Assembly will be participating. I, for one, will be growing, to the dismay of my wife. Personally I'm aiming for a Lanny McDonald by month's end.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in thanking all the Mo Bros, Mo Sistas, the impressive local Movember organizing committee, and all that are committed to changing the face of men's health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Two Miles for Mary Radiothon

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 3rd, I had the great opportunity to attend the Two Miles for Mary radiothon and breakfast which was broadcast on 900 CKBI from the Kinsmen Heritage Centre in Prince Albert. This annual event raises money for the seniors' transportation program offered by the Prince Albert & District Community Service Centre. Mr. Speaker, this year's Two Miles for Mary fundraiser raised close to \$30,000 for the seniors' transportation program in Prince Albert.

Each year an honorary Mary is chosen from the seniors who use the program. Coincidentally this year's Mary, Mary Aspvik, is also named Mary. Mary has been using the seniors' transportation program for two years and had this to say about the program: "I like it, I really do. I wouldn't be without it. It helps the seniors who can't get around to get around with a car."

Mr. Speaker, this program provides safe, dependable, and affordable transportation for seniors, with local rides available for as little as \$4 per trip. The program not only provides local rides for seniors but also provides trips to locations within three miles of Prince Albert and rides to medical appointments in Saskatoon.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the organizers of Two Miles for Mary on their successful fundraiser and the Prince Albert & District Community Service Centre on providing this important service to the seniors of Prince Albert.

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

New Hip and Knee Treatment and Research Centre

Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, last Thursday marked the official opening of the new RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] Hip and Knee Treatment and Research Centre, which will serve Saskatchewan citizens living with osteoarthritis. The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region expects to provide about 2,200 hip or knee replacement procedures this year for Saskatchewan patients.

The new centre is a complete redesign of the previous multidisciplinary clinic for people with musculoskeletal problems. Now patients coming to the region who are prospective hip or knee replacement recipients will come to the centre for assessment and treatment. The result is a streamlined process that helps patients understand their options and uses

teamwork to provide the care they need with fewer delays.

Wait times for orthopedic care has already fallen sharply in Saskatchewan, and this innovative approach will reduce patient waits even more, Mr. Speaker. Orthopedic specialists will be on site at the centre to consult with patients and other health care providers. Patients will learn about their condition and what options are available at the centre. Those who end up needing surgery will receive post-operative therapy at the centre rather than in a hospital setting.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the RQHR and everyone at the clinic for the successful work to improve patient care. Thank you.

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

Annual Roughrider to Rough Rider Regimental Dinner

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Recently I had the pleasure, along with my colleagues from Regina Wascana Plains, Regina Dewdney, Regina South, and Regina Coronation Park to attend the second annual Roughrider to Rough Rider Regimental Dinner at RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] Depot Division in Regina.

The traditional regimental dinner was hosted by the Saskatchewan Roughriders and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This was a chance to celebrate the shared history of the RCMP and our Roughriders. Mr. Speaker, a roughrider is defined as a person who breaks horses to saddle. The Rough Rider Badge of Appointment was awarded for the first time to Sub Constable Yorke of the North West Mounted Police in 1874 and is still awarded today. The North West Mounted Police were often popularly known as the roughriders whether they were in insignia or not.

On September 6th, 1910, the Regina Rugby Club formed with a large number of North West Mounted Police as members. The club adopted the name Regina Roughriders in 1924 and was again renamed the Saskatchewan Roughriders in 1948. With over 100 years of shared history in Saskatchewan, members of the RCMP and the Riders met officially for just the second time at this dinner.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking these two wonderful organizations that share history for their many contributions to our province and congratulating them on a successful event. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Coverage for Surgery

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last spring, Laura Cone came to the legislature. She's 29 years old and she desperately needed surgery for endometriosis. Rather than waiting for years for a Canadian surgeon, Laura underwent her fifth and, hopefully, final surgery in Atlanta with one of the most highly qualified endometriosis surgeons in the world. The

surgery cost Laura \$33,000, and this government denied coverage for it. To the Premier: how can he look this woman in the face and defend the decision to saddle her with \$33,000 in debt for desperately needed surgery?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to meet with Ms. Cone in the spring. Certainly have a great deal of sympathy for what she has gone through for over a number of years.

Mr. Speaker, the ministry had been involved over some time, going back over a year in working with Ms. Cone, working with her physicians to find out the best course of action within the system in Canada.

I think members will know that when there are options within the publicly funded system in Canada, that are available in Canada, that that is, Mr. Speaker, that that's the process that we encourage in terms of out-of-province coverage before we would ever think about approving an out-of-country approval.

The information that had been provided to me through the ministry and the medical consultants is that this service, this type of surgery is available in Canada and so therefore the application was denied. It went through the appeal process. The appeal process found that the ministry had followed the normal course of action and, therefore, that's where we stood on that decision.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know how this Premier and this government can look at Laura in the face, hear her story, hear about the immense pain that she was in, and simply look the other way. I don't know how this Premier can stubbornly refuse to act when a world-renowned endometriosis expert says that Laura's condition, her condition was progressing so incredibly fast that she could not wait for years for surgery here in Canada. In fact, there are very few surgeons who are actually qualified to perform the type of surgery that Laura ended up needing in Atlanta, and none of those surgeons, Mr. Speaker, are here in Canada. There wasn't any other option for Laura, but the Premier and this government are looking away.

To the Premier: will he agree to meet with Laura today, to hear her story, to look at her documentation, to reverse the decision, and provide the support to Laura that she desperately needs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I have met with Ms. Cone in the spring. I'd be happy to meet with her again today. But, Mr. Speaker, the ministry, as we work through these types of approval processes, we do look first, look to see what specialists would be available in Canada before we look outside of the borders. It's not to say that we would be opposed to out-of-country approval, but first of all we look to see whether or not specialists are available within Canada.

What has been indicated by the medical consultants that we rely on to make these types of medical decisions is that specialists are available in Canada — in other provinces, though not in Saskatchewan, but in other provinces.

Those names were forwarded on to Ms. Cone and her physician, Mr. Speaker. They chose another course. We certainly have a great deal of sympathy in this type of situation, but we need to ensure that through any type of out-of-province approval that we look first to what's available in the Canadian system. And there were specialists available in the Canadian system.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, what Saskatchewan people cannot understand is how this government has untold millions, untold millions for its lean pet project, but it doesn't have \$33,000 to cover desperately needed surgery for a 29-year-old woman. Untold millions for an American lean consultant, \$3,500 per day for a Japanese sensei, for each Japanese sensei, \$600 per day for Japanese translators — no end of money, a bottomless pit, Mr. Speaker, for its lean pet project — but no money for a 29-year-old woman who urgently and desperately needed surgery. My question to the Premier: how can he justify that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition will know that through the work that we've done in Saskatchewan and lean, it has saved us nearly twice the amount of money that we've invested to this point, nearly \$60 million in savings just on the cost side. We know that lean is so much more about just the cost. In fact one of the members on this side spoke of the hip and knee treatment and research centre that reopened in Regina using lean principles which has helped to streamline that system. So we can use those dollars to reinvest.

For example I indicated yesterday that from 2009 until this year, Manitoba and Alberta have seen their blood supply inventory costs, their costs to CBS [Canadian Blood Services], increase by \$8 million each. Over the same time frame, our costs have lowered by \$13 million, and we've been able to reinvest those dollars to improve wait times, improve the care that we're able to provide.

Mr. Speaker, in these types of cases, certainly we have a great deal of sympathy. But there is a process that we look to see whether or not there are specialists in Canada in the publicly funded system, and in this case there would have been.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, documents that we've obtained show that this government is planning to spend another \$2.9 million on John Black's travel costs during the remainder of this toxic contract, a whopping \$2.9 million for an American consultant to travel to Saskatchewan so he can treat our senior health administrators with disrespect and tattle on leaders who would dare to question his opinion.

\$2.9 million for travel for John Black coming up in the near

future, but this government cannot scrounge together \$33,000 to cover urgently and desperately needed surgery for a 29-year-old woman. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier: how can he justify \$2.9 million in travel for John Black while he refuses to pay for a desperately needed surgery for a 29-year-old woman?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we, as all provinces, are looking to be more efficient within the health care system, knowing that the days of 7 and 9 per cent increases in health budgets are not realistic. We need to find more efficiencies within the system. That's why we've embarked more than any other province, but certainly other provinces are looking at incorporating lean into the health care system. And why are we doing this, Mr. Speaker? Because the results speak for themselves.

For example, Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region's mental health and addictions clinic reduced their wait-list from 400 clients to 9 clients, Mr. Speaker, a significant reduction. Sunrise Health Region, prior to some work that involved consultants from John Black, found that 61 per cent of colorectal surgery patients and 28 per cent of Caesarean section patients had not received a recommended antibiotic within 60 minutes of surgery. Obviously that's a huge patient concern. After we have incorporated some lean techniques, all patients in that health region, within 60 minutes, get the required antibiotics. It's better patient care. It's safer care, and it's saving us dollars in the long run, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we have covered in this Assembly how John Black's approach to this government's lean pet project simply is not working for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and not creating the type of culture that we actually need to have here when it comes to better health care.

Documents we've obtained also show that this government is planning, planning to give another \$1.3 million to John Black to cover administration costs. That's over and above the 2.9 million that this government will give to John Black for travel, for this toxic American lean consultant and this wasteful contract. Again, millions and millions of dollars for training that the minister admits isn't even tailored for Saskatchewan's needs. No end of money for the John Black consulting firm, but no money for Laura Cone's desperately needed surgery.

My question to the Premier: when will he put an end to this wasteful and toxic contract, focus on what matters, like covering surgery for Laura Cone?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we've said, the John Black and Associates contract will be ending in June of next year. In fact we've lowered the total amount that we estimated that we were going to spend by about two and a half million dollars, so the contract will be roughly \$36 million over a four, nearly four-year period. But in that time we've seen tremendous results that have allowed us to

then use those dollars to reinvest within the health care system.

For example, in RUH's [Royal University Hospital] emergency department, the time between patient arrival at the door and treatment was measured at one hour and 53 minutes, so nearly two hours. This has been reduced by approximately 51 per cent to approximately 57 minutes, thanks to the work of continuous improvement. This is just one example where we are providing better patient care, and frankly at a lower cost, Mr. Speaker, that we can then reinvest into the system.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken about the significant work, just as one example, of Blood Services, and what that has allowed us to do is to have the dollars to then reinvest in the system where, to the point Canada's, Saskatchewan's air . . . the helicopter ambulance that we have, STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society], for the first time in Canada, that service now has blood products on the helicopter so that transfusions can begin earlier. That is because we now have the dollars that we can reinvest because of the savings that we're seeing.

[10:30]

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

Costs and Benefits of the Lean Initiative

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's blood example has absolutely nothing to do with John Black, and the minister knows it.

Almost everything about this government's approach to its lean pet project is appalling, Mr. Speaker. But what is especially appalling is to learn that John Black spent a quarter of his time and budget solely dealing with the optics and the politics of lean. And here's a quote from John Black to the deputy minister of Health and several other senior level officials. It says:

JBA has spent 25 per cent at least of its time and budget either responding to requests for data as a result of the opposition's questions and of attempting to make sense and get clarification of many unsubstantiated comments and rumours about its consultants and modus operandi.

That alone should have been enough to fire this American lean consultant, spending 25 per cent of his time and money consumed by the politics and the optics.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier: how on earth can he justify that John Black spends 25 per cent of his time in simply dealing with the optics for this government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to assume that the Leader of the Opposition wants me to not have the answer when he asks the question regarding the JBA [John Black and Associates] contract. They've asked questions through written questions and other means here in the House. We obviously have to collect that information. Some of that information is held by JBA and so, yes, from time to time we pick up the phone and say, can you give us information so that we can provide the answers? Mr.

Speaker, it's . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order on both sides, please. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, so these are, you know . . . I'll speak to what we are seeing and why we have decided to invest in this and why other organizations in Canada, and frankly around North America, are doing the same within the health system. A blood clotting tool — so if you think about how important this is for a patient — a blood clotting tool was previously used only 20 per cent of the time in the hospital in Estevan. Now because of lean and the work that the front-line staff have done, it's used 100 per cent of the time for patients that may be at risk of a blood clot. Important for those patients, but it's work that we could replicate all across the province. It's better patient care.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier: did he know that John Black spends 25 per cent of his time and budget on dealing with the politics and the optics of the lean pet project?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Again, Mr. Speaker, so here's another issue that we needed to fix. In Five Hills Health Region, distributing the wrong medication, distributing the wrong medication. So errors in distributing medication went from 17 a year, Mr. Speaker — can you imagine the risk that the patient has been at? — 17 times a year in one hospital in the mental health unit at Five Hills, happened on an annual basis. So that was before. Now we need to fix that. We applied some tools to that, continuous improvement. The front-line staff developed tools to fix that to where last year we went from 17 to 1, Mr. Speaker. And we need to get to zero. We need to reduce all of those defects, but that shows dramatic improvements.

Defects in blood work had been reduced in Saskatoon Cancer Centre — imagine, cancer care — from 35 per cent times where there was defects in the blood work, has been reduced from 35 per cent to zero in the last year, Mr. Speaker. This is work that we need to replicate across the entire system.

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

Smart Meter Program

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we know now that in August 2012, SaskPower sent a delegation to Philadelphia to investigate concerns about house fires related to Sensus smart meters. Was the minister aware of that trip at the time? Yes or no?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, as is very typical with the NDP [New Democratic Party] in this House when they present information, we should look at it very, very carefully. They

only tell about half the story at best.

The memo that the member is referring to from yesterday, SaskPower saw it and received assurances from Sensus. Sensus had upgraded the meters from a 3.2 version to 3.3 version, and they indicated that this upgrade addressed all of the concerns. Sensus also provided written assurances to that effect. SaskPower officials agreed and advised that we continue to proceed with the installation of the meters.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we've always come to realize in this legislature, we should only take a portion of what the NDP say because they don't want to read the remainder of ... [inaudible].

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So the minister says the company that sold us faulty, dangerous smart meters said they were safe. Nice, Mr. Speaker. That's real due diligence from that minister.

Throughout this crisis, that minister has been adamant that he wasn't aware of any safety concerns. But yesterday once a briefing to that minister was exposed, his story changed and he revealed all of a sudden that, yes, he was aware of safety concerns. My question to the minister: why was he pretending otherwise?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the indications within this memo are very, very clear. SaskPower went and had a look at these meters, the 3.2 versus the 3.3 version. They indicated from there that they still were fully supportive of the installation of these meters going forward. That is the advice that we acted upon.

If you look back at all of this information, it's very, very clear. We took all of the appropriate actions, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, when the problems came to light, we instructed SaskPower to remove those meters, and that is taking place, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to that, we've sought from Sensus to recover all the money, and that has taken place, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, we have put together three different reports that have indicated where the problems were with those meters, Mr. Speaker, and those actions are being acted upon by SaskPower.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the memo, the briefing note and the briefing had nothing to do with 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5. All it says is that Sensus meters were causing fires in Philadelphia, Mr. Speaker. We know that officials travelled to Philadelphia to learn about these issues with Sensus. We know that in September 2012, they decided to pull 400 meters from Hanley because of safety concerns. And we know that that minister was provided a briefing note and a face-to-face briefing by then CEO [chief executive officer]. Yet that SaskPower minister claims that he can't remember any of that. It's absolutely unbelievable.

So to the minister: was he negligent? Was he incompetent? Was he asleep at the switch? How can he not remember?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, when we are provided with information, we act upon that information. SaskPower came to us and said that there was problems associated with these meters, but those problems had been addressed by Sensus. And if you look in the report that was conducted just recently, Mr. Speaker, it outlines the stages of that. It says that there was a 3.2 meter that was tested in the test phase of these meters. And then they upgraded from there to a 3.3 meter that they believed, and SaskPower agreed, addressed all of the concerns, Mr. Speaker.

That is in sharp contrast to how you folks have handled problems in the past in this province. Any time, Mr. Speaker, any time there were problems in Saskatchewan when they were in government, they did their best to cover up every single thing until it was dragged out of them in court after six years of court action.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that SaskPower minister said, "If there was information presented and we didn't act on it, clearly there would be a problem with that and I would resign."

Well that minister was presented with information about major safety concerns related to Sensus a full two years ago. He ignored it. He didn't take it seriously. He didn't act upon it. He didn't ask necessary questions and he didn't demand protection. So by his own standard, and by the standard of ministerial responsibility, the member for Kindersley should be resigning from cabinet. Will he finally do the right thing and do so here today?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, when the information was presented to us about concerns, of course there would have been questions asked. Are these meters still safe? And they indicated, SaskPower officials indicated to us, because of the changes that Sensus had made in the meters from a 3.2 version to a 3.3 version, that the concerns that SaskPower had, had been addressed. And they advised to proceed.

Now is the member opposite suggesting that we did not, should not have accepted that advice at that time? And had that been the case, then I think you have a point. But we acted upon the advice that was given, Mr. Speaker, at the time. That advice said proceed, and that's exactly what happened.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, when Philadelphia was dealing with these issues a couple of years ago, they didn't look for a 3.3 or a 3.4 or a 3.5 meter from Sensus. They abandoned the company that had put people at risk.

That minister has been pretending that he didn't know about,

and claiming and stating that he didn't know anything about safety concerns. Why has he been doing that?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, it's clear here that when the member opposite is asked what he would have done, what did he respond by saying? These are technical questions that politicians shouldn't be in a position to be directing.

But yet, Mr. Speaker, we should be the ones that make all of the decisions with respect to that. We shouldn't take the advice of SaskPower officials. We shouldn't take the advice of experts in the area. We should just say, stop right now because of the concerns that you say existed that were addressed through the report, Mr. Speaker, that were addressed through SaskPower officials. It's clear the member opposite doesn't know what he's talking about.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it is this government's responsibility to protect people's safety, and this minister has failed. Two days ago, Mr. Speaker, two days ago the Premier was asked if it concerns him that the SaskPower minister didn't know about smart meter problems in other jurisdictions. Well we know that is not the case, Mr. Speaker. The Premier said, "Well I didn't either. I mean we were aware about the smart meter installation. I wasn't googling about them either, neither was any other minister."

He went on to say, "If this information is not readily available, you assume the appropriate processes are undertaken. It's not something you're going to go out and google perhaps and find out."

We now know, Mr. Speaker, that this minister knew about safety concerns, knew about fires, back in October of 2012, Mr. Speaker. He didn't bother to follow up. He didn't bother to ask the right questions. He didn't ensure Saskatchewan's safety was first and foremost. It's time for this Premier to demonstrate some leadership and to fire this minister. Will he do that today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it is very clear from the very memo that members read selectively from yesterday, that the minister took the advice of SaskPower. SaskPower identified an issue and then SaskPower said, well he said he was not aware of safety concerns because that is the briefing he received from SaskPower.

Now, Mr. Speaker, his own deputy leader set a standard for this kind of decision making two days ago. When that member, the deputy leader was asked, what would you do in a similar circumstance? The Deputy Leader for the NDP said, "I mean, those are technical, technical questions . . .". He said it twice that, you know, politicians wouldn't be in the position to . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. It would be nice if I could actually hear what is being said. So please, let's listen to the answer and

when there's a question, let's listen to the question. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — If the Leader of the Opposition has problems then with the conduct of the minister, he should turn in his seat and talk to the deputy leader who advised that the minister would do exactly what he did, Mr. Speaker, to not intervene . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Again, members, it's extremely difficult to hear the response. Can we please listen to it before other actions need to be taken. I recognize the Premier.

[10:45]

Hon. Mr. Wall: — The memo that the deputy leader and the Leader of the Opposition talked breathlessly about says to the minister, there is not an issue any longer. Based on that advice, the minister proceeds. Let's check on what the Deputy Leader of the NDP would say about that conduct by the minister. He would say that politicians shouldn't be in a position to be directing technical — he repeats it — technical questions. That is exactly what happened in this case, Mr. Speaker.

Safety has been a priority for this government throughout this process. So has been getting back the money for taxpayers. So has full disclosure of the issue, Mr. Speaker. And that standard, Mr. Speaker, is new to the province because whenever there was an issue while they were in power, their first choice was to hide it, to cover up, to hope they'd get away with it. As you can see by their numbers today, they didn't get away with it, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 151 — *The Pharmacy Amendment Act, 2014*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 151, *The Pharmacy Amendment Act, 2014* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health has moved that Bill No. 151, *The Pharmacy Amendment Act, 2014* be now introduced and 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?

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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 Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, it's my great pleasure today to stand in my place to respond to the Speech from the Throne. Mr. Speaker, it's appropriate that I begin my comments, as members before me have done on both sides of the House, with reflections on the events that took place on the day of our Speech from the Throne.

On that day, October 22, 2014, we as Canadians were challenged. Our institutions, the National War Memorial and Parliament Hill, were assaulted, casting a shadow across our nation's capital. Public service buildings, Canadian Forces bases, and legislatures across this country locked their doors to protect those who offer their careers to the public service and the betterment of our country.

As our institutions were assailed, so too were our ideals. The attack was a challenge not just to us as a nation but to the very principle for which we have built those hallowed institutions — principles of democracy, of freedom, and of the reverence which should accompany a life given to public service.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, last week our nation lost two brave individuals in the service of their country: Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo. I add my name to the millions of Canadians who mourn these noble servicemen and who thank them and their families for the sacrifice which they have made. Proudly the nation has emerged from this tragedy not one characterized by terror but instead, Mr. Speaker, strong and united. Our commitment to peace, order, and good government was not shaken and, if anything, it has been strengthened as we see the honour, the sacrifice of Patrice Vincent and Nathan Cirillo by living up to the values for which they gave their lives.

To this end, Mr. Speaker, it was no small gesture that our province went ahead and delivered its Speech from the Throne. By welcoming Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor to our Chamber, by inviting guests of the free press to report on and scrutinize the message she delivered, and by involving uniformed members of our Canadian Forces to participate in Saskatchewan's ceremony, our province confirmed that Canada has not and will not be deterred in its commitment to democracy.

Mr. Speaker, before turning to the contents of the speech itself, I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who made that event possible: Their Honours, my colleagues in the House, our Sergeant-at-Arms and his staff, the Legislative Assembly staff,

our police and protective services, and of course members of the Canadian Forces, past and present.

Mr. Speaker, as I continue and as is customary, there is a number of people that I would like to thank before giving my comments on the Speech from the Throne. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my wife and my family for standing by me as I serve the people of Saskatoon Northwest. Christine is with us today. I've introduced her earlier on. And as most members will attest, we can't do this job, Mr. Speaker, without the love and support of our families. So I want to again thank Christine for that and for allowing me to be here and to serve the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my children in particular. We have four — Jeremy, Kayla, Stephen, and Allison — all of whom are in university and, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say all of whom are planning a future in Saskatchewan, which is all the more important for Christine and I because we have one granddaughter, our little granddaughter, Mia, who's almost four years old. And she is certainly the light of our life. And we're so pleased that our children are living in Saskatchewan so that we can see them grow and see their families grow and see our great granddaughter grow.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take the opportunity to thank my constituency staff. Kelly Merriman is my constituency assistant. She does a great job of keeping the office running in a straight line in Saskatoon, and I want to thank her personally for that. I also want to thank my constituency association, my president, and the other members of my executive who help run the executive association and who have been very supportive in my career as I moved into provincial politics.

In my office upstairs, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my office staff: Dawn, Jennifer, Marina, Mary, and Reagan. It's certainly an honour and a privilege to have them working in my office. They certainly keep the office moving in the right direction as well, Mr. Speaker. And without their support, I wouldn't be able to do the job that I do.

I also want to thank the individuals over at SaskBuilds, which is my other responsibility, led by Rupen Pandya. They provide excellent advice to me in my role as the Minister of SaskBuilds, and I want to extend a personal thanks to them for their help and guidance.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the voters of Saskatoon Northwest. It is certainly an honour and a privilege to represent them here. I hope I live up to their expectations and certainly look forward to their continuing support, so I wanted to thank them.

Mr. Speaker, it is a welcome and appropriate coincidence that we begin our legislative session at this time of the year. Situated as we are in the month of Thanksgiving and with the days drawing closer to Remembrance Day, it's timely that we begin our discussions on the future of this province mindful of what good fortune it is to live in this great province. It is clear upon reading the Speech from the Throne that we are living in a time of unparalleled promise and opportunity. This province is strong. Its communities, businesses, and renown are growing, as is our confidence in its future. It is a province in ascension.

More and more we are taking a leadership role in Confederation and at forums across the country, ranging from discussions on interprovincial trade and commerce to a meeting of federal, provincial, and territorial ministers from which I recently returned where Saskatchewan led the discussion on a matter to improve access to justice, which is something which is very important to me personally and my ministry, Mr. Speaker.

More people than ever before are choosing Saskatchewan to call home. For those like me who grew up in Saskatchewan, this is a welcome sight. We have always known the benefits of this great province, and we have had potential above what we are achieving.

From the very genesis of this province in fact, Saskatchewan has been heralded as a land of opportunity, and this was more than mere advertising. Long before the establishment of Saskatchewan as an independent province, the merchants, artists, and governments of Eastern Canada and Europe knew about the land called Saskatchewan and heard narratives of its great province. For one, there existed a prophecy at the turn of the 20th century that Saskatchewan was destined to become a land of 800 million souls.

One evidence of this prophecy comes in an anthology of poetry called, *Songs of the Great Dominion*, published in London in 1889 by, coincidentally, the firm of a man named Walter Scott. In it while listing features of a young Canada, the editor wrote, “Her valley of the Saskatchewan alone, it has been scientifically computed, will support 800 million.” And who are we to argue with the destiny that’s been scientifically computed? We do know that we are seeing a level of population growth unmatched since the formation of this province. In 1905 our province held 236,000 people, by 1930 there were over 900,000 people. Perhaps such growth allows for such predictions.

For our part our government has set a more reasonable yet still ambitious goal. In the Saskatchewan plan for growth, we envision a province of 1.2 million people by the year 2020. Meeting this goal will be a testament to everyone in Saskatchewan, from the businesses who continue to create jobs and recruit workers, down to the neighbours that welcome new families to their streets and their communities. And at the same time, the Government of Saskatchewan will have a role to play. In accordance with the traditions of the Throne Speech, our government’s direction for the upcoming session has now been laid out. It includes many initiatives and announcements that are new and exciting.

The new-growth tax incentive for the creation of new corporate and head office jobs stands out as one example, Mr. Speaker. Creating opportunities for management positions will allow for career advancement for industry professionals, develop our service industries, drive demand for higher education, and further diversify our provincial economy. At the same time, I believe that these initiatives contained in the Throne Speech are what the Saskatchewan people should and have come to expect from our government. While we continue to seek innovation in the public service and encourage innovation in the private sector, the speech is not one comprised of surprises but rather of keeping promises.

Mr. Speaker, in a speech on parliamentary reform in 1831, Lord

Thomas Macaulay imparted the following wisdom, “We must judge . . . government by its general tendency, not by happy accidents.” There is no doubt that we have benefited from the province’s good fortunes since 2007, but we’d be wrong to ascribe the province’s marked upswing to a happy accident independent of leadership. How do we determine the effect of a government upon the future of the province? Thinking about such matters, it is worthwhile to take heed of Aristotle’s words in chapter 5, Book II of *The Physics*, when he determined “. . . we note that some things follow upon others uniformly or generally, and it is evidently not such things that we attribute to chance or luck.”

It is to these factors that we must turn our attention. For example, Mr. Speaker, important strides have been accomplished in the province’s health care sector. Indicative of these changes is the fact that a number of patients waiting more than three months of surgery is down 81 per cent. Moreover, the number of doctors is up more than 400 and the number of nurses up more than 2,600. Is this but a happy accident, or are these decisions underlying this trend? One could ascribe it simply to chance, but that would be inaccurate. For we know in the health field that certain outcomes can follow upon others, as Aristotle said, uniformly or generally.

In this instance improved outcomes for patients fall from the government’s focused attention to bring wait times down. Through initiatives like the patient-first review, the Saskatchewan surgical initiative and the Urgent Action Fund investments, we’ve seen outcomes for patients improve. And the list goes on.

We notice conditions on our highways continuing to get better for motorists. Again we ask, is this merely a happy accident or are our highways improved, or do we have reason to believe this government has paid careful attention to investing in roads and infrastructure? In this situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would be again be inaccurate to ascribe these improvements to chance or luck. For we understand that when record investments are made into highway construction and maintenance — \$4.3 billion since 2008, Mr. Deputy Speaker — it generally follows that road conditions improve.

This Throne Speech highlights many of the changes we’ve seen from these record investments. It includes improvements to Highways 6, 7, 16, and 39. This includes among other major projects, the Regina bypass — the largest road infrastructure project in the history of this province. The bypass promises to make travel around Regina faster and safer and to the continued growth of the GTH [Global Transportation Hub].

It also includes a partnership with Ottawa and the city of Saskatoon on a P3 [public-private partnership] bridge project, and an offer to do the same in Prince Albert. Of course, this is not the only P3 project under way. SaskBuilds is leading procurement on a number of P3 projects, including the new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford integrated correction facility, a new 225-bed long-term care centre in Swift Current, the Regina bypass, and nine joint-use elementary schools.

[11:00]

A P3 approach to these projects allows the innovation and competition of the private sector to deliver savings for taxpayers on public projects while at the same time bringing them in on time and on budget. All the while SaskBuilds will continue to follow Canadian best practices to ensure transparency and accountability. It is also worth noting for clarity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our interest in P3s is not ideological. A P3 is only pursued where due diligence indicates that it's an appropriate decision or it delivers value for money. Many and most projects in this province will still be completed through conventional means.

Continuing on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we see accomplishments in other sectors. Our province's post-secondary institutions are producing first-class research and world-class graduates. Furthermore we see these young graduates choosing to stay in Saskatchewan to start their careers and their families, and I count my children among them.

It is not merely by happy accident that Saskatchewan's young people are choosing to stay. Our government has also paid particular attention to seeing that the economy can offer job openings and opportunities. Our government also introduced measures to help students, including the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings and, importantly, the graduate retention program. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the graduate retention program has now provided \$130 million in rebates to more than 50,000 students, and so we have reason to believe that this is not merely by chance that young people choose to stay in this province.

Mr. Speaker, our agricultural sector is strong, contributing 50,000 direct and indirect jobs to our provincial economy. In this, immense credit is due to our hard-working farm families who have struggled against difficult weather and delayed seeding and threatened harvests.

As I speak on this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm reminded of the comments of Jonathan Swift who wrote in *Gulliver's Travels*, whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind and do more essential work to his country than the whole race of politicians together. While this may well be the case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm confident there is still a role for government to help our farmers, ranchers, and producers. A partnership with Parkland Regional College is one of those measures helping a new generation of farmers to learn some of farming's essential tasks.

At the same time, SaskTel's investment to improve Internet and cellphone service can make a massive difference in rural Saskatchewan, especially during times like harvest when farmers are using their phones to coordinate pickups of grain, parts, and importantly lunch from inside the cabin of their combine.

There are also important initiatives coming out of the Ministry of Justice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over which I have particular interest. Legislation will be introduced that will improve the functioning and fairness of our province's justice system. With respect to these bills, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll reserve the majority of my comments until their introduction.

Notwithstanding this direction, the Throne Speech does speak to a number of these important initiatives.

The counsel for children was established this year within the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee. This program will ensure that children in protection hearings can have a lawyer appointed to them so that their voice can be heard by the court on matters affecting their future.

Important stakeholders have voiced their thoughts respecting this program, which may be of interest to members. The child and youth advocate, in a media release following the budget, was heard to have said he was very happy that the government is establishing a program for independent legal representation for children and youth in child welfare court proceedings. In a follow-up interview with the *Leader-Post*, he was quoted as saying he was pretty excited about the new program.

Other stakeholders have shared the advocate's excitement. Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan on March 20th posted on Facebook, "Great news for children and youth requiring representation announced in yesterday's budget." Their executive director subsequently told the *Leader-Post* the program was a very welcome addition. We are encouraged by this positive feedback as we certainly believe the program will have a meaningful impact in the lives of some of our province's most vulnerable citizens, its children and youth.

Similarly, another group our government is committed to assisting is victims of crime. Looking at Lord Macaulay, as Lord Macaulay said, at the general tendencies of a government, we see the Ministry of Justice once again increasing support for victims.

Last year the Throne Speech spoke to our province-wide expansion of police-based victim services, making these vital services available throughout our province. This year we had the opportunity to enhance the victims compensation program, the most significant enhancement since the program's inception in 1992. The victims compensation program assists victims primarily with immediate expenses after a violent crime and during the criminal justice program. Resulting from these enhancements, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the maximum compensation level has increased from \$25,000 to \$100,000. Maximum compensation for funeral expenses has increased, and family members are eligible for counselling and compensation in more circumstances. There are in addition to the enhancement previously made last June.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, yesterday I also had the opportunity to introduce amendments to *The Victims of Domestic Violence Act* to allow the justice system to better protect victims of interpersonal violence and abuse, making faster and firmer protections available in more situations. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would submit that when examining the general tendencies of our government, that list must certainly include a commitment to supporting victims of crime.

Furthermore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are exploring innovative ways to improve the functioning of our justice system. *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Act* is being amended to improve enforcement mechanisms. Additionally, the Throne Speech makes reference to Bills 145 and 146 concerning *The*

Fee Waiver Act. Court fees are a common requirement in commencing a legal action. These bills expand the circumstances in which fees can be waived, allowing fee waivers in all three levels of Saskatchewan courts, thereby making the justice system more accessible to low-income residents and making for a fair and more just society.

There are a number of issues that we could explore to find a similar result. It's not merely by chance that the province has changed so drastically since 2007. Yet among these, none stand out quite as much as the growth in our provincial economy. The statistics, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are impressive: a record high in employment, a record low in unemployment, average weekly earnings have increased. And as before, we dismiss the possibility that these changes are merely a happy accident.

When a government maintains its commitment to sound fiscal management by presenting seven straight balanced budgets and announcing an eighth, when debt payments are made and a vision is laid out to cut the provincial debt in half in the 2007 level by 2017, and when governments show a commitment to using best practices when investing in public infrastructure, we know that it falls and credit markets respond favourably. Therefore it is more than luck that Saskatchewan today holds the highest possible credit rating, a AAA.

The same is true when exploring the reasons behind the province's economic growth. Government policy can have a significant impact on the trajectory of a province's economy, and there are effects we can predict that follow, generally or uniformly, from policy choices. For example we know that, generally speaking, taxes create what social sciences term dead weight losses that are a hindrance on the efficient functioning of an economy. It's worth noting that since 2007 the provincial tax paid by a family of four has fallen by 93 per cent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan already stands as an export and trade pioneer. Recent Statistics Canada numbers confirm a positive outlook with wholesale trade numbers jumping nearly 11 per cent in August on a seasonally adjusted, year-by-year basis.

It is undoubtedly the case that government policy can affect the health of exporting industries. That is why in the Throne Speech we see measures designed to help Saskatchewan businesses that are reaching across borders to compete in world markets. Noteworthy among these is the growth incentive tax tied to the creation of new jobs by manufacturers and processors as they expand their sales out of the province.

At the same time, new inroads are being made into international markets. The Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership carried out 42 trade missions to 27 countries in 2013.

In Asia, consumers are fuelling demand for Saskatchewan goods, including high quality meats and grains, and industries are clamouring for our fuel and fertilizer products. This region will continue to be a strategic priority for our government. Accordingly we look forward to receiving and looking to the recommendations of the Saskatchewan-Asia trade council and the advice they will provide on trade, recruitment, innovation, and investment. We do these things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as Aristotle pointed out, there are outcomes that we have

discovered to follow generally or uniformly from choices that government can make.

When looking to how to develop an economy that is competitive, efficient, and sustainable, there are few matters more important than the trade of goods and services. It is of absolute importance that government pay attention to the state of trade and make efforts to make it freer and fairer. This fact has been recognized for as long as the practice of economics has been studied. Given the character of our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and our economy and especially the prominence of agriculture and resource sectors, our trade agreements have become very important. The Throne Speech appropriately highlights these agreements and the benefits they bring to Saskatchewan workers.

While respecting how important our trade agreements are in a resource-rich and agricultural province, our government is committed to ensuring opportunities for local businesses are maximized. To this end we have established Priority Saskatchewan and are actively meeting with local businesses to consult on how to ensure a level playing field for local companies.

Furthermore, our province recently received encouraging news that the World Trade Organization shares the view of the Government of Saskatchewan that American mandatory country of origin labelling unfairly discriminates against Canadian cattle and hog exports. Our government supports the federal government pursuing further action if necessary to address this situation.

Mr. Speaker, these are only a sampling of the issues that we'll address in the upcoming session which I am certain will yield important discussions on our province's future. Yet as we look at the Throne Speech, we are wise to adopt the lens of Lord Macaulay and distinguish between general tendencies and happy accidents. It is not a happy accident that wait lists are down, that roads are improved, that supports for victims are being enhanced, that Saskatchewan's young people are staying, and that our economy and province is strong. These trends are at the heart of our government's vision for the future of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I was told a story recently, which may in fact be more fable, but nonetheless imparts an important message for legislators and societies. According to the story, there existed in a tropical plateau a delicious sort of fruit tree. The dilemma for those interested in the fruit however was that the fruit grew very high up and the tree was covered in large spikes that made it impossible to climb by human or beast.

These trees, archaeologists determined, always appeared next to a different sort of tree that itself would have had no protection and was therefore easy climbable and hence bore no fruit for human benefit. Experts assumed the plants were compatible. They soon discovered however that there was no ecological or biological explanation for why these trees grew together. What could have caused the trees to grow in such a fashion, they wondered. The answer to this mystery, Mr. Speaker, of course is that whenever the fruit trees sprouted naturally, the community of indigenous people to the area would plant a sapling of another easily climbable tree beside it.

The remarkable fact is that these trees took decades, more than any lifetime, to mature. And even though the planters would conceivably see no benefit from their efforts, they still endeavoured to plant so that future generations could assess the fruits of their labour. Regardless of how much of this anecdote is meant to be fable, the story is a positive one and offers insight into how prosperous societies should be governed.

Relatedly, Mr. Speaker, there's an old Greek proverb of which a former lieutenant governor, Lynda Haverstock, was fond. It says, a civilization flourishes when people plant trees whose shade they will never sit under. In the same way as our previous story, it intimates how we should approach the task of planning for Saskatchewan's future.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech is one piece in that plan and speaks to our government's direction for the upcoming session. At the same time, it is another affirmation of the general tendencies of our government and a sign of our long-term vision for this great province, a Saskatchewan that is prosperous, fair, and strong. Mr. Speaker, I'll be supporting the direction of the Throne Speech and supporting the government motion. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to the Throne Speech on the fourth session of the 27th legislation.

Before I continue on the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say some other things. Mr. Speaker, as each day passes we must never forget those that serve and protect us and all the people of this great country — our military forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, police officers, firefighters, and all responders to all and any tragedies. I also want to add my condolences on behalf of my family to the families of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo from the tragic events that occurred in Quebec and Ottawa this year.

[11:15]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to thank my wife who is always there supporting me. Sheila has supported me through several campaigns as well as supported me while I'm doing my MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] duties, which takes me away from home quite a bit, and she doesn't get to eat my great cooking. I would also like to thank my daughter, Shanaya, who has supported me and has door knocked with me since she was 12 years old and has never, ever said no when I've asked her. Lastly I would like to thank the people of Meewasin, who have given me the opportunity to represent them here in the Legislative Assembly. What an honour it has been.

I have lived in Saskatoon for over 55 years and specifically Meewasin area for over 30-plus years. Mr. Speaker, I have been a board member of the Meewasin Valley Authority for the last couple of years, which was established in 1979 to oversee and be sure that the riverbank is accessible to everyone. Prior to 1979 there was one crescent, Spadina, which the houses backed the river and you can't get access to the river there. It is such a

beautiful sight, the South Saskatchewan River in Saskatoon. And I'm fortunate that Meewasin constituency has . . . The whole east boundary is the river, so when I'm out door knocking, I have the privilege of overseeing the river and the beauty that it . . . [inaudible] . . . to Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, there are several themes to Throne Speech I would like to speak about. Mr. Speaker, in June employment hit a high record of 577,000 people working in our great province, and in July unemployment hit a record low of 3.2 per cent, the lowest employment rate ever recorded in Saskatchewan. In September Saskatchewan had the lowest unemployment rate, the fastest rate of job creation anywhere in Canada.

Our province has a balanced budget for the I believe seventh time. Moody's recently upgraded Saskatchewan's credit rating to AAA, their highest possible rating. Mr. Speaker, since 2007 Saskatchewan exports have increased by 63 per cent while manufacturing shipments have climbed by more than 50 per cent.

Saskatchewan's population is now at an all-time high of over 1.125 million people, which the goal is to reach 1.2 million by 2020. That represents an increase of more than 123,000 people in the past seven years, a far cry from the previous seven years when Saskatchewan population actually declined.

Mr. Speaker, the first new potash mine to be built in the province of Saskatchewan in 40 years, the K+S Legacy project near Bethune is under construction, while multi-billion dollars are being spent on the expansions of the existing mines, are coming on stream again. Uranium production is also increasing with the opening of the Cameco Cigar Lake mine, the first new uranium mine to be built in Saskatchewan in over a decade.

I was also very privileged, Mr. Speaker, to have a tour of the McArthur River mine site with our Australian delegates that were here in the spring. Ryan Baerg, one of Cameco's employees, took that Easter long weekend and came with us and made sure we got a very good tour of the uranium mine, and it was very, very pleasing to be able to go and see that mine. I had never been underground in one of those mines before. And I know all of the Australians have sent me emails back, thanking us for the tour of the mine site and how they really enjoyed it. And we all know that Cameco is doing research right now into producing a mine in Australia, in Western Australia where some of the delegates were from, or I think all of them are from there.

And I had the privilege of going to Australia myself with my wife. And when we were on vacation in Australia, of course I went to the legislative building in Western Australia in Perth and met several colleagues or several Australian MLAs and MLC [Member of the Legislative Council], which is the upper house. And after that I was privileged to meet with the minister of petroleum and mining, and we had some very good discussions about companies like BHP, etc., and how they operate. And I got to explain to him how Cameco has been such a great company for the people of Saskatchewan and Canada, as far as that goes.

Also, Mr. Speaker, to help meet our government's goal of doubling exports by 2020, it will introduce a new-growth tax

incentive tied to the creation of new jobs by the manufacturers and processors as they expand their sales outside Saskatchewan. In the months ahead, our government will undertake trade missions to key international markets while continuing to support the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, STEP, which carried out 42 trade missions to 27 countries in 2013, most of those under the leadership of Lionel LaBelle, who is now part of the Sask initiatives and the CEO.

Mr. Speaker, the comprehensive European trade agreement, CETA [Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement], will open many new markets for Saskatchewan exports. The Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement will give Saskatchewan exporters equal footing with their European and American counterparts in South Korea's \$1.3 trillion economy.

Our government has taken a leadership role in enhancing the dispute resolution mechanism within Canada's agreement on international trade barriers that remain in place between provinces, and this must change. Through the New West Partnership, Saskatchewan is working with Alberta and British Columbia to harmonize labour standards and occupational health and safety regulations. Priority Saskatchewan, a new agency, is leading a cross-government review of current tendering practices. To provide further support to local businesses, the Ministry of Central Services has launched the new SaskTenders website. I'm glad to see that happen.

Mr. Speaker, since 2008 ministries and Crown corporations have spent close to \$16 billion on a range of capital projects including hospitals, highways, schools, and power plants. For me the completion of twinning of Highway 11 from Saskatoon to P.A. [Prince Albert] has made many of my trips to Candle Lake to my cottage a lot safer. I used to dread when it was one lane in each direction and you'd get some people would be passing 20, 30 vehicles at a time. Now it's nice, easy sailing all the way to P.A. and through P.A. Also since the government covered the cost of rebuilding the bridge in Prince Albert, I get through P.A. in minutes. And if I can hit every light synchronized, I don't even stop when I'm going through P.A. sometimes.

I have already had calls from relatives from St. Louis and Hoey, from relatives thanking us, the government, for building the new bridge in St. Louis. And I'm sure I'll get more calls, as that's basically where my mother and father were born, was St. Louis and Hoey.

I personally want to thank this government for helping finance a new commuter bridge for the north end of Saskatoon. You can't believe the congestion in Saskatoon in the north end during rush hours. And I remember when we had a by-election a few years back for Saskatoon Northwest, and I live up in the north end of Saskatoon in Lawson, and it would take me 45 minutes to drive from my house to the campaign office which was only, walking probably would have only taken me 10 minutes at the most. And once they get that commuter bridge in, it'll lighten the load on Circle Drive and the traffic trying to get to the Circle to go home or get up to the north end and to places north of the city to work. It'll be a real pleasure to get around the city.

This year alone nearly 3 billion has been committed to renew

and expand the province's infrastructure. That's a lot of money.

Mr. Speaker, SaskBuilds was created two years ago to help deal with the province's infrastructure demands, and it has initiated a number of P3 projects which include nine joint elementary schools located in Regina, Saskatoon, Martensville, and Warman. And I know the one in Saskatoon in Hampton Village is really needed because that area is just growing like you cannot believe.

An Hon. Member: — Didn't they vote against that?

Mr. Parent: — Yes they did.

The Regina bypass project, the largest transportation project in Saskatchewan history, that's a huge project. The Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford integrated correctional facility also completed with P3. The 225-bed Swift Current long-term care centre is now under construction and is expected to save taxpayers \$13 million by using the P3 approach. Our government has partnered with the city of Saskatoon and the federal government on a P3 project to build the north commuter bridge I was talking about, and we have entered into a similar partnership for the second bridge in P.A.

Mr. Speaker, this government will no longer spend any money on building liquor stores. We will allow the private sector, wherever we need new stores, to build and operate the liquor stores. There are two new private liquor stores operating in Saskatoon and one in Regina, with another in Regina coming soon, as the cities continue to grow.

Mr. Speaker, increased traffic and unprecedented flooding have taken a toll on the highways in Saskatchewan. Our government is responding with record investments in highway construction and maintenance. On Highway 16 work has begun on a new twinning project from Saskatoon to Clavet. On Highway 7 new passing lanes between Delisle and Rosetown are under construction. Pre-construction work continues on the twinning of Highway 7 from Vanscoy to Delisle and Highway 6 and 39 from Regina to Estevan. As you can see, Mr. Speaker, this government has spent a lot of money on infrastructure in this province and continues to do so to make travel better and easier for the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, across government the lean process which is used to improve services for people and businesses . . . By using lean the Ministry of Economy has reduced the time to issue routine permits for oil companies from 10 days to one day. The Ministry of Highways now processes 13,700 more bridge permits annually, double the previous volume.

Over the last seven years, Mr. Speaker, our government has spent more than \$700 million on education infrastructure, a 268 per cent increase. Forty new schools have been built or are in the planning stage. This year new schools have opened or will open soon in Swift Current, Lloydminster, White City, Regina, and Saskatoon. Schools in La Ronge and Lumsden have undergone major renovations.

Mr. Speaker, programs such as the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings, and the graduate retention program have made

post-secondary education more accessible and affordable for our Saskatchewan kids. Since 2008 the graduate retention program has provided \$130 million in rebates to more than 50,000 students who have chosen to stay in Saskatchewan after graduation.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this month people from around the world gathered at Boundary dam power station near Estevan as SaskPower opened the first commercial power plant in the world with a fully integrated post-combustion carbon capture system. More than 90 per cent of the carbon dioxide emitted at Boundary dam 3 will be captured and stored for use in enhanced oil recovery operations in mature oil fields. This is the equivalent of taking more than 250,000 vehicles off Saskatchewan roads each year.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of the province's predictable and sustainable revenue-sharing program, municipalities already know they will receive record revenue sharing of \$265 million in next year's budget, more than double what it was when our government took office.

Earlier this year, Saskatchewan was once again hit by hard flooding. Our government responded by establishing 11 recovery centres, including three in First Nations communities. They were one-stop points of access staffed by representatives from ministries, Crown corporations, Canadian Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse Canada, and other organizations to help individuals and families affected by flooding. So far this year, the provincial disaster assistance program, PDAP, has . . . [inaudible] . . . more than 325 municipalities and First Nations and individuals living in those communities who were affected by the flooding and were eligible for assistance under the program. PDAP has completed or is in the process of completing well over 3,000 claims from this year's flooding alone.

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's agriculture sector is strong, contributing 4.5 billion to the Saskatchewan gross domestic product and sustaining 50,000 direct and indirect jobs.

In the coming weeks Saskatchewan will host the New West Partnership Transportation and Market Access Summit to discuss long-term improvements to Western Canada's transportation system.

In 2003 Saskatchewan set a record for agriculture exports for a third consecutive year with sales of 11.7 billion, and we are on track to meet our goal of increasing the agriculture exports to 15 billion by the year 2020.

In Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan plan for growth, we committed 344 million to boost the supply of housing in the province, particularly for the low-and moderate-income families. In 2013 the number of rental housing units started was nearly 34 times higher than in 2006. Today the vacancy rate in Saskatchewan is 3.3 per cent, which is higher than the national average. Our government has decreased waiting lists for families needing housing and has increased support for the homeless. At the same time we are increasing opportunities for low-income families to own homes

in co-operation with organizations like Habitat for Humanity. Since 2009 our government has committed 7.85 million to assist Habitat for Humanity build 134 houses in 12 communities.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year our government was pleased to announce the opening of the new Sweet Dreams home in Saskatoon. Sweet Dreams will provide at-risk single mothers an affordable housing and support while they complete their education and learn life and parenting skills. This project was made possible through social impact bond funding model, the first of its kind in Canada. Saskatchewan has the second-lowest poverty rate in Canada, and there's more to do.

Mr. Speaker, since 2007 our government has committed \$71 million to improve the camping experience in our parks, including adding 1,400 new electrified camping sites. And I see this at Candle Lake where I go and I have a cabin, and I have lots of friends that come up there and camp. And we go to the different places in the park and visit with them, and it's really nice to see that we're continuing to add on to them.

Saskatchewan Lotteries assistance supports 12,000 non-profit sport, culture, and recreational organizations in Saskatchewan. Recently, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Sport and SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association signed a five-year lottery agreement to provide funding stability and allowed these organizations to maintain quality programs and services. Last year alone, Mr. Speaker, 52 million was distributed to these organizations.

Mr. Speaker, to assist with the cost of operating rinks, hockey, curling, our government introduced a community rink affordability grant program in 2012. More than 3.2 million has been invested in programs during the last two years, with more than 380 communities benefiting from this program. This year our government has committed another 1.7 million to the program.

Mr. Speaker, the Boundary dam 3 project, which will demonstrate to the world it is possible to significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions while generating the electricity needed to sustain growth, proving economic growth and environmental protection are compatible objectives. In the coming months, Mr. Speaker, 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.

This session our government will amend *The Wildlife Act* to increase penalties for illegal hunting. The amendments include, Mr. Speaker, increasing the hunting suspension for serious violations from one to two years, prohibiting those who have not paid a hunting fine from buying a licence, and prohibiting any Canadian resident suspended from hunting or fishing in another jurisdiction from purchasing a licence in Saskatchewan. And being a hunter, I'm very happy to see this. Those convicted of three serious wildlife offences will be banned for life from hunting in Saskatchewan, and I totally agree with that one.

Our government has undertaken an online drainage consultation that received nearly 500 submissions, and will carry out further consultations with the stakeholders in the coming months. Mr.

Speaker, these consultations will lead to the development of new regulations governing drainage as part of the province's 25-year Saskatchewan water security plan.

And last but not least, Mr. Speaker, in 2009 our government introduced the Saskatchewan Scholarship of Honour, a \$5,000 scholarship available to returning military personnel and to spouses and children of Canadian Armed Forces members killed or permanently disabled in the service of their country.

Since 1919 the Government of Canada has awarded the Memorial Cross, sometimes called the Silver Cross, to the loved ones of Canadian Armed Forces personnel who died in service. This fall our government will make a commemorative licence plate available to recipients of the Memorial Cross. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to speak to the throne, and I will be supporting the Throne Speech. Thank you.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, along with my colleagues, have already talked about the catastrophic incident that happened in Ottawa last week and in Quebec a couple of days before that. And I would like to pass my condolences on to the families of Warrant Officer Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo. These cowardly acts actually just enforce that we do need a strong military presence in this province. And I'm very pleased now to see that a lot more Canadians are more receptive to the military and what the military is doing to keep us free.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to have been part of that military for 33 years. And I've seen dramatic changes in this country over that time frame where the military were frowned upon. I was at one time uncomfortable wearing my uniform in some of the major cities in Canada. And as time progressed through the '80s, I would say I saw a dramatic shift in the attitude of Canadians toward the military.

When the wall came down in Berlin, we went into a peace dividend, and I think that was very costly at the time to us, especially in our intelligence community. I am a believer that if the wall had not come down or if the peace dividend had not been taken after the wall came down that we would not have seen 9/11.

Our intelligence services were depleted so much, and when you get somebody embedded into a terrorist organization or a political organization that is against freedom values . . . That happened, and as a result, the intelligence wasn't there prior to 9/11. And I believe that if it had, if we had the intelligence services there, that 9/11 would not have happened.

And I think that became a big change to the Canadian public, seeing what that had done to the United States and our country and all the free world. And since then there's been a pretty positive change in attitude by Canadians toward the military.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues have talked extensively about the Throne Speech. And my approach is going to be somewhat different. I also want to say some thank yous, but then I want to go back in time a little bit.

I want to say thank you to my family. It's been a number of years since I've been in here, since 2000. I want to thank my constituency assistants. Sandy Kuffner runs my Assiniboia office and Charlene Orr my Glentworth office. And they do a good job of keeping me out of trouble most of the time.

I also really want to thank the citizens of Wood River who have totally supported me over the last four elections. And that's kind of what I want to do now, Mr. Speaker, is go back in time a little bit. As most members will know, I'm not running again. So I announced that last February, and so there was a heated contest for my replacement. We had four outstanding candidates, and Mr. Dave Marit won the nomination.

We had at one of the meetings in excess of 150 people showed up in Ponteix and then there was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 500 showed up for the nomination night in Assiniboia. And I was very pleased to be able to speak to the crowd there. And what I spoke about to the crowd was my early days when I got involved in politics and why, and basically what I was going to do in the future.

So I reflected back on the early days and why I got into politics. Mr. Speaker, when I retired and moved back to Saskatchewan — I have a half section of grassland — people wanted me to get involved in politics, and I wasn't that interested in it. So I finally got talked into it. And one of the reasons that I accepted coming into politics is I looked at where I live in southern Saskatchewan.

I grew up in a little town of Fir Mountain, and I live about 12 miles from there now. And I reflected back to when my grandparents homesteaded, both sets of grandparents homesteaded just south of where I live. When they moved out here circa the 1915 time frame, there was no schools. There was no railroad. There was no hospital. And I would daresay the roads weren't very good in those days. And when I retired in 1994, some 80 years later, the school was closed, the hospital was closed, the railroad was pulled, and the roads were in about the same condition as they were when my grandparents were there. So that's one of the reasons I got involved in politics.

What caused that? How could that possibly happen? We were a very progressive province growing in the early days from 1905 through the . . . Yes, I know we had a depression in there, but we were a growing province. And then something dramatic happened, I'm going to say somewhere in the mid-'40s. And we tried a new experiment in this province at that time. And as far as I'm concerned, the province went downhill after that experience, and something had to change. So why did we go downhill? I really believed it was politics.

Another reason that I got involved was I looked at the area that I live in, and it's a lot of ranching. At that time, Mr. Speaker, we were shipping 750,000 head of cattle out of this province to Alberta to be fed. And where did they get their barley from to feed the cattle? From Saskatchewan. And where did they get the young women and men to feed that Saskatchewan barley to those Saskatchewan cattle? They also came from Saskatchewan. Was that right? Was that policy of the then government? Why would this happen?

And so I started looking at reasons why this would happen. This

was a total unfriendly business province under the NDP — totally, totally. So I got digging a little bit. And why couldn't we have those cattle fed here? Why couldn't we have a business startup here?

So in my research and my digging, yes, I found the *Regina Manifesto*. How could you possibly want to start a business in Saskatchewan if you do due diligence and saw what the *Regina Manifesto* said? They are against business. They would not be happy until capitalism was destroyed in this province.

It promotes socialism. And doing due diligence, and if you looked at that, why would you ever want to come here? Also doing due diligence, if you looked on the books, when the NDP took over the potash, that bill was still on the books. That bill was still in place. Fortunately we formed government. That's one of our first things that we did was repeal that bill and that helped us become a business-friendly province.

Back in the early days, Mr. Speaker, I remember my first election. I ended up in a tie. From that tie, there was a court case that came about, and we had 37 pages of discrepancies of the election in my constituency. We had people from Alberta that voted, people from BC. Lots of people from outside the constituency voted. And we even had one member that was deceased who voted. Now how could this happen? How could this possibly happen? Well we've since changed our election laws here in the province so that should not happen again, but it did happen in my case.

[11:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, I heard a lot in my early days of travel in this province. I had some very strong CCF-NDP [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party] people in my province, and one of the reasons that these people supported Tommy was they said in rural Saskatchewan he brought electricity. And I said, and that's why you voted for him? Yes. I said, when was he Premier of Alberta? Well he wasn't. Why? I said, well they got electricity in the rural areas too. If Tommy takes credit — only Tommy — for putting it in rural Saskatchewan, who's going to take credit for putting it into rural Alberta? They could not respond to that.

Mr. Speaker, in my campaigns I had some good times, but one of my favourite times was in the 2007 campaign. I come across this little fellow and he had a box with kittens in it. And in the box — I think he must have been put up to it by his dad — but he had NDP kittens. And of course the NDP candidate was quite pleased with this. He'd come by and pat the little boy on the head every day, and I thought it was kind of cute. But about a week later, NDP was crossed out and he put, Sask Party kittens. And I remember the NDP candidate asking me, he said, hey, they were NDP kittens. How come they're Saskatchewan Party kittens now? The little boy said, they got their eyes open now.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the people in the province got their eyes opened. They finally realized what the NDP stood for and what we stood for. And every time, every election it seems like more people are having their eyes opened to what really went on in the past and what we're doing now.

I reflect back on my constituency. When I moved back, like I said, the roads were in terrible shape. I'm totally convinced that for 16 years of NDP there was not a paving machine in the constituency of Wood River. The roads . . .

An Hon. Member: — Or Saskatchewan.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Probably not in Saskatchewan either. But the roads were just atrocious. We even had occasion where it was so bad that the citizens of Val Marie and area were fixing roads, going to fix the roads themselves. And I was kind of fortunate because the day that I was supposed to help them, it rained, and we couldn't do any work on the roads. Because I don't know anything about fixing roads. But that's how bad the roads were. And we're making progress right now.

And as I told my constituents the other night in my speech, we now, in Wood River, have Highway 13 that is absolutely outstanding. Highway 58 between Lafleche and Gravelbourg has been a priority of mine, is actually being finished now, but it won't be paved until next year, and Highway 43. So people are extremely pleased that they've seen some progress on highways.

And I think everyone knows that we inherited the biggest infrastructure deficit probably in the history of this province, except 1905 maybe, when the province first started. And it's going to take years and years to catch up from that deficit left by the people opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the people of my constituency again see what we've been doing and how we've been doing it. And I'm not bragging or anything but my plurality in the last election, I got 83 per cent of the vote. So there's 17 per cent in my constituency that may not agree with what we're doing.

I got to speaking about this in my speech, that we have students . . . We have so many things that we could talk about, but we have jobs. I think there was, the one day I checked — it varies, fluctuates — we had 16,000 jobs on the SaskJobs website at one point. And I had one person from my constituency, one of the 17 per cent that didn't support me, said that's fine. You talk about all of these jobs, but they're all in the cities. So I reminded the individual, out of the 16,000 jobs, they were in 130 places in Saskatchewan. I said, unless I've missed something in the last few years, we don't have 130 cities. So these jobs are all over the province, and I was very proud to be able to announce that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about things that have been extremely positive for people in Saskatchewan, but I'm going to refer a lot to my constituency. We know that the motto of our Throne Speech is: keeping Saskatchewan strong. We took a Saskatchewan that was weak and we have helped to make it strong. I give credit to the people of Saskatchewan that made it strong. We just got out of the way and cancelled some of the archaic laws such as the bill that took over potash and got them out of the way and made this a business-friendly province so businesses could expand.

One business in my constituency, prior to the 2007 election he told me he was closing his doors and going to Alberta. But he said, I'm going to give a shot at waiting until this election is

done. We formed government, as we know, in 2007. The business that I'm talking about today, he's expanding. He's doing . . . His business percentage went up over 60 per cent and he's adding on to his existing facility right now. And I see that throughout my constituency, in places that are expanding, businesses are expanding.

Yes, we're fortunate to have some oil industry coming into the area, but it's again a business-friendly province. People are moving back. There are jobs. Young people are moving back. And I'm very proud to be part of a government that promotes that. But in my constituency, I want to talk a little bit . . . This is for the province but it's very important for my constituency also, in agriculture, a record 11.7 billion in ag exports last year.

Now yes, it's agriculture that's doing it, but we have done, the Premier and business have done trade missions to help support this. Net farm income in 2013 was 2.63 billion, a 187 per cent increase since 2007. The CETA agreement will do nothing but help producers. The western livestock price insurance program is extremely well received by livestock producers.

We're committed to funding, fully funding, federal-provincial programs upfront. And I think most of us that were here for a long time will know that the NDP refused to do this.

Compensation for livestock killed or injured by predators, the NDP would not do that. A 100 per cent wildlife damage compensation was 80 per cent under the NDP.

Increased agriculture research funding by 104 per cent over what the NDP did.

The gopher and beaver control programs, not available under the NDP. We've opened 10 new extension services offices. And I think we all remember what happened before; the NDP closed 31.

In taxes, since 2007 our government has increased the personal, spousal, and child exemption amounts and introduced a new low-income tax credit. These total exemptions plus yearly indexations save Saskatchewan residents almost \$480 million every year. And we have removed 114,000 residents from the income tax roll, 114,000. In 2007 our government's tax reductions . . . Since 2007 it saved Saskatchewan people more than \$2.8 billion. And we all know about the education property tax we took over. Now education portion of the property tax or education property tax was stated at one time as the most regressive tax there is in this country. And who said that? It was Tommy in 1944. And so there's, there's . . . Look at the years that went by under NDP governments that absolutely nothing was done. And nothing was done until 2009 when mill rates were reduced, and that has saved Saskatchewan residents \$728 million.

And since forming government, we have paid down more than 3.8 billion in debt. That amounts to a 44 per cent reduction in debt and will save 600 million in interest payments over the next four years. And we've heard from my colleagues our credit rating is the highest it can be. We also have heard from many of my colleagues about the population growth and where we're at right now. It's worth repeating — 1,125,410. And we're still growing.

We have the highest highways budget in history at \$664 million. And believe it or not, in 2007 that was the highest. The next year — we broke the record — was the highest. And we've done that every year since, so this year over \$600 million. 4.3 billion invested in our first seven years — that's an 82 per cent increase over the last seven years of the NDP. And we've committed to invest 2.2 billion over this term. That brings the total to 1.82 billion, well on pace to meet our target. And here's an interesting statistic: since 2008 we've improved over 8600 kilometres of provincial highway — 8600. We've expanded primary weight networks by more than 61 per cent. Mr. Speaker, revenue sharing has increased by 102 per cent, providing more than 1.6 billion in unconditional funding to Saskatchewan municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, there's an awful lot more in our Throne Speech that I could talk about, but one of the things I would really like to talk about now is what do the NDP have? What is their platform? I haven't seen anything on their platform. The only thing that I've seen that they come out with is demands of the Throne Speech. And this is interesting reading for some. And what it reminds me of is a P3 program. The NDP are very much against P3s but they have their own P3, and their own P3 is poor policy planning. That's the NDP P3.

And I want to comment on one item that they have put forward here, maybe more than one. They talk about in this particular paper, focus on diversifying our economy. Just think about that. The NDP wanting to focus on diversifying our economy. Well, Mr. Speaker, as I look around, we have a pretty diverse economy right now. Agriculture is the rock star of our economy. We've got oil, gas, uranium, information technology. You can go on and on and on about our economy and how diverse it is right now.

So as I was driving the other day I got thinking. What possibly could the NDP think about more for diversification of the economy? So then I realized my little sheet was in my folder, and I figure that this is what they meant by diversifying the economy. They wanted to get back into dot-coms. Is that what they want? Diversifying the economy by getting into dot-coms? Well they could get tapped into. They could get Persona. They only lost 15 million. Navigata only lost 43 million; Craig Wireless, 10; NST [NST Network Services of Chicago], 16 million; and it goes on.

Is that what they want to diversify back into is dot-coms? And then my favourite. I have to chuckle at this myself. I think they wanted to get back into the potato business. That's how they wanted to diversify the economy — get back into potatoes. Reinvent . . . SPUDCO 2 [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company].

An Hon. Member: — If at first you don't succeed . . .

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Yes. Try again and lose more money. SPUDCO lost \$35 million. Or do they want to go into places like Guyana and Channel Lake and do that over again?

Mr. Speaker, and then I got thinking, how else could you diversify this economy? I know what they were thinking. They wanted to take over bingo in this province again. Remember mega bingo? Mega bingo lost \$8 million. And, Mr. Speaker, I

think maybe they wanted to get back into the pulp mill business. That's how they wanted to diversify. You'd think they would learn their lesson. Eight hundred million dollars they lost. I have a total here of \$1.2 billion that they lost in bad investments.

[12:00]

An Hon. Member: — They tried to buy an election with the pulp mill.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Yes, they tried to. And the \$100 million they put in or promised in the 2011 election to Weyerhaeuser to keep the mill open in Prince Albert, well I think the people of the province saw through that. Yes, they had their eyes opened, yes.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's so much good news in our Throne Speech that, and I know my colleagues have spoke about it, but I wanted to reflect back a little bit to the past, where we came from. And I'm just so pleased that we have formed government and hopefully the other side never, never will form government again.

Their socialist policies, I'm wondering where they get their policies from, especially now that Fidel is not around. I wonder how they get their policies and where they're coming from. I know it's a very poor policy set-up because they don't have any. So I'm really wondering where they're getting their policy.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I guess you can tell from my remarks that I will not be supporting the amendment, but I will be supporting the Throne Speech. And I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join in to the Throne Speech. I've made a lot of them over the years.

I'd like to, like all the members before me, you know, thank my family for all the support that they've given me and the reason that I'm being able to be here. And also with all the members before me and also on behalf of the constituents of Arm River-Watrous, and I know each and every one.

And I've talked to many of them just over the weekend that want to pay their respects for what happened in, the tragedy that happened in Ottawa and also in Quebec. They want to express their total disgust at the most cowardly act that you could probably put on against our country. And I know everybody in my constituency, it doesn't matter what stripe they are, are just totally . . . can't believe what has happened and also want to pay their respects to the families that are grieving and going through that. And I know our government has always, you know, supported the military, honouring those who serve and also the people that protect us in this building.

And I want to talk about, even though the members have already talked a lot about this, especially the member just before me, but I just want to reiterate how we've introduced Saskatchewan's Scholarship of Honour. We brought that in in 2009, just a small, a very small thank you for our gratitude for

what the people that serve and protect us, trying to do what we can.

And I just say I don't think we could ever thank them enough for the protection that they give us and laying their life on the line. Myself I couldn't imagine, you know, going to another country and putting my life in danger. I have the greatest respect for the people that do that, Mr. Speaker. And also this fall in the Throne Speech, you know, making a commemorative licence plate available to members that have the Memorial Cross, just a small way that our government can say thank you.

I want to, as I move forward, I also want to thank my CAs [constituency assistant], Lavonne Lyke and Donna Petit, as many members have thanked theirs. And each and every one, I know a lot of the members' CAs. And they're all very, very competent, same as mine, and they do an excellent job of keeping the fort going back home and taking the calls and handling the cases as we're up here. I'm in constant contact, when I can, by phone and trying to give them advice on how to deal with constituents and doing it by phone up here, rather than in person when I'm back home on the road.

You know, my constituency is a fair size. It's a little over 4,500 square miles, probably three hours from one end to the other. So I try through the summer to visit each and every community, town, village, RM [rural municipality] that I can, and I gather what I can from the constituents. You know, I've spent many hours travelling and going to sports days and events and fundraisers as each . . . This fall is just like, every constituency in the fall is a very busy time for fundraisers. It's when the Lions, the Elks, local rec clubs raising money to keep their facilities open and them just raising money to help anyway that they can keep their communities going.

But in a conversation that I've had, you know, and just not with one constituent but one just happens to spring up my mind, I was at a steak supper, and a constituent just talked about, you know, the attitude of Saskatchewan and how it's changed. Because the same as me, I can remember how we had talks about, you know, the jokes about if you're going to Alberta, the last person to leave Saskatchewan turn out the lights. You know, there was always never . . . Even though people that lived here were proud of the province, but they just didn't have as much of that attitude that they have now.

They always had that in Alberta. I know I had family that moved there, cousins that lived there, the same age as myself. And there was always just a little different attitude. They were just how, you know, the province has grown and things are moving and you can always get a job, you know. And in Saskatchewan, you know, it was always joke and kid: you guys have been the same size for population for years. And I'm talking through, you know, the '70s when I was just 20 years old. And most of the people went to the oil fields to work from my area, the younger kids, kids my age, you know, and guys I went to school with. If you wanted work, that's where you went.

But we talked about how the attitude has changed now. That's Saskatchewan now. When people, young people talk about, and even the older ones talk about the attitude in Saskatchewan now — how we're the place to be, how we're growing, how we're

never going back, how this is, the opportunities here are endless. And I've noticed that over the last four or five years as I go to events. People come up to you and just say, you know, this is a great place to live and man, there's the opportunities here. And you know, they've always been here. The opportunities have always been in this province, but it was the attitude.

The member before me talked a bit about it, the history, and I want to touch a bit on that because it does, it speaks to this province, speaks to this Throne Speech. Because this Throne Speech is about the attitude. And all the throne speeches we've delivered talks about the attitude, how we have . . . How we expect this province to keep growing; how we're working it to grow. You know, we went through probably . . . The last time that happened, my grandfather, both my grandfathers came to here through the '20s. And that's when we had that kind of attitude, that spirit: this is where you came. You know, you come to grow. This is where you're going to expand.

Then we went through probably the toughest times this country ever faced. That was the dirty thirties. I mean, I don't remember it. Some of the members may very well that are here, but I've heard stories from the grandparents and my parents and read many stories, how this was probably the very toughest time that this country faced. And Saskatchewan in particular was very hard hit, you know, and it took a little bit of the hope and the long-range planning out of some of these people. They were just living day to day.

And then from there we went into the war years. Same thing. Those were tough years. There were rations and, you know, you never knew what was coming the next day. And right behind that, the NDP came in. And they kind of worked on that attitude that, don't want, don't expect too much. Don't, you know, next year could be always a little worse, so always the government should look after you. Don't get too much into the entrepreneur spirit. Don't spend too much. Don't expand your business. You know, we will look after you. And they worked on that attitude, and that was a whole generation.

I had a couple of older neighbours. I won't mention their name, but they were, I know that they voted NDP — older gentlemen, two different farmers, retired, you know, rented their land out. And the one gentleman, I talked to him just a year or two ago. And I said, are you going to be able to have a farm auction? He goes, no, no. He goes, things are pretty good now, but he says, you know, I may have . . . Things could get tough again. I may have to go back farming. And I'm thinking, you're, like, 80 years old. And he actually believed that because he went through that. He went through the dirty thirties. He went through all the years the NDP were, you know, don't expect these good times to last. And that's what a generation that they formed government on, all through the '40s and the '50s and through the '70s, when they basically tried to take over most of the businesses and just had that attitude.

I remember growing up through the '70s, and it was like, yes, government should be running things. And then through the '90s when I actually got involved in politics at the town council level when, you know, everything was planned for decline. I mean we can talk about closing the hospitals, and no talk about reopening. I mean, no talk of it at all. Just saying, no, we're

closing them. This is the way things are going.

I can remember the year that they brought out, they were planning a decline of 3,100 students the next year. And just a decline of every year is when they . . . The projections was always decline and things are going to get tougher. And that was their attitude. They never looked at, like, how can we change that? How can we turn things around? That was never in them. It's just the status quo. Never change. And that's, you know, why they're at where they are with nine members.

And when I talk to the people — just not in my constituency, I talk to friends and relatives in the cities — and the attitude has changed. They don't want to go back to that. They want a government that's willing to look forward, that has an attitude that this province is going to grow, and that you're going to work with the constituents and you're going to work with business to make it grow.

You know, you're always going to have . . . Everything is never going to be all roses, but people want a government that's looking forward, that has new ideas. And I've got that from a lot of my constituents, say, you know, I've listened to what they say and they're just negative. They don't have a policy yet. You know, sure, they just slam what you're doing, talk about the Liquor Board stores.

You know, constituents in each and of every stripe have said, yes, it's probably not that smart to pour money into capital. I mean we're always going to get the tax money. We're going to regulate the industry, which we should. But why should we put out capital money when we're short of capital dollars on hospitals, the long-term care facilities, and schools? Why would you lay out capital that you may not recover for a very, very long time?

And also with that building, you have to remember you're paying the heat and the insurance costs and the wages that go with it. Why would you even do that, you know, especially when times are a little tight, when we are short? We have a capital infrastructure deficit and we're addressing it. And that's one of the ways we can address it.

When I talk to every constituent, I mean that's what they talk about, is the hospitals and the schools and the long-term care facilities. Those are the ones you have to maintain with the capital dollars, not Liquor Board stores. And that has nothing to do with ideological. That's not political. That's just common sense, when we talk to individuals saying, you know what? You have to make your priorities and you have to make them for the people. And that's what we've been doing and that's what this Throne Speech talks to.

We have to, you know, maintaining the momentum. You know, oh yes, this is the first time we've had mine expansion on the edge of my constituency and my new constituency that's going to be coming up, Arm River. We have K+S. You know, we haven't had a mine expansion in this province since 40 years, never mind BHP in Jansen Lake mine going ahead. You know, that area of both provinces . . . I mean there's people I know that are working both sites from a 40- to 50-mile radius. They're back working back in Saskatchewan. They don't have to leave the area for work.

There is lots and lots of work in this province, and there's going to be as we go forward in the future. This is a growing, growing province, and it's going to keep growing. And it's some small part through some of the policies this government has brought forward because it speaks to the attitude.

You know, naturally business is the one that has to drive the government, drive the economy, but they also need the attitude and they also need a government that's willing to support them so they may create them jobs and turn that money back. And it all comes back to the people through taxes, through different initiatives. That's how we can, you know, keep this province going.

You know, agriculture naturally in my constituency is very huge. You know, this year the crops, there were some struggles. We had the wet spring, especially in the eastern part of my constituency. There was acres that didn't get sowed. You know, many farmers had a lot of trouble getting the crop in, a lot of equipment getting stuck, you know, and that progressed through the summer, especially more in the eastern part again.

[12:15]

I know that crops are coming off. Most of the farmers I talked to are done. If there's a little bit left, it's some flax, maybe a couple hundred acres here and there, but the crop has finally, finally come off. We were lucky. We had some very good weather at the end of October. And the crops were average, in some places above average. You know, there wasn't anything that was below. Prices aren't as good as we'd like to see them, and there was some disease in the cereals. There was some concern out there, but the agricultural people, farmers are still very optimistic of the future as we move forward.

And some of the, you know, initiatives that we've worked on with agriculture, which was providing 100 per cent on fowl damage and wildlife damage . . . Because it has been increasing in my area surprisingly because we're not what you'd consider . . . And there is I guess a bit of wasteland. But I just know that this year all the hunters pretty well hit their limit every day on snow geese, so we've had a lot of, a lot of increase in waterfowl coming through more our area, plus moose. There's usually, about every two or three weeks there's always one killed on the highway, it seems like, between Davidson and Kenaston, at that end of it. So you know, we're trying to offer some protection for the farmers through that and yet allow hunters to still hunt again, which there is a very good turnout, very good interest yet in people that still hunt and outfit in our area.

You know, also talking about agricultural, one of the things we have and this government has promoted hugely is free trade and trade missions to other provinces and to other countries throughout the world because that's a big part of our agricultural products. That's where they go.

I can remember when the lentil industry was just starting in this province. I mean there wasn't hardly an export area for them. I'm talking about, you know, the '70s and into the '80s. And that market has grown huge. I can remember an odd neighbour growing 80 acres of lentils, and they develop on . . . where they were very short. There weren't the technology and the seed advancement that there has been now, and there wasn't much of

a market for it. And now that's a huge part of most farmers' rotations are pulse crops, which are lentils — the price on them are not bad right now — and peas.

And that's all export. That's all export, and that a big part to, you know, us, to our government and also the federal government that has been promoting many new markets. You know, Saskatchewan is just becoming known around the world for its exports. You know, we're just starting there. The potential, like I've said before, is very huge for this province.

And the innovation that's come out of here in agriculture, in equipment — you know, the air seeders, air drills, all the smart technology — a lot of it has been, you know, either developed in this province or tested in this province. Farmers use the very, very top line of farm equipment out there.

I can remember, as some of the members that used to farm, what we started with. And now the technology that's out there when we run this equipment is very advanced, from GPS [Global Positioning System] to header height control to whatever. I mean you can sit in a piece of equipment, and if you've got a mile run, you basically don't have to touch anything to get to the end of the mile. And then you just lift the header, turn around, and go back again. And with that, it is very good. But I can also remember a neighbour of mine having that and having an accident with the sprayer, you know, because you do have a tendency to either doze off or to be distracted by other things in the machine, where you still have to run them. But anyways that's kind of digressing with that.

But just talking on agriculture and the technology that's come and that's coming forward, I have some short-line manufacturers in my constituency that are on the cutting edge of developing, always, new equipment as we move forward. And that's one thing that I commend this government for is what we have.

You know, I've been involved with SARM [State Agriculture and Rural Leaders]. I've gone to it many years, where we've always been working on COOL [country of origin labelling] resolutions which we actually got passed at one SARM which is State Ag and Rural Leaders down in the States.

You know, it's more on their state level not on their federal level, but still when we talk to . . . The more time we spend down there talking to their senators and their legislators and telling them that, you know, telling them how things work and how if they implement COOL, how it will also hurt their industry, not only ours, how it will hurt their packing industry. And I think the message is coming through. I know that I'm hoping in the following trade dispute that the US federal government doesn't appeal it, but it looks like they're going to. But still I think we're still winning that war on the trade end of it, and we have to keep getting that message to them.

Because the previous government — I can remember; I was opposition — even in the '70s and '80s and '90s wasn't that much on dealing with other provinces, even if they weren't NDP, let alone another country, United States. Still they're not. I've never heard them really talk a lot about how we need to promote trade with the United States, how we have to promote trade in Europe. They really don't talk about it a lot.

I think they still like the old attitude: if it's in Saskatchewan, it should be just done in Saskatchewan and the co-operative method. Everybody just lives kind of like a commune, and everybody just lives in their own little world in this province. Them days are long gone. We're dealing with . . . When I talk to and work with constituents and business, that attitude is long gone. And they still talk about it, the NDP. They just don't seem to have that. They just don't grasp that we're in a world market now. We have to deal with the world. We have to be open, and we have to work. And it's work because I mean there's other countries trying to sell the same products we are and trying to work into the same markets that we're working with. And I think we're, our government, is a leader in that.

I mean we talk about, we're working on, you know, lifting internal trade barriers that remain between the provinces. We have a New West Partnership. We're working with Alberta and BC.

And I'm hoping, you know, a province like Manitoba, which is NDP, will come on board. And I think they need to, and I think they're going to start to realize as they go through . . . And I think they're coming up to an election and, from what I understand, I think they're running into a bit of trouble because they had a bit of an isolationist attitude in that province. And I think things are changing there. And I'm hoping that if they form a new government in Manitoba that they will be working with us as we try to eliminate barriers between each and every province because we should be able to move freely. Whether it's a tradesperson certification or whether it's a business or whatever, product should flow easily because I mean we're so intertwined, provinces. I mean you hardly even know there's borders there, you know. Well most places you don't, you know, unless you see the sign when you cross.

It makes economic sense as our universities and as our SIASTs [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] in each province works together to maybe . . . you know, working on a certification. It saves money, saves students money. You know, any way that we can work together and develop programs and work to save that because we need to build, you know, a skilled workforce as we move forward. Any businesses I talk to, that's the main thing right now. They're short in my constituency of skilled labourers.

No. 11 Highway, which is getting to be one of the busiest highways in Saskatchewan, goes through my constituency, and I can see the businesses springing up on it, especially coming out of Saskatoon but even around the town of Davidson. You know, I can remember when the first A & W went in. Now there's a Dairy Queen. Now there's a mall coming in, and I'm hoping that there's going to be some more businesses being built there.

But even all the towns up and down the No. 11, they're all talking growth. They're all doing subdivisions. When I was up in Watrous, they just completed their last, worked on their last . . . on their subdivision. That's done. They're actually now planning for another one. Town of Kenaston is trying to develop more lots around the town. Davidson's been in a growth mode, hugely. Dundurn, Hanley, I mean these towns are growing, and they're going to keep growing. And they have the attitude that we have to keep. We're moving forward.

Because, you know, many of the towns, when I was first elected, it was about how are we going to deal with the empty houses in town and the people leaving? That was their biggest concern when I met with them, you know, when I was first elected — and that was under the NDP government — of the town shrinking. Now that's completely changed as we move forward.

Now I talk about highways, which I mentioned No. 11, but also No. 15 Highway. You know, we've developed that as a wide-load corridor as we realized that as we go through, as this province grows, we need to get the heavy and the wide loads off of No. 11 Highway. We have to move them on another route because there isn't a day goes by No. 11 right now that you don't see many wide loads going. Right now it would either be houses or bins or just stuff. I don't even know what it's being used for, mostly probably in the oil industry as it moves down south.

We've been working on No. 15 Highway there. It's a four-year plan, you know, in the 30 to \$40 million range. You know, I'd like it to be built in one year, but I understand that it can't be and so do the residents. But what they like at least, that there's work being done and that we have a long-range plan. Because that's one of the things the NDP never had and still don't have is a long-range plan. We're laying out, as the future's growing up, where we're going to need more infrastructure dollars. And that's one of them is on Highway 15, as we make that a wide-load corridor, as we have to move . . . you know, as industry needs a good access route. And No. 11 is getting so busy that we need to start doing long-range planning, which we are.

And that's something that this government has always did. Even when we were in opposition we were making plans. I can remember our current leader actually, you know, put out a policy paper when he was in opposition. These NDPs still haven't laid any policy just for the next year, not anything, let alone any long-range ideas. And you wonder why that they're at where they're at in the polling, and they're going to stay that way. You know, they have no policy how to grow this province because that's totally foreign to them. They were always used to being in the status quo, and I mean personally I hope they don't change that attitude because if they never change it, that's exactly where they're going to stay, and that's how most constituents like to see that.

Another thing we tried to do is, you know, and that was one of the first principles we ran on in '99, was a smaller, more efficient government, running on a smaller, more efficient government. And as our health care costs moved, and they did under the NDP, hugely — I can remember in opposition, budgets, health budgets growing 6, 7 per cent — well that's unsustainable. And no long-range plan how to correct that. And that's what we're working to. That's what lean addresses, and we need that. I think constituents understand that, that you can't have a health care budget growing by 6, 7, 8 per cent per year. That's just totally unsustainable. You're going to lose your health care system and that's what . . . We have a long-range plan how to address it, how to keep them costs manageable, how to keep our health care sustainable. That's what lean is about. And that is what each and every constituent out there realizes.

[12:30]

And I know that this government, the opposition on the other side gets up every day and rallies on it, but you know, they have no idea that people realize that there has to be savings, that you have to try to run, you have to run each and every government, whether it be health care, whether highways, in the most efficient manner. You have to use each and every tax dollar as wisely as you can if you want to maintain this province.

I've seen, you know, United States where there's states that are almost declaring bankruptcy. There's cities declaring bankruptcy in the United States. Manitoba is running, from what I understand, a huge deficit. There's provinces in this . . . And that's totally unsustainable. And that's one of the things that we always ran on, was a balanced budget. And that's one of the things I'm very proud of with this government and also the initiatives of doing a balanced budget. With it some days, yes, there's some tough decisions, but constituents understand it if you're making smart, tough decisions. And this government has been making very smart, tough, tough decisions as we move forward.

You know, I could go on and on, but again I just want to thank the constituents of Arm River-Watrous for allowing me to get up again to represent their views in this House. And there is no way that I'll be supporting the amendment brought forth by the opposition, but I know the constituents of Arm River-Watrous will want me to be supporting the Throne Speech of this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to speak to the Throne Speech of this fall. I'll take the sort of traditional approach that a lot of people have and first of all talk about their constituency. I've had the great pleasure of representing the Kindersley constituency for a long, long time.

An Hon. Member: — 1962.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Not quite 1962, but 1991 with a few years where I was absent from the legislature. My good friend from Athabasca likes to say that I ran away from the legislature during that period of time. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think you know the truth with respect to that running away. The fact of the matter is, at that time my wife and I had a young family. Our son was still in high school. Our daughter had graduated and was in university at the time. And the fellow that had been the farm manager for us for I think it was eleven and a half years or 12 years, somewhere in there, a guy by the name of Bob Steinbronn — Bob was more like a brother than he was an employee — but Bob passed away, and of course that was in the spring of 2002. Bob went down very, very quickly.

I'll never forget it, Mr. Speaker. I went home on the Easter weekend, Good Friday, and so of course the legislature recessed just prior to that. I had picked up a number of supplies for the farm, a bunch of bolts, a bolt pack and all of those kinds of things, and I went home.

And this was a gentleman, Bob Steinbronn, that was extremely capable in terms of making things, building things, welding,

cutting — all of those kinds of things, extremely, extremely capable. He knew all about the mechanics of a lot of things. He was a fantastic mechanic, fabricator, and all of those kinds of things.

And I went home. And in the morning he came, that Thursday morning, I believe it was. And we were starting to unpack this package of stuff that I'd bought, a bolt pack and stuff, and Bob couldn't read properly the bolt sizes. Well he would be, under normal circumstances, just able to look at them and know what the size of them was, let alone have to read from the package to put them away. And the other thing that was startling at that time was he looked like he had aged 10 years overnight. Well we buried Bob three weeks later.

And you know, of course that resulted in me having to make a pretty big decision. And that of course was, the decision was I'd better return to home and manage the farm. And of course it's worked out pretty well since then. But that was the circumstances.

My good friend across the way, I hope he knows that that is the circumstance. I hope someone perhaps on the other side would present him with the facts around that because it just is . . . I find it a little bit unfortunate that the member would say those kinds of things knowing full well, or at least intimating that somehow or another, you know, people in these jobs, we run away from those kinds of things. Because that certainly wasn't the case at the time.

Of course then we, you know, got back into it. My good friend, the Premier of our province, was embarking upon the leadership at the time. And some folks, myself included, thought he might make a pretty darn good premier, and I think our assessment was right. That prompted my entrance back into the political world, and it's been a, you know, a whirlwind of activity since then as a member of this government. And the privilege of serving in the Premier's cabinet has been something that has been, you know, I've been richly blessed with and honoured with and certainly take those responsibilities very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Throne Speech I think lays out a continuing vision for our province that I think is very, very important. When I look around Saskatchewan today versus when I first started politics in this legislature in '91, there's some very, very stark differences between what was happening in 1991 and what we're seeing happening in Saskatchewan today. I think that's something that I think is very important, that we should all think about a little bit from time to time. In 1991 our province was I think headed — and many people I think would agree with me — in a very, very bad direction where we were seeing hospitals being closed by the government, where we were seeing schools being closed by this government, by the NDP government of the day at that time. In addition to that, our highways were crumbling; we were losing population.

Mr. Speaker, all of us have had the experience. Some of the new members will have this experience, I think. At that time it was not unusual for MLAs to be invited to high school graduation ceremonies and it was both a celebration for the students in terms of, you know, them embarking upon the next phase of their life but it was also something that just tugged at

your heartstrings, Mr. Speaker, and it was sad because of the fact about what was happening with those students. It was almost to a person, student after student after student at that time were saying that they didn't see the opportunities for themselves in our province. And that is sad, that they were going to go on to post-secondary education of some sort, whether it was university or technical training or they may enter the workforce right away, but what they were doing was they were going to enter into that workforce at some point in the future and it wasn't going to be in Saskatchewan. And that was sad to say the least.

Student after student, on one of the days that most of us remember as one of the most significant days of our lives, which was our graduation, they were saying those kinds of things to us. You know, I'm happy to be graduating. I'm looking forward to the next part of my life. And oh by the way, when I get my post-secondary education I can't wait to get into the workforce and do it in Calgary or in Edmonton or in Red Deer or some other place, but not here in our province. That was sad, Mr. Speaker.

And now the good news is, we have been successful. When I say we, I say the people of Saskatchewan, the business leaders in our province, and I think in some small measure I think our government has made some things, put some things in place that have turned that around, Mr. Speaker. Now when we attend graduation ceremonies, it's almost the exact reverse.

And that is one of the things that continues to make me want to continue to be a member in this legislature, because of that transformation, because of the changes that we've seen here in Saskatchewan, because of the optimism and hope that people see now in our province that we have never seen in a long, long time. Throughout my entire political career, we have not seen that kind of optimism, that kind of hope in the people of Saskatchewan that we've seen in the last number of years that was absent, totally absent for almost generations in Saskatchewan.

And I think that's what motivated me, and I think a lot of our members here, to get involved in politics in the first place, that our province could do better and should do better. And if they had a government that actually supported the people, that put policies in place, that encouraged business development in our province, that encouraged entrepreneurs to invest their hard-earned dollars here in Saskatchewan, that we could turn it around. And all you had to do was send that message to people here in Saskatchewan and they would respond. And they did, Mr. Speaker, in an overwhelming fashion.

We've seen that change here in our province that is incredible. And look around now. And I would encourage young people in this province to look around and see what has happened in Saskatchewan. You'd see community after community, city after city growing, new businesses, new infrastructure being put in place, new optimism that we've never seen — the kinds of things that I think are really important, where people have options in their life. They have the options that we haven't seen in a long period of time, where there's very, very good job prospects here in Saskatchewan. There's very, very good kinds of things that are happening in terms of people entering into the business world.

And that's one of the other things that I think we should always keep in mind. And I try to do this on an occasional basis in my constituency, where you go in and meet with some of the young students, you know, sort of grades 10, 11, and 12, and I say to them a couple of things. First of all, you should be thinking about Saskatchewan. And I think they, you know, they kind of agree with that pretty easily. And I also say to them, you're going to have a lot of people advising you as you move forward towards your career destinations, whatever it might be. You know, your parents maybe are saying, I think you should be thinking about post-secondary; I think you should be thinking about university. They may be saying as well, they may be saying, I think a technical education might be the way you can go. The trades are just booming in this province and there are tremendously good jobs. And there may be other people saying to them, you should enter the workforce and think about it for a little while before you make a decision around your future here in Saskatchewan.

I add to that one other thing. I say to them, just take a look around in your community for a moment. Take a look in small communities or larger communities. It doesn't matter about the size. There's business after business after business that are owned by people that are probably at the stage in their life where they're thinking about moving on. They're thinking about retiring. They're thinking about making a change in their life. And in a lot of cases, they may have a succession plan in place, but there's a ton of them, there is just hundreds of businesses out there that there really isn't a succession plan in place. But there is a fantastic business opportunity that presents itself for someone that's motivated to take it on.

And I think and I say to people, whatever it is . . . I remember one in Unity, Saskatchewan here last fall, meeting with some students there. And there was a young lady there, she came up to me afterwards and said, I've never had anybody advise me of that; I've never had anybody say that to me. And she said she wanted to go into the hairdressing business but she wasn't sure how to go about it. And she said, you know, actually it's made me think, what you've said to me, because there's a couple of businesses in this town that I think they're pretty good, that are in that business. And I actually now am going to go and approach them and say to them, I would like to start working for you and maybe build towards the ownership of that business at some point in time.

And I think that's just one small example of business after business that are extremely good businesses, small businesses. They are clearly the engine of growth in our province that I think young people should be thinking about. You know, I tell people this as well: there's a special place reserved for those who make those kinds of choices. There's a special place in ownership in terms of being your own boss, in terms of being the person who makes the decisions about that business. I think society reserves a special place for them because they are the people who drive the economy. They are the people who employ people here in Saskatchewan. They are the people who pay the majority of taxes in Saskatchewan. They are the people who make those kinds of decisions that are right for our society, I think.

And as I say, there is a special place reserved for them because we all understand that, generally speaking, most of the growth

that we see in Saskatchewan is as a result of small-business owners expanding their business, making those kinds of good choices, hiring additional people, building on to their business, doing all of those things that result in the growth of our province.

So I think this is something that's very important. That kind of thing here in Saskatchewan that we see that's taking place where we see our province growing — new houses being built, businesses being built all over Saskatchewan, fantastic opportunities here in our province to move forward. And I can't help but think that we're on the right track with respect to those decisions that have been made here in our province.

[12:45]

And to those young people that are out there, one of the other things is around the tuition that they pay here in Saskatchewan, and how our graduate retention plan can help them manage that tuition going forward where they will get their tuition back here in Saskatchewan — essentially a free education to be able to take up and move into the workforce here in Saskatchewan.

So you know, we and all MLAs on both sides . . . I'm sure this happens on a regular basis. You have young people coming up to you, and they may ask for your help with respect to education. They're thinking to themselves, I'm not sure that our family can afford to put me through an education. I want to do that though, whether it's in technical institutions or whether it's in the universities here in Saskatchewan. Well frankly, that's one of our jobs. That's one of the things that we are most proud of, is steering them in the right direction in terms of student loans and all of those kinds of things, so that they can embark upon an education and make a better life for themselves and eventually a better life for their family that I'm sure all of them aspire to have.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think we're on the right track here in Saskatchewan. Is everything right? Of course it's not. Of course it's not. There's always going to be challenges in Saskatchewan in terms of continuing to see our growth. There's going to be mistakes made by people. There's going to be mistakes made by governments. And Lord knows we've made some of them, and some of them have been on the floor of the legislature that I've been responding to in the last few days.

Mr. Speaker, yes of course. I said this to the media when I was talking to them out there this afternoon in the scrum. Of course we would have done it different had we known and had the benefit of hindsight. Of course we would have. Any reasonable person can look at all of these progressions of events and say, well would you have done something different had you known? Yes, of course we would. But we don't have the benefit of hindsight when you're in the position where you have to make the decision now. You simply don't have that luxury of saying, what if? You have to say, what are we going to do, is what the question is.

And you look at this whole smart meter situation, and yes, there was a lot of mistakes made with respect to this. But we were constantly advised by people who are in the know, people who make these decisions on a daily basis, the people who keep the lights on in this very building. They made those kinds of

decisions, and I don't begrudge the fact that they are in those positions. They are there because they've got a good quality education. They've worked very, very hard. There's a lot of very, very good people that work at SaskPower that make these decisions and keep these lights on, and we kind of forget about all of that. But the fact of the matter is we rely on those judgments. We rely on that advice.

We aren't in a position to be able to be infallible. We are infallible. We're human after all. And I would just say that, yes, there was problems associated with this, but I think the intent was good all the way along. I think that's exactly the progression and good governance that I think people would want to see from a government here in Saskatchewan with respect to this program. And I think the facts speak for themselves with respect to this.

Mr. Speaker, our government I think is on the right path. I think we're seeing that here in Saskatchewan, I think, through a whole host of things that are important. In my portfolio, one of the responsibilities that we're looking at is in terms of continuing to see growth here in Saskatchewan. We promote trade here in our province and we do it for some very, very good reasons. Mr. Speaker, you would know, and I think that all members of the legislature would know, that we are a trading province. We're a resource-driven province here in Saskatchewan. And as a result of that, as a result of that, we have to think about what we do to continue to see that growth going forward here in Saskatchewan.

I can't remember the number — our ministry folks did it — I think it was 65 or 66 per cent of our GDP, of our gross domestic product here in Saskatchewan, is as a direct result of trade: of selling grain into the international markets, of selling potash into the international markets, of selling uranium and manufactured goods into the international markets. And we're aware that prices go up and prices go down in Saskatchewan, but people on a daily basis take up that challenge and export into the international markets our product to the rest of Canada or into the United States or to the world, indeed. And we are the leader in area after area after area.

But one of the things that was highlighted last year when we saw rail congestion here in Saskatchewan, it wasn't just one commodity that suffered in terms of those exports. It was all of the commodities that we export that suffered in terms of moving those products out of Saskatchewan. So if we're going to continue to see growth in Saskatchewan, and I think we will and I'm sure we will here in Saskatchewan, we're going to continue to export potash, we're going to continue to export a whole host of grains and uranium and all of those kinds of things from our great province here in Saskatchewan. If we're going to continue to see that, we have to make sure that those transportation corridors are as efficient as possible.

And so we may need to take a look at other options, Mr. Speaker. We have two rail carriers here in Saskatchewan. We also are supported by a network of short rail lines here in our province. I think they do a pretty darn good job of moving product, but there's always improvements that are necessary to keep up with the growth. And when you go through commodity groupings one after another, and you talk to them about what kind of exports that they expect we will see in the future, all of

them are universal in what they say to us. And that is, we expect continued and very, very significant growth going forward. So that's something that we're looking at as a priority. I think that's why we are such strong supporters of free trade initiatives in Saskatchewan, because that is the very lifeblood of our province here in terms of the fortunes going forward here in Saskatchewan.

And in addition to that, as a result of that, we need to continue to build a skilled workforce to be able to take up the challenges of new jobs, to be able to take up the challenges in terms of what businesses need to be successful here in Saskatchewan, and to see that growth going forward. And that's why we are continuing to add to that complement of services and classes and, you know, adult basic education and additional seats for training at the technical institutes, apprenticeship training, and all of those kinds of things. That's why we will continue to press forward on that.

At this time we have historical highs in terms of the number of people who want to access those kinds of services. And we have a responsibility as a government and as a society to help our young people move into those and down those career paths, and we take that very seriously with respect to it, Mr. Speaker. So you will see that continue to be an emphasis of our government going forward.

You know, infrastructure of course is one of the topics that is always on the minds of people here in Saskatchewan. We'll continue to make investments in that here in Saskatchewan. But one of the things I'm most proud about our Throne Speech, and I think many of our members or all of our members would agree with us, when it comes to things like liquor stores. Why have we been building liquor stores with taxpayers' dollars here in Saskatchewan when there's so many other areas that should be considered priority areas for governments, successive governments?

I look around and see some of these liquor stores that were built with taxpayers' dollars in Saskatchewan and it makes you really wonder what was the thought pattern behind that. What was the thought process that was going into that type of development here in Saskatchewan? We don't need to have all of these stores owned by the government. We don't need to continue to invest in that. We have scarce dollars, scarce infrastructure dollars that should be put into areas that are a lot more of a priority for the people of Saskatchewan when it comes to things like health care, long-term care beds. You know, greater numbers of hospitals here in Saskatchewan, all of those kinds of things are our greater priority, I believe, than putting it into liquor stores, into the bricks and mortar of liquor stores.

I think in every one of our constituencies you can look around at the highways. The Premier kind of chides me from time to time about all the highways that have been built in the Kindersley constituency. I can't think of one, but there must be one out there somewhere that's been upgraded because I'm not aware of it. But anyway, we're putting a lot of dollars into highways here in Saskatchewan, but nevertheless there needs to be more. And we all know that. There was a system built of thin membrane highways that were for another era, frankly. What we've seen in terms of, what we've seen in terms of growth in that area is where we see a lot more heavy traffic on the road.

We see a lot more traffic, period, on the road than we've ever seen before. And those highways were built for a different era. So we have to move forward in terms of upgrading that.

But of course, with one of the largest networks, or I think the largest network of highways in Canada for the population base that we have, that's widely distributed, that population base around our province, of course there's going to be challenges in this area. But I think the Ministry of Highways is doing a good job in terms of identifying those priority areas that need to be addressed and moving forward.

So we'll continue to see that, and we'll see those large projects as well like we see here in Regina right now, where we're building a state-of-the-art bypass system here in Regina that's going to be amazing when it's completed and will certainly help the traffic flow. And when I'm in Saskatoon and you pull into Saskatoon on the west side which, you know, that's the direction I come in from, from my constituency. You're going to visit Saskatoon or do some business in Saskatoon and now you have the highway going around the south part of our province. Or the south part of the city, I should say, the south bridge. It's just amazing how quickly you can move around the city on that side compared to what you used to face, Mr. Speaker.

And I think clearly the city of Saskatoon has identified some other areas when you look at the north bridge, and it makes sense. I think anybody, when you look at that, understands the kind of traffic flow patterns that have changed, and how they've changed and how much more traffic there is in the industrial corridor, the northern part of the city, and in the housing developments that are in place there as well. So we need to think about those as well going forward. And I think that's a very, very important consideration.

As the time is starting to kind of wind down here, I'm going to move quickly through some of the other areas that I think are important in terms of Saskatchewan.

When you look at health care in our province, again it's an area that our government spends a tremendous amount of time thinking about and working in those areas trying to make them efficient, Mr. Speaker. And again I look at the kinds of discussion that we see in the legislature here around the whole lean process and does it make sense. And the opposition would say of course it doesn't make sense and all of that kind of stuff. But I think the facts speak for themselves with respect to this. There has been savings. There has been a significant amount of savings. Yes, there's been an investment to try and change behaviours and patterns of development and all of those kinds of things to try and bring our health care system up to a greater level of efficiency than we've seen before, and I think that's important that we do those kinds of things.

I think we should always be questioning, always be questioning the system. When I say the system, whether it's in health care, whether it's in education, or whether it's in highways or any other part of government, we should always be questioning, are we getting the best bang for our buck out of these types of operations that we on a daily basis manage here in Saskatchewan? And I think that's the hallmark in a lot of ways of this government, is that we are not going to be stuck in the

status quo of just saying nothing should ever change because it's always been done that way; we shouldn't think about change. Well I think that's wrong, Mr. Speaker. I think there's always going to be efficiencies.

If you look at the business world, anybody who comes up with the proverbial better mousetrap, they are incredibly rewarded by society for making that change that results in a product being better, faster delivery, services that are better, all of those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker. And that example should be applied to government in spades, Mr. Speaker. And I think it is being applied with respect to health care here in Saskatchewan to ensure that we have an efficient system going forward. We have to make sure that scarce tax dollars are being managed in an appropriate way, and I think we are doing the best we possibly can. And I commend the Minister of Health and the Minister of Rural and Remote Health as well for taking a look at the system and asking those very relevant questions about what we have to do to make sure that this is managed better in the future, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said about the Throne Speech here in the legislature in the last while. Mr. Speaker, the opposition has made their amendment. I clearly, Mr. Speaker, will not be supporting the amendment going forward. And I will support wholeheartedly the efforts of this government and wholeheartedly will be voting in favour of the Throne Speech.

The Speaker: — It now being after the hour of 1 o'clock, this House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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