



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

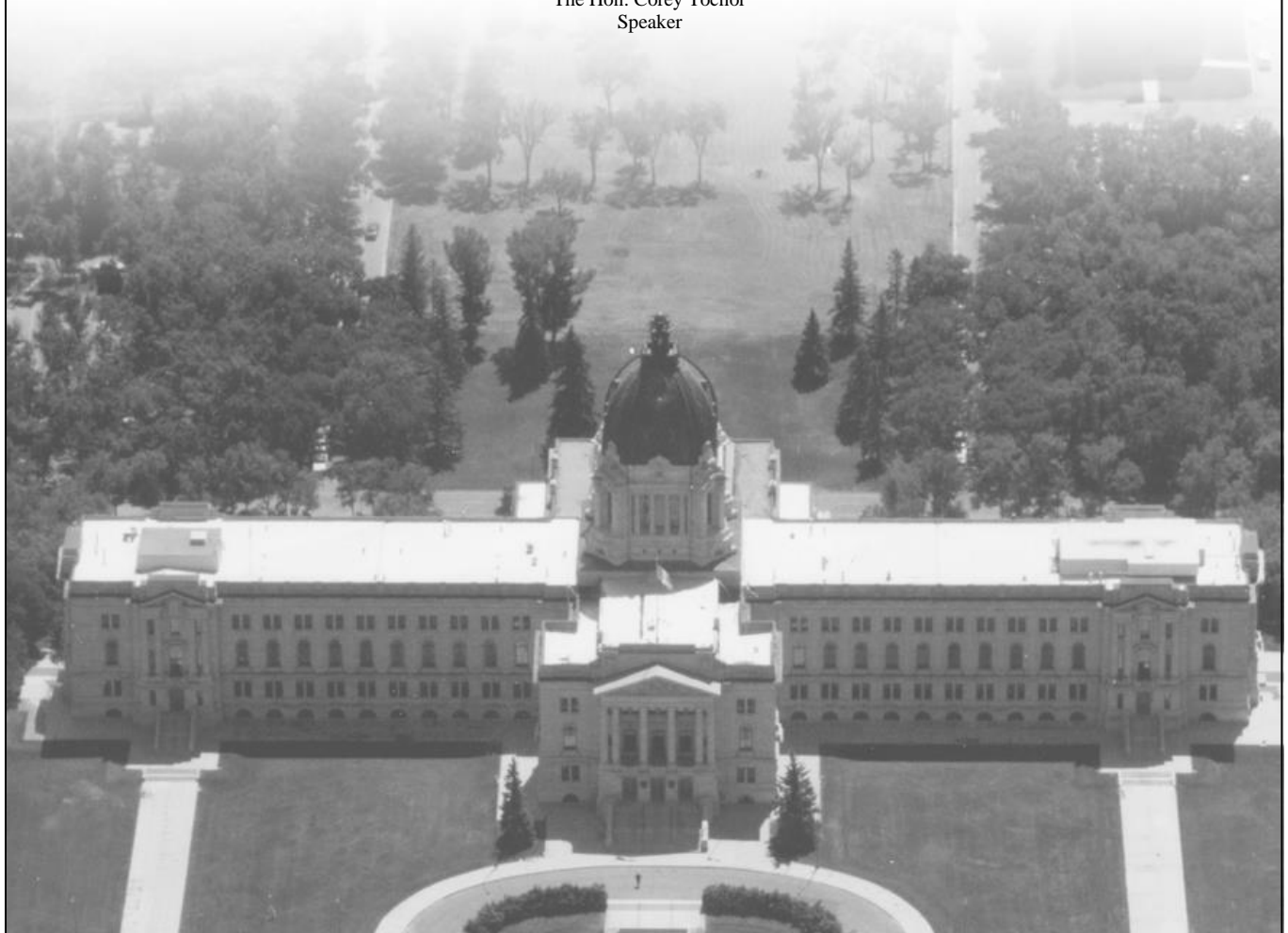
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Corey Tochor
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
1st Session — 28th Legislature

Speaker — Hon. Corey Tochor

Premier — Hon. Brad Wall

Leader of the Opposition — Trent Wotherspoon

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Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

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Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 51; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 10

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce individuals sitting in your gallery today representing the MS [multiple sclerosis] Society of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we are joined by Erin Kuan, the president of the MS Society of Canada for Saskatchewan and Manitoba divisions. As well, Mr. Speaker, Jessica MacPherson who is director of government relations and research support for the Saskatchewan division of MS Society. Brian Duck is past Chair of the MS Society and a current board member.

Mr. Speaker, earlier, just moments ago Nicole Tiller, who is a Saskatchewan resident living with MS, pinned the carnation on me in honour of MS Awareness Month. And I know that all members are joining us in recognizing that here today. And so I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming our guests from the MS Society of Saskatchewan to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to join with the minister in welcoming these guests today, Ms. Erin Kuan, Ms. Jessica MacPherson, and Brian Duck to their legislature today, again in honour of MS Awareness Month. And just I would like to say thank you on behalf of the official opposition for all that you do for advocacy for those . . . for helping MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] better understand some of the challenges that those living with MS and their families face, so we can create better policy for the work that you do in supporting individuals who have a diagnosis of MS, and for all the work that you do around fundraising and to better support research. So thank you for all that you do for our people here in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and across Canada for better improving the lives of those living with MS. Thank you. And I'd ask all my colleagues to join with me as well in welcoming these guests to their legislature.

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

Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the Assembly I'd like to introduce the grade 7 and 9 class from the Countryside Mennonite school in Saltcoats. We've got eight grade 7 and 9 students and as well their teacher, Mrs. Bonnie Penner; and chaperones Evan and Janelle Penner, Galen and Valerie Wohlgemuth, John and Candice Wohlgemuth, and Melinda Penner. And these are children and grandchildren of various industries in the area such as Castleton Industries, Penn-Truss, Railside Homes, Penner

Insulating, Cut Arm Agro, Sunshine Landscaping — a very industrious bunch in our area.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of funding heritage languages here in Saskatchewan. And we are very disappointed to know that after 25 years, the Government of Saskatchewan is now discontinuing all supports for heritage language learning in Saskatchewan.

Since 1991 heritage language schools have depended on this modest funding from the Ministry of Education to help sustain their programs. Now as a result of the announcement by the Ministry of Education, many of these non-profit heritage language schools will be faced with the difficult decision of whether they can continue to operate.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to know that it's increasingly important to work towards improving of access to indigenous languages, many of which are endangered. Heritage language programs provide support not only for immigrants, refugees, and their descendants but also for Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians who recognize the benefits of learning additional languages.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to reconsider this decision and restore funding for heritage language education in Saskatchewan heritage language schools.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people presenting this petition are from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Carbon Capture and Storage Technology

Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, China is the world's largest source of carbon emissions, and last week the International Energy Agency released a report explaining that retrofitting China's coal-fired fleet is the best option for reducing their carbon emissions.

Saskatchewan is home to the world's first commercial-scale carbon capture facility retrofitted to coal-powered generating plants. We are the world leaders in this technology. Between January and April of 2016 alone, SaskPower has captured

299 000 tonnes of CO₂. That's the equivalent of taking about 75,000 cars off the road. This spring we announced a partnership with BHP to develop a CCS [carbon capture and storage] knowledge centre to share our experience with companies and countries looking to address climate change.

Mr. Speaker, the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases is the United States, and last week the Environmental Protection Agency agreed that using CCS is essential to continued coal power generation. Green Alliance highlights that CCS is the only technology available to decarbonize heavy industry to the extent needed to meet carbon targets. Duncan Kenyon from the Pembina Institute recognizes that "There are so many assets and such a vast infrastructure invested in fossil fuels, the short- and medium-term reality is that we need carbon capture."

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members join me congratulating Sask Power on the world-leading technology in developing CCS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

National Fiddling Day

Ms. Sproule: — In 2015 Canada's Parliament proclaimed the third Saturday in May of each year as the country's National Fiddling Day to ensure that the historical and contemporary importance of the fiddle as well as its unique contribution to Canadian culture is not only recognized but made known to a broader audience.

This past Saturday fiddlers from across the country filled my Facebook feed with photos and videos of their celebration of National Fiddling Day, and I was lucky enough to join with good friends to celebrate our wonderful Canadian fiddle culture just north of Prince Albert, playing tunes together for three hours. Malcolm McLeod also organized an event right here in Regina.

Over the centuries, newcomers from many different cultures have come to Canada, sharing their own styles and their own interpretations of traditional fiddle music. The fiddle was introduced in Canada by the Jesuits in the 17th century. From those first days in New France entertaining the members of l'Ordre de Bon Temps, this humble yet complex instrument has been the catalyst for cultural development throughout our country. The early French settlers and the famed coureurs de bois took the fiddle with them to the North and to the West. Indeed it is representative of the Métis culture to this day. The Celtic settlers and explorers also brought their unique style of fiddling that can still be found in Cape Breton and the Ottawa Valley.

Mr. Speaker, our range of fiddling styles are as reflective of the people from whom we come and who we have become, but when it comes to fiddling there is no such thing as a language or cultural barrier. I ask all members to join with me to acknowledge the unique importance of the fiddle as a cultural icon and its celebration on National Fiddling Day.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month

Mr. Bonk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise in this Assembly today to mark MS Awareness Month. As you know, multiple sclerosis is a neurological disease that impairs and destroys nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. The impact of MS in Saskatchewan reaches beyond the estimated 3,500 people in this province living with MS. The effects of this degenerative disease touch families, friends, workplaces, and communities.

Earlier this year, we received the recommendations from the Multiple Sclerosis advisory panel of Saskatchewan. The panel recommended ways to improve the care experience, support research and education, and enable Saskatchewan people living with MS to participate in clinical trials that focus on improving a person's conditions or symptoms.

Mr. Speaker, our government has committed to the establishment of an MS patient registry. We have also committed to the creation of an advisory council on degenerative neurological diseases and will continue to consider the panel's other recommendations. Our government is committed to improving the care and support of people affected by MS and to advance research in Saskatchewan. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like also to join in welcoming the dignitaries of the MS Society of Canada and thank them for all their hard work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Biju and Thingyan Celebration

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on May 7th I had the opportunity to attend the Biju/Thingyan 2016 celebration hosted by the Chakma and Myanmar immigrant communities in Regina. The event was a joint endeavour between the two communities to belatedly celebrate Biju and Thingyan.

Biju is traditionally a three-day-long festival celebrated by the Chakmas, an indigenous group of people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It is the largest carnival of all the indigenous peoples in the region. Thingyan is traditionally a four-day-long water festival that ushers in the Myanmar New Year. The festival is believed to rinse all bad luck, sins, and evil deeds of the past year.

I was honoured to bring greetings at this event on behalf of the official opposition. Many other dignitaries were also in attendance, and we were treated to various cultural, dance, and musical performances, and some pretty amazing food.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking the leaders of the Chakma and Myanmar communities including Dr. Talukdar, who organized such a successful event, and also in thanking them for the valuable cultural contributions their communities make every day to our province's multicultural fabric.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Provincial Fossil Chosen

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over 14,000 votes were cast, and Scotty the T. Rex is now our new provincial emblem. Scotty is a 65-million-year-old T. Rex skeleton. He was discovered on August the 16th, 1991 and was the first found in Saskatchewan. In June 1994, excavation began and more than 6,000 people visited the excavation site that year.

Mr. Speaker, there were many great fossils to choose from, including Big Bert, the 92-million-year-old crocodile who took second. In addition to the voting, grade 7 classes from across the province were invited to learn about the fossils on the candidate list, choose from one they think would be the best representing Saskatchewan, and create a second video to argue their case. The videos entered into a contest and were posted online and helped promote the contest for Saskatchewan fossils.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that the grade 7 class from Alameda School submitted the winning video. On Thursday they came for a tour of their legislature and they earned the chance to join the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport in the unveiling of Scotty at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Royal Saskatchewan Museum for their hard work, dedication to this project; the public for taking the time to vote; and the classes for their participation in the contest with great enthusiasm. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Family First Radiothon in Moose Jaw

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to talk about the generosity of the citizens of Moose Jaw, especially in regards to the 10th annual Family First Radiothon held earlier this month. The radiothon is a presentation of the Moose Jaw Health Foundation in support of the hospital.

This year was unique as, for the first time, the radiothon was hosted in the entrance lobby of the Dr. F.H. Wigmore Regional Hospital which was opened last fall by our government. The 36-hour live broadcast on CHAB radio was an opportunity for donors, hospital staff, and radiothon organizers as they watched the donations come in.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the people and the businesses of Moose Jaw and area are incredibly generous. This was confirmed as the fundraising total of \$150,000 was met and exceeded by almost \$25,000. The annual radiothon has experienced phenomenal success as the total funds raised in the past 10 years has exceeded \$3 million. This year, funds are going to support the life-saving equipment for Moose Jaw and the people of the Five Hills Health Region.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating the Moose Jaw Health Foundation and the organizers of this year's radiothon, and to thank the people and businesses who once again reached deep and generously

donated to assist and provide the health needs of our community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

JDC West 2016 Business Competition

Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past January, students from the University of Regina's Paul Hill School of Business competed in the 2016 JDC [Jeux du Commerce] West business competition, which was hosted by the University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this competition provides students with opportunities to achieve excellence in academics, community stewardship, and professional and personal growth. Participants worked for eight months prior to the competition, dedicating countless hours to preparing their cases, raising funds for charities, and volunteering in their home communities.

Mr. Speaker, the competition's theme for 2016 was Achieving Excellence, and the team from Regina Hill School of Business did just that by placing top three in the following categories. This list is very long and impressive: second place for Overall School of the Year; first place for Overall Academic School of the Year; first place in the taxation and not-for-profit competitions; second place in the human resources, business strategy, and accounting competitions; third place in the finance competition and most charity hours.

JDC West participants from the University of Regina raised money for Hope's Home and contributed more than 1,000 volunteer hours in Regina and area. These are the kind of young leaders I'm proud to champion, Mr. Speaker. I ask all members to join me in thanking the 2016 Hill School of Business JDC West team for their many contributions to our community and congratulate them on their outstanding performance at the competition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

SaskTel Risk Assessment

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we just had an election where the Premier hid the true state of our finances and his budget, and over and over again, he promised he wouldn't privatize our Crowns. Well the truth is leaking out. The deficits are much, much bigger than pretended by the Premier and he's now reviewing, doing a supposed review of SaskTel. Everyone knows, as one commentator put it, that the biggest risk to SaskTel is a cash-strapped, third-term Sask Party government. And the Premier has already put privatization on the table of this company that belongs to all Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, this is the party and the Premier that is hiding the finances, that's hiding the budget, that's hiding the information with his GTH [Global Transportation Hub] land scandal. Does he really not understand why Saskatchewan people are just a little skeptical about how open and fair and honest his supposed assessment of SaskTel will be?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I think it's very important in the wake of the recent takeover of MTS [Manitoba Telecom Services], the proposal to take it over by Bell, that we ask the Crown corporation, SaskTel, to look at any risk that might exist to the Crown as a result of it now being the only small and regional Crown telephone company, frankly, in the country.

I think that risk analysis may highlight a number of things. It may highlight there is no particular new risks to identify, that SaskTel can continue to operate as it has, providing good service to the people of this province and being the asset that it is for all of the people of Saskatchewan.

There may be other elements that are identified in this analysis that we can react to to strengthen SaskTel. I think the bottom line is that Saskatchewan people will want to ensure that the jobs that are here because of SaskTel stay; that revenue to the province remains, Mr. Speaker; that this company, which has been invaluable in the life of the province, is protected from whatever risks that may exist with now it being the only, the only regional telco in the country, the only small one.

Mr. Speaker, I would note that as a result of CRTC [Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission] rulings from the previous federal government, with no apparent hopes of them being reversed, SaskTel is required to share all of the network that it has built through the taxpayers' investment with other companies, with competitors. We need to do whatever we can to protect SaskTel not just for today, but for years into the future.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the biggest risk to SaskTel and our Crowns is that cash-strapped government, Mr. Speaker. Everyone knows that. And now he's talking just weeks after an election about a costly referendum. You know, if he wanted a mandate to privatize, he should have been honest to Saskatchewan people during the election. The fact is the Premier solemnly swore he would not privatize SaskTel. Now, just weeks later, he says privatization is on the table.

The people of Saskatchewan know the real value of SaskTel. They know how much more affordable phones and mobile devices are here. They know how important it is to our economy, with thousands of jobs all across our province, with hundreds right here in Regina. They know that the more than \$500 million SaskTel has paid in dividends over the last five years alone helps to fund things like classrooms and hospitals and lightens the load on taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask again why wasn't the Premier straight with Saskatchewan people about his plans on this front during the election?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was asked

during the election campaign if our government would change the Crown protection Act, which obviously governs what governments can or can't do with any of the Crowns, beyond what we'd campaigned on with respect to SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority]. I said that we wouldn't and we would keep that promise. That's what we have done for the last eight years, Mr. Speaker, is worked hard to keep the promises that we've made.

What happened post the election was the takeover in our neighbouring province, the province of Manitoba, of the only other small regional telephone company, Manitoba telephones, by Bell. Mr. Speaker, that obviously will impact on SaskTel here. We don't know the degree to which it will impact on SaskTel.

I think it's completely reasonable that the board and the executives would hire some experts in the industry to provide a risk analysis and then report transparently back to the shareholders of SaskTel, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, there will never be a change in the ownership structure of SaskTel without a mandate from the people of this province so long as we have the opportunity to serve in government, and I'm sure that would be the case for members opposite.

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

SaskPower Rate Increases

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, it's really hard to understand why they're so chipper over there. I sure don't remember them campaigning on raising SaskPower rates either. Mr. Speaker, for years this government and this Premier have mismanaged and bungled project after project, and the people of Saskatchewan have been stuck with the bill.

We haven't seen a budget from this government. We saw nothing in the Throne Speech by way of a vision for the future of this province. But on Friday we did see more costs being thrown on the backs of hard-working Saskatchewan families and the businesses who are so crucial to our great province.

SaskPower says they need to raise rates 5 per cent this summer and then another 5 per cent just six months later. Mr. Speaker, will someone over there stand up and admit that Sask Party mismanagement is hurting the bottom lines of families throughout Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Economy and SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, due to aging infrastructure and record demands on power, about \$1 billion a year is being spent on the grid in Saskatchewan, the power system in our province. Rates are based on future needs for the people of Saskatchewan.

SaskPower has added about 60,000 new customers since 2007. About 82,000 more are projected over the next 10 years, Mr. Speaker, with plans to add over 2000 megawatts of power. As a result of all of that, Mr. Speaker, there's a need to raise rates

here in the province of Saskatchewan by 5 per cent in July and another 5 per cent in January of next year. But even with that, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan still enjoys the third-largest basket of utilities here in the country.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, do I need to remind the minister about the so-called smart meters? The Sask Party was warned not to use them. They plowed ahead anyways, and then they ended up setting some homes on fire. Then the Sask Party burned through even more money by handing over another \$23 million to the manufacturer of those meters. And you didn't talk about this, Mr. Speaker: there's also their carbon capture fiasco that cost \$1.5 billion, and it has had many, many costly setbacks. Things have gotten so bad, even with rate hikes SaskPower's debt is still going up.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've got to wonder, is Sask Party taking notes from Ontario's Kathleen Wynne? Is this mismanagement of SaskPower all a part of a plan to try to privatize it, or have they just mismanaged SaskPower so badly and chose to hide these rate hikes from Saskatchewan people during the election?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Economy and SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the smart meters, \$24 million was received back to the people of Saskatchewan in cash refund, \$18 million was received in terms of future purchases, \$5 million was received in terms of research and development on a new meter.

After all, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite makes it sound like no one in the world is using those meters, Mr. Speaker. But just recently in Medicine Hat, Alberta, they have about 80,000 of those meters installed with no recorded incidents, Mr. Speaker. Before we would ever go back to try on a smart meter here in Saskatchewan, we'd want to try them under Saskatchewan conditions, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that they can meet the rigorous environmental- and weather-related activities that we have here in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Sproule: — That darn winter, Mr. Speaker. Things have gotten so bad that even with the rate hikes, SaskPower's debt still continues to rise. Saskatchewan people are burdened not only by the increasing power bills, but also the Sask Party keeps racking up the debt. Since 2011, five years ago, the debt has more than doubled. That's an additional \$4.1 billion.

Currently, SaskPower's debt is equal to three-quarters of what the company is worth. SaskPower officials have told us that this is the maximum debt threshold that the company can handle, and yet the Sask Party is putting our public company in huge risk.

To the minister: when will this government stop burdening the people of Saskatchewan with the costs of their poor management in our Crown corporations?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Under the NDP [New Democratic Party], rates increased almost every single year that they were in government, with a shrinking population here in the province of Saskatchewan. Our government has increased rates to keep up with the demand and to ensure that there is reinvestment through the dividends back into SaskPower, Mr. Speaker.

Through 2000 and 2007, \$638 million at the time, ranging from 60 to 90 per cent of the dividend, or of the net income, pardon me, of SaskPower was stripped away by the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has not done that, Mr. Speaker. There's been two occasions where dividends have been paid to the Government of Saskatchewan, and the first one was as a result of significant amounts of water flows in the river systems here in the province of Saskatchewan.

I will remind the members opposite of a program that the NDP had opposite, Mr. Speaker, perhaps in the next question.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Prevention of Domestic Violence

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of things that the government was not upfront about throughout the election. However, one thing they were clear on was their lack of commitment to address domestic violence. When this government released their poverty reduction strategy in February, they very clearly stated that they would not implement initiatives to address interpersonal violence and domestic abuse until "fiscal capacity allows."

Our province has the highest rate of domestic violence deaths in Canada, and tragically this weekend we saw another life lost. Regardless of the fiscal situation, will the minister commit to advice that his own government commissioned and take efforts to prevent and reduce interpersonal violence and domestic abuse?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for the question. Mr. Speaker, we've done quite a bit on the area of domestic violence over the years that we've had the privilege of being in government. Just last year, we introduced amendments to *The Victims of Domestic Violence Act*, Bills 144 and 152, to enhance the ability of police and the justice systems to engage in dealing with this very, very difficult problem.

[14:00]

And just last fall, Mr. Speaker, we introduced our plan to bring forward a domestic violence death review committee, which is currently in the process of being assembled. We've had to work on some information-sharing agreements, Mr. Speaker, to bring that to bear. We will be announcing the memberships of that committee in the very, very near future, Mr. Speaker, with their

work to begin in early July.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the extent that the member opposite is critical of our commitment, I think we've made some significant contributions to this in the years since we've had the privilege of being here, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the highest rates of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and homicide. We know that as economic times get worse, we actually see increases in violence, and particularly violence against women. At a time when supports should be bolstered, this government is not taking action fast enough.

It is clear that victims of domestic violence are not the main priority of this government. Even in a fiscally restrained period, the government still finds money for takeout food and private contract fiascos. Even a fraction of that money would go a long way in providing initiatives to address interpersonal violence and domestic abuse. How can the Premier justify such misplaced priorities?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2015-16 this government invested over \$11 million to provide support for interpersonal violence and abuse services, including 12 transition houses, family violence outreach services, and sexual assault services.

Last year alone, Mr. Speaker, our funding commitment increased by 20 per cent, and that includes a new transition house that we committed to in Melfort, Mr. Speaker. So not only that, with the proclamations of Violence Prevention Week, we've had some promotional work that's been done. Last year we brought forward our Who Will You Help video campaign which has been received very, very well, not only with the schools, Mr. Speaker, but through the public generally.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we have more work to do. And certainly the work that's being done by the domestic violence death review committee is going to point out perhaps some gaps that are in the programming, Mr. Speaker, and help us identify some of that, Mr. Speaker. But our commitment to combat domestic violence, Mr. Speaker, will continue.

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

Education Funding and Government Consultations

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, it's nothing but excuses from this government now; well, excuses and now revelations about the plans they kept secret during the campaign. The Minister of Education let slip on Friday before the long weekend that part of the "transformational change" the government announced in their Throne Speech would be amalgamation of school boards.

Mr. Speaker, this throws yet another curve ball at school boards who are already struggling with Sask Party cuts, all of the

unknown cuts in the budget, increased demands, and growing class sizes. Now they've added another layer of uncertainty in our kids' schools. Mr. Speaker, clearly this was their plan all along, so why did they keep this secret during the campaign, and why are they speaking so cryptically now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the House and I can advise the school boards that we've made no determination or no decision on anything. What I can say is we would like to have an open and frank discussion and some very careful consideration of what options are there to continue to ensure that we're able to provide the best quality of education for our students. We want to have consultation to find out if we can do this in a more effective and more cost-effective manner, Mr. Speaker, unlike the NDP that chose to close 176 schools, neglect the schools — they drove 35,000 students out of our province, Mr. Speaker — that is not the direction we're going. We're going to have some consultation. We're planning for growth, and we're planning for the best possible outcome for all of our students.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, we're speaking about the condition in our children's schools today. Of course school boards are willing to make sure that we have the best education system for our students, and of course consultation should take some time. But that still doesn't explain why they hid this plan from Saskatchewan families during the campaign.

It's almost June, Mr. Speaker, and all Saskatchewan school boards know right now is that, thanks to the cuts, they're short on money and the money that they need to give our kids the education Saskatchewan parents expect. Regina Public is over \$6 million short; Prairie Spirit, \$7.1 million; Regina Catholic, \$2 million short; Saskatoon Catholic and Public are both over \$3 million short each.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on about what these cuts mean. But let me try asking one more time, why is the minister throwing out even more uncertainty at our kids' schools before the budget comes out, and why didn't he talk about this during the campaign?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear to the members opposite and to the public, we have never ever cut funding to a school board in this province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have raised funding each and every year that we were in government, unlike the members opposite that chose to close 176 schools.

Mr. Speaker, I can say this: the budget line for education has more than doubled since 2007. We have increased operating funding by 31 per cent. We've increased capital spending by four times. We've increased child care spaces by 53 per cent. We've increased pre-K [pre-kindergarten] spaces by 104 per cent. We've increased child and intervention funding by . . . [inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker, those aren't cuts. Those are real increases because we care about the children in our province.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I will remind the minister that I sat at the school board table last year at Regina Public, and I sat through a budget where we had to find \$6.1 million to deal with the increased growth that was not funded by this government. There is concern about what transformational change now will mean for local governance at our schools.

The minister's amalgamation trial balloon last Friday doesn't make very much sense, especially considering that municipal elections for school board trustees are just five months away. Some are even wondering if this government means to do away with elected school board trustees altogether. So will the minister guarantee that transformational change and amalgamation won't lead to government-appointed school board trustees?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We'd like to ask all the school divisions in our province, all the staff, all the board members to participate in a process where they can have some meaningful input, that they can prescribe and plan where our government is going to go to and where our province should go to with education. We have a strategic sector plan, Mr. Speaker, that has outlined a plan that is the best for the students in our province. Now we as elected members, both school board members and government members, have to figure out the best way that we can fund that and deliver that.

Mr. Speaker, I can say this to the member opposite. We've increased our overall operating grant 31 per cent since November of 2007. Total pre-K to grade 12 education in our province is now nearly \$2 billion. The funding is over and above the \$966 million that we've spent on capital. Mr. Speaker, we have made a major investment in education. We're going to continue to do that. We support and value everything that takes place in our education . . . [inaudible] . . . and want to make sure it's sustainable.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of an answer, I'm going to ask the question again. Will the minister guarantee that transformational change and amalgamation won't lead to government-appointed school board trustees in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we have no preconceived plan or outcome for how that consultation might end up. Mr. Speaker, we want to have an open, candid, full, and frank discussion with the school divisions in our province, with the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], with the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], with our education partners. We don't want to put parameters on it before we start. We look to them for some much valued and much needed input. We want to participate with them in a full discussion so that we can plan where we take our province and where we take the education system, and we're not going to put boundaries on it

before we start.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Funding for Post-Secondary Education

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last year this government cut nearly \$10 million from the University of Saskatchewan's operating grant, forcing the university to dip into savings to make up the difference. That was on top of the additional \$20 million the university agreed to hold back in order to let the government balance its budget.

Now the university's acting provost is sounding the alarm. They can only rely on their savings for so long. And as education of course is the cornerstone of a strong society and economy, and as the acting provost said, the people of this province will most certainly feel the impact of under-investment in our university and in the post-secondary sector.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Advanced Education admit that they're not doing enough, and in fact that their cuts will be hurting not just our students, but the future of this province as well?

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. And the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, it's been this government that has invested and invested heavily in our post-secondary education sector here in the province of Saskatchewan, in our institutions, Mr. Speaker, as well as in the students themselves attending our institutions across the province.

Mr. Speaker, we've increased post-secondary, funding to our post-secondary education sector by some 61 per cent in just eight short years, Mr. Speaker. This is six and a half billion dollars of investment, to almost half a billion dollars of investment in infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. It includes a 350 per cent increase in student supports, Mr. Speaker, programs like the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings, the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, Mr. Speaker, and the graduate retention program that almost 10 per cent of our population here in the province are partaking in now.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, things are so great in this sector that Saskatchewan university students pay, on average, the second-highest tuition in the country, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan leadership. And if they've got a problem with that, Mr. Speaker, maybe they can take it up with Statistics Canada.

In terms of last year's budget, Mr. Speaker, that minister and that government stood in this House and made promises to the post-secondary sector. And then of course we found out that mid-year the Finance minister sent the Advanced Education minister around the sector asking for half of the increase back, Mr. Speaker. So again the sector is paying the price for mistakes that this government has made.

I want to know from the minister, Mr. Speaker, what guarantee can he make to the people of Saskatchewan, to our post-secondary sector, that when they stand in this House on June 1st that that's as bad as it gets, that they're not going to come around halfway through the year to take the other half of the increase back?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Advanced Education Minister.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. An indication of the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that institution, when ranked against its peers across the nation, is the second-best provincially funded institution in the nation of Canada, Mr. Speaker. The University of Regina ranked against their peers across the nation of Canada also ranked second in their level of provincial funding, Mr. Speaker.

This is a far cry, Mr. Speaker, from the commitment of the members opposite when they were in charge of the file. In 1993-94, '97-98, they cut nearly \$10 million out of the post-secondary budget here in the province of Saskatchewan. They made policy decisions, Mr. Speaker, that resulted in tuition increases at the University of Saskatchewan by some 175 per cent. The University of Regina was 144 per cent, Mr. Speaker; 336 per cent increase at the Sask Polytech, Mr. Speaker. This is the record of that party, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to investment in our post-secondary institutions and our students, Mr. Speaker, it's this government that will continue to invest to ensure that we keep our province strong.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 1 — *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016*

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 1, *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read for a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for the Liquor and Gaming Authority that Bill No. 1 be now introduced. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — In accordance with section 5(1) of *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*, this bill is required to be committed to a policy field committee after first reading. To which policy field committee shall this bill be committed?

I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I designate that Bill No. 1, *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016* be committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — To the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

[14:15]

Bill No. 2 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Crown Corporations' Fiscal Year End Standardization) Amendment Act, 2016*

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 2, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Crown Corporations' Fiscal Year End Standardization) Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Crown Investments that Bill No. 2, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Crown Corporations' Fiscal Year End Standardization) Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 3 — *The Teachers Superannuation and Disability Benefits Amendment Act, 2016*

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 3, *The Teachers Superannuation and Disability Benefits Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 3, *The Teachers Superannuation and Disability Benefits Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 4 — *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2016/Loi modificative de 2016 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 4, *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and

read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 4, *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 5 — *The Electronic Information and Documents Amendment Act, 2016*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 5, *The Electronic Information and Documents Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It is moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 5, *The Electronic Information and Documents Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 6 — *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 6, *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It is moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 6, *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016* be introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 7 — *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016 (No. 2)/Loi n° 2 de 2016 modifiant le droit législatif*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 7, *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 7, *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

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

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Standing Committee on House Services

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report that the committee has convened pursuant to rule 138 and is presenting its first report. I move:

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Chair:

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

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

TABLING OF COMMUNICATION

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I wish to table a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor dated May

24th, 2016 communicating the membership of the Board of Internal Economy is as follows: Hon. Corey Tochor, Chair; Hon. Jim Reiter; Hon. Jeremy Harrison; Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff; Randy Weekes; David Forbes; Warren McCall.

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. Buckingham, seconded by Ms. Carr, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Ms. Sproule.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise again today to conclude my remarks that I had the opportunity to start on Thursday. Just as we were ending on Thursday, I was talking about surgical wait times, pointing out that the one area this government had made progress since last March, since the last budget, those numbers have gone in exactly the wrong direction.

Starting in March 2015, wait times for surgeries across the province started increasing. Those waiting more than three months, the number of people waiting over three months for their surgeries has tripled in just 11 months. In Regina, the amount of people waiting more than three months for surgery has increased by 285 per cent, and in Saskatoon the amount of people waiting more than three months for surgeries increased by 120 per cent. Those waiting for more than six months, the amount of people waiting longer than six months for surgery has increased by 174 per cent. So this government, on the one thing that they had some success in, are going in exactly the wrong direction.

There's just a few other things I'd like to touch on very quickly that I would have liked to have seen in the Throne Speech and would expect to see in a budget. This government, a year and a half ago, came up with a mental health and addictions 10-year action plan with very little action tied to it, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you, in Saskatoon right now at RUH [Royal University Hospital] people who are suicidal, unless you are a 4 out of a 4, like you are . . . suicide is imminent, you are turned away or sent home after being assessed. I can tell you that the Dubé, from my understanding, is over capacity almost every day, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you that this government has a suicide protocol that is supposed to be, was supposed to be in place in 2011 across all health facilities and it is nowhere near that. This government is not doing what it needs to do around mental health.

I would have liked to have seen a palliative care strategy. There's no dementia strategy. With our aging population, no senior strategy. All those things tie together, Mr. Speaker. There's not a word on any of this. So we think about good investments in health care, which is sort of my theme of this,

good investments in health care: no palliative care strategy, no dementia strategy, no senior strategy, no work on their poverty reduction strategy which could go a long way in saving money in health care.

The reality is seniors' issues have not gone away either, so over the last session we raised many issues and concerns around long-term care and the lack of staff in long-term care. Their proposal of \$7.5 million, Mr. Speaker, is going to be a drop in the bucket in addressing those concerns.

PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], I would like to see this government move on making it a presumptive illness under workers' compensation and will be continuing to encourage the government to do that, Mr. Speaker.

So those are some of the things we'd like to see, Mr. Speaker, around health care. The reality is good investments are absolutely imperative in good . . . They should have happened in good fiscal times, Mr. Speaker. Think again what \$40 million could have done on anti-poverty reduction for health and saving taxpayers' money. Instead they poured it into John Black, Mr. Speaker. This is about smart investments. And now the financial situation is tight, Mr. Speaker, because of our natural resources and this government's mismanagement. I would argue not a single penny saved for this kind of day, Mr. Speaker; in fact, this government has accrued a whole bunch of debt. Now is the time for smart investment in many things, Mr. Speaker. So to that end I will be supporting the amendment and I will not be supporting the original motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to take part in the Throne Speech debate. Thank you for recognizing me. I want to first begin by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your election to the Chair. As well, I want to join with other members last week in congratulating all members to their election to the House.

Mr. Speaker, this is certainly very much an honour and a privilege that we all have. The way that I try to explain it when I, especially when I meet with school groups, is to try to put it into context, to say that for this four-year period of time we get to be one of 61 people in the entire province, out of 1.1 million people, that get to stand in this Chamber and say our piece on behalf of our constituents. And, Mr. Speaker, it's an honour that I just . . . I'm very honoured to have this role.

Mr. Speaker, I very quickly want to thank the people that give me that ability to be here — first and foremost, my constituents. Mr. Speaker, I am moving on to I guess it'll be 10 years next month that I've been the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy. So I want to thank the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy that have given me this opportunity.

I also want to thank our election team back home, Mr. Speaker. We have had a great team that has been in place for a number of elections now, and so I just very quickly want to thank them for putting in all the hard work that they did in helping with the re-election.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my family, especially Amanda and Jack, for their continued support to allow me to be in this place.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank certainly all of my colleagues for their support, but especially the member from Yorkton who, as the Minister for Rural and Remote Health, is a great partner to work with. I've been very fortunate in this role to have the support of members in the past, beginning with the member from Biggar and then the former member from Lloydminster and now the member from Yorkton. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how the member from Indian Head-Milestone did this job on his own. I certainly am very fortunate and I want to thank the member from Yorkton for all of his support and for being a good friend in the province. So I want to thank the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Speaker, when I was listening last week, not knowing if I was going to get a chance to get into the debate, I was listening to other members and trying to think about, okay, if I had an opportunity to reply to the Throne Speech, you know, where I would want to put my focus. And so, you know, first and foremost what came to mind, and when Her Honour was delivering the speech, is I think some very strong remarks, very positive remarks that she made on the economy and on the standing that this province has in the country and the standing that we need to have in this country when it comes to ensuring that we have the ability to responsibly develop our resources well into the future, and what that means, not only for our province but also for this country.

And so there were a number of members that spoke last week on the importance of the economy. Certainly we believe on this side of the House that all of the good services that we're able to provide as a government, none of that is possible without a strong economy, Mr. Speaker. So my remarks were initially going to focus on that, especially in light of what we're hearing by many on the national stage, certainly from members on the other side of the House, particularly from their federal party, Mr. Speaker. I think my brief comments on that will be that I would certainly urge, especially for me, my constituents that have a strong stake in ensuring that we have the ability to develop our resources in a responsible way . . .

Certainly we are feeling in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency, we're feeling the effects of a low oil price right now, Mr. Speaker. We certainly have been through this before and we will make it through this. But, Mr. Speaker, it certainly is taking its toll on our community and on employment. As well as, you know, just even I hear from friends of mine back home who, you know, even the number of kids that were in the daycare or in the kindergarten class are half of what it was at the beginning of the school year, Mr. Speaker, and it really shows that, you know, we're going through a difficult time.

But I would urge my constituents to pay very close attention to what is coming out of, especially, the NDP at a national level. And certainly there are supporters here in this province of what's being discussed in terms of policy. Mr. Speaker, this is very troubling, Mr. Speaker. And so that would have been the focus of my comments.

But, Mr. Speaker, I also had an opportunity to listen to the

member from Athabasca when he spoke. And I've said before in the House that I hope for however long I'm a member in this House, that he is a member as well, just so I have the opportunity to listen to what he has to say — not because it's relevant because, Mr. Speaker, it rarely is, Mr. Speaker. But as I was listening to the member, it sounded a lot like things that he's said in the past in this House.

[14:30]

And so I would say to people watching, if you want to hear more on the economy, look at the speeches that have been made by members of this side of the House, especially my friend from Walsh Acres who had a very good speech in terms of the economy. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, for members, if you missed what the member for Athabasca had to say, don't worry; he'll say it all again next year at the Throne Speech debate next year.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to focus most of my comments on health care, Mr. Speaker, the role that I have the . . . where I am, the area of responsibility. Mr. Speaker, and I'm pleased that I have the opportunity to follow up from the member from Riversdale who is the Health critic. And I will say, and I will give her credit. The member over the last number of years has been very, very diligent and very earnest in raising concerns, and she has taken a great deal of time in committee to try to understand the file. I give her a lot of credit for that, Mr. Speaker, to understand how the ministry operates and how we operate with our stakeholders.

And I was pleased to see in her comments that she agreed with comments that I had made in the last week of ensuring that we are doing all that we can to ensure that we are putting the health care system on a sustainable path moving forward. We've talked about ensuring that health care is sustainable, not only today or next year, or to try to make it through a difficult, more challenging fiscal situation for the government over the short term, but also ensuring that we're doing the things that we need to do to put health care on a sustainable path going forward into the future.

Mr. Speaker, today we will spend about 45 per cent . . . As a health care system, we'll spend about 45 per cent of the Finance minister's budget that he will table in the coming weeks. Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago that was 35 per cent. We will spend this year about \$591,000 an hour, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 366 days, because this last year was a leap year, Mr. Speaker. And so we have to do what we can to ensure that we are bending the cost curve and keeping our growth in terms of the health care budget to a minimum, Mr. Speaker, because the higher our budget increase is, that means there's going to be less money for education and agriculture and highways and social services and other important areas, Mr. Speaker.

And so as a government, we have worked very hard. And certainly beginning under the Deputy Premier when he was the Health minister, we have seen our increases in terms of the health budget come down to the point where on average over the last eight years our health budget has increased on average about 5 per cent. That's about 3 to 4 per cent lower than it was over the last eight years of the NDP government. Their health budgets were going up on average by 7 to 8 to 9 per cent a year.

And if you think about it, the economy's growing at 2 or 3 per cent a year, Mr. Speaker. We certainly are outstripping the rate in terms of what the economy can support in health care spending. And so while we are sitting at about a 5 per cent on average increase, we're certainly . . . [inaudible] . . . lower, on the lower end the last couple of years: three and a half, 3.4 per cent, 2.3 per cent last year, Mr. Speaker, and that trend is continuing.

So that's why we need to talk about ensuring that we are looking at continuous improvement and looking at how do we ensure that we are able to transform the health care system so that it can serve the people well into the future.

So the member opposite from Riversdale talked at some length about some work that had been done on transformational health care over . . . and reports that had been issued by the CMA [Canadian Medical Association] and the CNA [Canadian Nurses Association] and other organizations over the last number of years. And so I'll talk a little bit of what we've tried to focus on.

We've looked at it through the lens of the four betters: better health, better care, better value, and better teams. And so this work has begun even at the earliest days of the Patient First Review that really guided where we were going to move initially as a government in terms of health care reform in this province.

The better health, certainly we are seeing improvements being made in health promotion. We've seen some great results in terms of lowering some of our very problematic areas such as our HIV numbers in the province, our TB [tuberculosis] numbers in the province by putting in place under the former Health minister some very dedicated, specific strategies in those areas, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will say that so in terms . . . So that was on the better health side. So better care, we have certainly made significant changes within the health care system while working with our front-line providers to try to put in place the concept of continuous improvement: daily visual management, continuous improvement, Mr. Speaker. And why do we do that? So we've tried to do that because the people of Saskatchewan, the people of Canada, are paying a lot for their health care services. And, Mr. Speaker, we are not, compared to a lot of other countries . . . And I'll speak on more of a global basis, not necessarily specific to Saskatchewan because there's areas that we do well and there's areas that we need to do better in.

But in terms of Canada, Canadians pay a lot for our health care. And there are countries in the OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development] and other organizations that monitor this that get better outcomes, not necessarily by even spending more dollars than we do. So we need to look at the way that we're actually delivering services. And that is why we invested and we made the very conscious decision to look at what are the other high-performing health care organizations in North America.

I had the opportunity in November in 2014 of touring the Mayo Clinic, one of the, I think one of the highest performing health care organizations in North America — certainly one of the

most respected organizations — that has embedded in this concept of continuous improvement into their operations, Mr. Speaker. And so doing that we have seen some positive improvements.

For example, just to name a couple, rural patients that are referred to Regina General Hospital emergency for cardiac care . . . So this is in the event that somebody's had a heart attack and they are being sent to Regina General either by STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] or road ambulance. We've now changed the processes using input from the front-line staff to see that their diagnostics that they need to take place and their physician assessment are now occurring 50 per cent more quickly than when the way we previously used to do things.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if that saves us money. I don't know how much money that saves us, but if it's my family member, I certainly want that diagnostic procedures to happen 50 per cent quicker if a loved one is having a heart attack and being sent by ambulance to Regina from rural Saskatchewan.

Prince Albert Victoria Hospital has seen the reduction in the time that surgical patients are waiting for medication by 57 per cent. I don't know if that saves us any money, but again from the patient perspective, I'm glad that those patients . . . And if I was a patient, I'm glad that that patient is receiving their medication after surgery or in the surgical process 57 per cent less amount of time.

Mental health patients in Sun Country Health Region wait 78 per cent less time for a referral and an assessment. If you can imagine some of our most vulnerable individuals in our society, Mr. Speaker, can now count on quicker service in Sun Country and in Five Hills and in Regina Qu'Appelle.

For example, Sunrise Health Region mental health and addictions units patient capacity, because of what we're doing in continuous improvement, they've increased their capacity by 41 per cent without adding resources.

We can now see more people in a more timely way without adding resources. Too often in the past in health care, the answer was always just put more money into it and we'll get a better outcome. Well, Mr. Speaker, we weren't getting a better outcome so we need to actually look at what is the root cause and, Mr. Speaker, that is why we poured money into continuous improvement, Mr. Speaker. That is why we made those investments.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Riversdale also talked about equitable access, and we have made strides to ensure that we have better access regardless of where you live. Knowing that there will always be more work to do in this, but that's why this government made the decision to ensure that the new Wigmore Hospital in Moose Jaw has an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] machine.

In the past when the NDP were the government, MRI machines were in Regina and Saskatoon and if you lived anywhere else, too bad; you had to drive. Now we have access to MRI in Moose Jaw in a hospital, a regional hospital.

We now have CT [computerized tomography] access in

Estevan, Mr. Speaker. We are looking, continually look to see where can we ensure that services are being provided closer to home.

Mr. Speaker, on better value . . . So that's better health, better care. On better value, Mr. Speaker . . . And the member opposite, member from Riversdale who I've a great deal of respect for, said, and I quote, ". . . if the government would have spent money in a real and meaningful way." Well, Mr. Speaker, some of the examples that I gave, I don't know how you'd not call that real and meaningful, Mr. Speaker.

The same would be true in terms of better value. So the surgical initiative, Mr. Speaker, who the member talked a little bit about, Mr. Speaker, she quoted a couple of studies. And I will quote from a couple of studies as well. Fraser report 2007 — this was the 17th edition — *Hospital Waiting Lists in Canada*, critical issues bulletin 2007. Mr. Speaker, right in the executive summary on page 3: "Saskatchewan exhibits the longest wait times in Canada."

Mr. Speaker, I would also say that, I would also refer members to the Health Council of Canada annual report in 2006 which was issued in February of 2007. This is what they reported on hip and knee replacement surgery: British Columbia decreased . . . between 2001-2006, they saw a decrease; Alberta, between 2005 and 2006, they saw a decrease. Mr. Speaker, Ontario, between 2005-2006, a decrease. What does the report say for the 2006, Mr. Speaker, for Saskatchewan? "No reported reduction in wait time found for hip and knee replacements on the government website," Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, and this was at a time, this was at a time, Mr. Speaker, when the Martin government had given all sorts of money to end wait lists. This was going to be the fix for a generation for health care in this country. And, Mr. Speaker, by the time the NDP got finished spending the money, the wait lists were longer in Saskatchewan than before the fix for a generation began, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I briefly also want to touch on some of the other innovative things we were doing when it comes to value. Mr. Speaker, this government passed a bill to allow for citizens to purchase an MRI in the province, which they had already been doing either going to Calgary or going to the Mayo Clinic or driving to Minot, North Dakota, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker . . . And where we got that idea, we just extended what an NDP government had allowed for the Saskatchewan Roughriders and workers' compensation. Now, Mr. Speaker, in 27, 28 days of campaigning in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, in a month of campaigning in my constituency, I got an opportunity to talk to a lot of my constituents. And I have yet, Mr. Speaker, to meet a constituent of mine, with all due respect to the Roughriders, I have yet to meet a constituent of mine who is worth any less than a professional football player, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we had a debate, we had a debate in Regina during the campaign and I remember when this came up and I explained the government's record. And, Mr. Speaker, the member from Elphinstone was the NDP candidate at the debate and he replied, after I explained the government's position on

MRI he said, "well you know, the NDP government didn't always get it right." Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't need the member from Elphinstone to tell me that. I've lived in this province my entire life. History will tell us that, absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, also what we're doing in terms of better value, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we're also looking at what is our core business, what do we need to provide in terms of the services in the health care system, and what can be provided by others that are not a part of the health care system, And this, yes, did result in some difficult decisions.

Certainly my constituency was impacted on it, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, we moved for example on laundry. We had a system in Saskatchewan where the health care system actually did the laundry. Now I think we need to ensure that we have clean laundry, clean linen in our health care system. I just don't think it needs to be the health care system to do that work, Mr. Speaker. And so when we looked at a proposal that would save . . . and the number is now well over \$100 million over 10 years, Mr. Speaker. As Health minister, I know that we needed about \$30 million just to rebuild laundries. And, Mr. Speaker, my position on this . . . and the government, my colleagues agreed that if I can get \$30 million to put into capital for replacement, I'd much rather put it into a hospital or into a long-term care facility, Mr. Speaker. That money shouldn't be going into a laundry facility in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're having . . . So, Mr. Speaker, we are having a high-quality service provided and it doesn't have to be the health care system providing that, Mr. Speaker. That's what we need to identify in the future: what is our core services? What are those things that we need to be doing? So that's better health, better care, better value, Mr. Speaker.

Finally on better teams, Mr. Speaker, the record is clear. The member opposite, when she talked about surgeries, she said that the surgical reductions that we saw as a government . . . She credited us but she said that that was the only improvement that we have done, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ on that and better teams is a great place to look, Mr. Speaker. As well, look at the other things that I've already said. But 650 more doctors practicing in Saskatchewan, a 40 per cent increase; 43 per cent more specialists; 50 per cent more pediatricians; 32 per cent more family doctors; 3,000 nurses of all designations, Mr. Speaker.

We have the police and crisis teams working to ensure that the police are paired up with a mental health worker in Regina and Saskatoon. We're piloting hot-spotting, Mr. Speaker, so that we can look at those high users of the emergency department, those individuals that are going to emergency departments a dozen times — in some cases, 100 times — in one year. Let's build a service tailored to those people, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, those are some of the initiatives. So just in closing I would say — and as a way maybe perhaps just to refute my colleague, my friend from Riversdale — by just saying that if she's looking for real and meaningful progress, Mr. Speaker, more doctors is real and meaningful. More nurses is real and

meaningful. A children's hospital is real and meaningful. Mr. Speaker, a new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford is real and meaningful. Fifteen long-term care facilities is real and meaningful. A new hospital in Moose Jaw is real and meaningful. STARS to serve the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, is real and meaningful, a trauma centre on a helicopter, regardless of where you live. Having the lowest wait times for surgery in the entire country when we had the longest is real and meaningful.

Mr. Speaker, for those reasons and the reasons I couldn't get to in 20 minutes, I will support the Throne Speech. I will not be supporting the amendment.

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to support the government's Speech from the Throne opening this session of the twenty-eighth legislature. It is a humbling experience to share this Chamber with the many committed leaders who have helped build this province.

I'd like to take a moment to thank some of the people who helped me on the journey to arrive at this place. Mr. Speaker, I'm humbled by the support I have received. I first need to thank my wife, Giselle; our kids, Angela, Erik, and Mitchell; and the many friends who have shared this experience with me. We have learned a great deal about the spirit of our constituents, the fellowship of our peers, the leadership of the Premier, and our team of MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, I was born and grew up in my constituency in farming and small business. My parents, Jens and Hazel, were farmers and entrepreneurs. I grew up in business, and my working career took me across this province, northern Manitoba, and across Alberta. We experienced the corporate world for many years in Alberta, having worked in banking, corporate reorganizations, and financial services. When the timing was right for our family, Giselle and I were looking for the right opportunity to move home, to come back to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, when we looked at opportunities to succeed in 2003, we could see an emerging sense of optimism in Saskatchewan as a new party was beginning to bring a breath of fresh air to the province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, some would say that the writing was on the wall.

Mr. Speaker, I bought and operated a number of small businesses which I sold in 2014 to pursue political aspirations. I'd like to honour and thank our previous MLA, June Draude, for her commitment to the people of Kelvington-Wadena and for her friendship and guidance through this experience. I also want to thank my election team led by campaign Chair Meagan Rumbold, who many of you know, and volunteer coordinator Bonnie Wallin. The dedication of the directors, the sign team, the campaign volunteers, the business manager, and all of our volunteers was truly amazing.

I especially want to thank and recognize the support of my constituency Chair, Terry Zip; as well as Wes Black; Bob Jackson; David Ewan; Mickey Patrick; my business manager,

Jackie Grisdale; and so many others. Each played a critical role in my selection as a candidate and in the election process. Also in particular, I want to thank the constituents of Kelvington-Wadena for placing their faith in me.

Mr. Speaker, I have the good fortune of representing a constituency that has supported this government since its inception. Unlike the history of members opposite being satisfied with status quo policies and a lack of vision that saw tens of thousands of people leave this province, our government stands day in and day out with the people of Saskatchewan with a positive vision and with a sense of pride in this province.

Mr. Speaker, let me share a story of perseverance, a vision of commitment to community and to your fellow man. That story is about the humble people of Kelvington-Wadena constituency. Kelvington-Wadena constituency was built over the last 120 years by immigration. Folks came from England, Scotland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Ukraine, Poland, Germany, China, the Philippines, and many other countries. They built farms, roads, communities, churches, and a way of life filled with opportunity in Saskatchewan. In fact, Mr. Speaker, my constituents truly respect the Saskatchewan motto: "from many peoples, strength."

Every generation, the people of my constituency went above and beyond to build a better province and country. Local men and women stepped forward to serve their country and came back, sometimes broken in body but never in spirit, to build communities like the soldier settlements and villages carved out along the railways that developed. For generations my constituency sent our fathers and brothers off to northern Ontario, to northern Manitoba, and to BC [British Columbia] to build the Canadian mining and forestry industries. We sent our brothers and sisters off to build the oil and gas industry in Alberta and BC. We sent our best and brightest to be the engineers, geologists, doctors, lawyers, the welders and pipefitters to build industry across Canada.

We are now coming home in droves to continue to build the new Saskatchewan. We are the educators; the health care leaders; the computer technologists; the scientists; the agriculture, forestry, and mining innovators of the future Saskatchewan. We are the innovative entrepreneurs that will build the small businesses that will drive the economy for generations. Our farmers feed the province and the world. My constituency supplies the greatest resource of all, Mr. Speaker. We supply the human resource.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the incredible volunteerism in my constituency. Whether it's a fundraiser for an arena in Wynyard; a community complex in Foam Lake; arena upgrades, X-ray and health care facilities in Porcupine Plain; hospital needs in Kelvington; or hundreds of other services and facilities, the people of my constituency are proud to take ownership of their needs and to step up in amazing ways.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech first and foremost keeps the promises our party made during the campaign. We are following through on our commitment to recognize the incredible contribution of our seniors by allowing them to defer a portion of their property taxes. This allows seniors to stay in their homes with a lower financial burden. Mr. Speaker, our

government recognizes that these types of measures have multiple benefits. In this case, seniors will have the better quality of life in familiar surroundings. They will be in supportive communities, surrounded by family and friends. They will continue to be a stabilizing influence in their towns and villages across the province. This is just another example of forward thinking by our government.

After generations of building layers of regulation and bureaucracy under various governments, the people of Saskatchewan have repeatedly asked us as their representatives to find a better way to facilitate an economic model that lets our innovators succeed. As one example of our commitment to our creative entrepreneurs, we are keeping the promise we made by introducing the innovative patent box. Mr. Speaker, the people of this province are incredible innovators and leaders in economic freedom. I have no doubt that they will rise up and embrace every opportunity to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, it's particularly interesting to note that the Fraser Institute's 2015 survey of mining companies, which rated 109 jurisdictions around the world, rated Saskatchewan as number one in Canada and number two in the world. That's right, Mr. Speaker, number two in the world.

Allow me to quote from Pam Schwann, executive director of the Saskatchewan Mining Association, who stated, "Saskatchewan provides a low-risk environment because of both the great geological framework, but also the considered regulatory and policy frameworks." She went on to say that it is "predictable, transparent, and science-based," and that policies are done "... with a holistic approach that includes environment, economic and social considerations." Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is a representative view of what makes Saskatchewan strong and moving forward under our government.

Mr. Speaker, since being nominated I've made it a point to take the time to meet with RM [rural municipality] and municipal administrators. They have shared with me how they need continued investment in their communities, highways, and critical infrastructure. We have done a lot and, Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to do more. Our commitment to highways investment is still needed as we fix the infrastructure deficit left after decades of NDP governments. The investments we are making will position our economy for growth.

Mr. Speaker, you will know that in the very near future we will be opening a new integrated health facility in Kelvington. Like the new school in Porcupine Plain, the investments in Greenwater Lake Provincial Park, and the ongoing investment being made by municipalities, as a result of an increase of 113 per cent in municipal revenue sharing since we formed government, this is just another example of how our government keeps our province strong and moving forward. We made a commitment to keep our finances strong and we will keep that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, we must look at every aspect of our services Saskatchewan residents ask us to provide. Our government is committed to keeping our province's finances strong so that we can provide the social, health care, and education resources that a growing economy and population require.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a few minutes to philosophize a bit about this place and the great MLAs that serve here and their interaction with each other and the people we serve. Mr. Speaker, in a parliamentary democracy it is the obligation of each of us to represent the interests of all of our constituents equally, fairly, and without prejudice. It is my privilege to be a part of a strong parliamentary democracy that we have.

Each of us comes to this place with our personal stories, our backgrounds, experiences, lifestyle choices, family circumstances, foibles, strengths and, yes, even weaknesses. On both sides of the aisle we have aging parents, families dealing with the health care system, children and grandchildren in the education system, and family members in all walks of life. All of us drive on the same roads, use the same Crown services, have the same challenges with infrastructure, and care about our communities.

Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly we may disagree on philosophical approach, but we should all agree and recognize that each of us is here because we believe we have a role to play in making Saskatchewan a place where everyone can fulfill hopes and dreams.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would like to address two particular conundrums that challenge us in this time and place. They are expectations of perfection and political correctness. Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of Plato's dissertation of the *Apology* of Socrates at his trial before execution in 399 BC [before Christ]. Essentially Socrates was on trial for corrupting the youth and for not recognizing the gods that the community recognized. In modern terms, he might be described as an outspoken critic, a denier, a contrarian, or a charlatan.

At that time there were believed to be many gods, each with their following and believers. In perspective, in today's lexicon we too have many gods — whether they be of a particular political persuasion, particular business or social leaders, and advocates of positions on climate, science, environment, health, and every imaginable end-of-the-world issue of the day. The difference is that today we don't execute our detractors in democratic nations. We allow information to be widely distributed and broadly dispensed without even a modicum of fact-checking or skepticism.

[15:00]

In any event, Socrates is discussing the issue of wisdom. And I quote:

I reflected that if I could only find a man wiser than myself, then I might go to the god with a refutation in my hand. I should say to him "Here is a man who is wiser than I am, but you said that I was the wisest."

Accordingly I went to one who had the reputation of wisdom, and observed to him — his name I need not mention; he was a politician whom I selected for examination — and the result was as follows. When I began to talk with him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise [I could not help thinking that he was not really wise], although he was thought wise by many, and wiser still by himself. And I went and tried to explain

to him that he thought himself wise, but was not really wise, and the consequence was that he hated me, and his enmity was shared by several who were present and heard me.

So I left him, saying to myself, as I went away: Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is — for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows. I neither know nor think that I know. In this latter particular, then, I seem to have slightly the advantage on him.

When I left the politicians, I went to the poets . . .

And as a sidebar, Mr. Speaker, in those days poets were the historians, the pundits, and the coffee row of the day. So I quote:

When I left the politicians, I went to the poets . . . thinking that they would teach me something. Will you believe me? I am almost ashamed to speak of this, but still I must say that there is hardly a person present who would not have talked better about their poetry than they did themselves. That showed me in an instant that not by wisdom do poets write poetry, but by a sort of genius and inspiration; they are like diviners or soothsayers who also say many fine things, but do not understand the meaning of them. And the poets appeared to me to be much in the same case; and I further observed that upon the strength of their poetry they believed themselves to be the wisest of men in other things in which they were not wise. So I departed, conceiving myself to be superior to them for the same reason that I was superior to the politicians.

Mr. Speaker, at the risk of being perceived as being a student of ancient studies, I will admit that I am not. I am, however, moved by differing perspectives. And as such, over time, with discussion and debate and quality, substantiated information, I can change my mind and I should allow others the same latitude. Thus, Mr. Speaker, I challenge the modern-day town criers, the scribes, the pundits, the members herein to allow a certain amount of imperfection unless they should choose to cast the first stone from within their glass house.

The point by Socrates's eloquent words is that because we come to this Assembly knowing what we know, we do not know all things, and it is the collective wisdom that should be judged. Far too often we unfairly shoot the messenger as if he or she personally is egregious and has not taken account of those around him or her. Mr. Speaker, we are accountable to each other for our actions and words and, I repeat, we are all here to represent our constituents, regardless of political stripe, to the best of our abilities.

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud of its actions and direction. We rely entirely on the great people of this province to hold us to account. And we respectfully ask the people of Saskatchewan to recommit to their neighbours, their communities, and to the province that we'll work hard to be good neighbours, good stewards of our land, and we will keep Saskatchewan strong for generations to come. Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak in support of our government's plans for the future of this great province.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to thank all the people present here today. It's an honour and a pleasure to represent the constituents of Canora-Pelly. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the twenty-eighth session of the legislature. To the newly elected on both sides, congratulations. I look forward to the exciting times.

Mr. Speaker, I would first like to take this opportunity to thank my wife, Lorri, who has been by my side for 32 years. She has supported me not only through this election but through 20 years and seven elections municipally. Of the 20 years, I sat as an alderman for six years and 14 years as mayor. Lorri has always been a strong woman with the will to succeed and help me. She has spent 30 years as a registered nurse, going back to school and attaining a nurse practitioner's standing. She continues to help the people of the Canora area. Lorri was my Co-Chair this past election and on the front line. Along with the work crew, she put up signs, door knocked, cooked hot dogs, and many other tireless jobs.

Mr. Speaker, the most important thing my wife has ever accomplished is providing me a home, our family, and three beautiful, talented, and successful children: Jasmine Ostapowich, her husband Shane, my little grandson Lewis; Jade Dennis; and Carson Dennis. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to my three wonderful children, my son-in-law, and a very special grandson for all their support throughout the election campaign. They would all come to Canora from Regina and help with the campaign whenever they could.

Jasmine, her husband Shane, and son Lewis live in Regina. Jasmine works at Walker Projects as a human resource executive assistant. Her husband Shane works at SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance]. They recently built a house in Harbour Landing and now have a beautiful home to raise their children.

Jade Dennis, my middle daughter, she also lives in Regina. She graduated from the U of R [University of Regina] with a four-year degree in social work. She began her career in child protective services, but has since moved into a correction officer with the Regina Correctional Centre. She's a great hockey player. She played for the U of R Cougars and is now playing with the men's rec hockey league in Regina here.

Carson, our youngest, graduated from Canora Composite School and went to Olds, Alberta to take a three-year turf management course and is now managing the golf course in Melville. He came back to Saskatchewan. Carson is a sports nut. He played baseball, golf, hockey, and any other thing that he could. In 2012 STARS ambulance was established in Saskatchewan. This is very close to my heart, as my son was one of the first ones in our area when he rolled his vehicle, and today he's doing very well. Mr. Speaker, STARS ambulance is such an important asset to our rural and remote areas in our vast province. My story is not the only one. And to think that the NDP would not even consider bringing them to our province is

unsettling.

Our children would travel out to Canora and help put out signs, stuff envelopes, attend our meet-and-greet events, and help any way they could. They were at my nomination meeting with over 700 other people in attendance. Yes, they were with me on the election and then, along with other family members and friends, were here with me on Monday to get sworn in as the MLA of Canora-Pelly constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to extend my thank you to my campaign team: my Co-Chair, my lovely wife Lorri again; and a good friend of mine and first female mayor of Canora, Gina Rakochy; my business manager, Carol Sleevea, and now my CA [constituency assistant].

And I just wanted to mention a few other people that did jobs putting up signs, cooking hot dogs, and doing breakfasts: Sylvester Hrynkiw, Gary Sleevea, Kris Cherewyk, Matt Hrynkiw, Gladys Zavislak, Claudette Hanson, Adrien Rock, Brandi Zavislak and her four-year-old daughter Angel, Brad and Sandy Tokaruk, Brad Gabora, Willy Reay, and many others. Thank you for your commitment, encouragement, and all your hard work.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd also like to thank two men that have been a great inspiration for me. First of all my predecessor — the MLA for Canora-Pelly, deputy premier of this great province, minister of Finance, minister of Education, and a good friend of mine — Ken Krawetz. He not only represented the constituents of Canora-Pelly, but he represented the province like no other for 20-plus years. His commitment and dedication to the people he represented should never go unnoticed. I wish him well in his retirement. You most definitely deserve it.

Mr. Speaker, another man who not only inspired me but encouraged me to seek the nomination of the Sask Party for Canora-Pelly is Lorne Kopelchuk. Lorne served as the MLA for the Canora constituency from 1986 to 1991. I first worked with Lorne when he became the alderman in the town of Canora when I was mayor. We worked together for six years as residents to serve the residents of Canora. I was honoured to have Mr. Kopelchuk introduce me at the nomination meeting on March of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank two very special people who are no longer with us. My mom and dad, they instilled in me the values that I live and work by today. They taught me that hard work . . . to work hard, be honest, and treat people with respect as they deserve it, and help those who are in need.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take this time to speak about my campaign trail and a few stories that will stay in my heart. It all started back on March 4th, 2015 in Sturgis. I had spent the previous six months out selling memberships and convincing people to come out and vote. About 700 people filled the hall that night. And three candidates including myself were pretty nerve-racked and waited until I was named the Sask Party candidate for Canora-Pelly.

An Hon. Member: — Well done.

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the real work started right after that. I got out to speak to people in my constituency. There was a year filled with appearances at teas, fall suppers, hockey games, and curling bonspiels. From Usherville to York Lake, from Springside to Duck Mountain Park, there were weeks that I would cover up to 1700 kilometres, checking and serving with people, having coffee with seniors, listening to farmers, and chatting with kids after hockey games. The theme was always the same: the government is doing a great job, and we have the best Premier in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, a great day of campaigning was when the Premier made a stop at my constituency office in Canora. A nice crowd showed up to chat with him and take pictures. For one little girl that day, it was a special day that she will never forget. Little Lila Wilson, which I'm sure you've seen on TV, was eight years old and was fully prepared to interview the Premier that day. It was a great moment. And then I . . . A dozen kids from the daycare walked over across the road to meet the famous Premier. It was a day for them that they will never forget.

Mr. Speaker, another story that touched me was 10-year-old Nate Wolos from Canora. Driving home after school one day, he asked his grandma if he could put up an "Elect Terry Dennis" sign on their lawn like everybody else had. Grandma Phylis called me, and I personally went out and pounded that sign in that afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I also remember nine-year-old Lucas Lathan who got interested in the whole election process. We were gathered at the Legion Dugout on election night to follow the results, and he was calling his mom every five minutes to see if I had won. I think he was a little more nervous than I was, maybe even today. After they announced my victory, I phoned Luke, thanked him for his support, and told him to go to bed. It was a school day. The next day I delivered a poster and signed it, and it's now hanging above his bedroom. Mr. Speaker, it was a joy to see our young people involved and asking questions. The future of our province is bright indeed. Mr. Speaker, I was very humbled to receive so much support from the young children, retired folks, old friends and new. It has been an exciting ride and very humbling, and I intend to serve my constituents well.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, I was born and raised in the fine community of Canora. I grew up enjoying several sports activities offered in our community and, when the time came, the children became actively involved in sports. As many of you know, parents volunteer to be coaches. So I've coached for about 18 years, helping out with the kids, and now the kids are gone and I'm still coaching today.

Mr. Speaker, my father was a successful businessman in Canora at our family-owned business, in the grocery store business. This store has been in the family . . . It was a family-owned business since 1947 and it still operates today. At the age of 24, I joined my father in the business and became a meat cutter in the store. I established what most of you have probably heard of today — and some of you have tried yesterday — Terry's shishliki.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, I have spent 20 years in

municipal government when I was first elected at Canora Town Council as an alderman in 1994. After six years on council, I felt an opportune time to move and to become the mayor of Canora. I was first elected in 2000 and then honoured to be re-elected as mayor the following four elections, giving me a total of 14 years in that position. I'm grateful to the people of Canora for their support and their confidence to extend my term for that length of time.

Mr. Speaker, the only reason I did resign from being mayor of the town of Canora, as I enjoyed my time as mayor, because I was no longer a resident in Canora as my wife Lorri and I decided to build a brand new home and move out to Crystal Lake. And you have to be a resident.

Mr. Speaker, when Ken Krawetz announced his retirement, I saw an opportunity to continue to be involved in government, not only at the local level, but the provincial level.

Of course being in the position of mayor, one is involved in some provincial government ministries. And as I followed the endeavours of the Sask Party and our own MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], at that time Ken Krawetz since he was elected in 2007, I really wanted to be a part of a team that focuses on the great things of our province.

Mr. Speaker, as the mayor of Canora from 2000 to 2014, I spent seven years working with the NDP government and seven years working with the Sask Party government — pretty even. I recall receiving a phone call from Premier Calvert, asking if he could meet along with me and a few community leaders and some prominent citizens of the area to discuss rural revitalization. Along with 15 other area residents, we met with Mr. Calvert and his staff to discuss ways that we could improve the growth in rural Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we did a lot of brainstorming that day and we were very excited about the prospects of the growth in our area. Well, Mr. Speaker, that excitement disappeared the very next day when Premier Calvert announced in the media that the government would be closing our ag office in Canora. That is the trust of the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, with the Sask Party government under the new leadership of our Premier, our population has begun to grow. We are beginning to see increases in our schools and communities. In Canora-Pelly we saw \$1.1 million spent on a renovation to Norquay School, \$224,000 for a new roof in the Canora Junior Elementary, and another \$900,000 for three new classrooms in Canora Junior Elementary to accommodate the population growth in our new . . . of our new school age. And we have also been fortunate to have a total of 70 new child care spaces for our young people and families in Canora. Mr. Speaker, our government has spent \$6.4 million on pre-K to grade 12 capital since 2007.

Mr. Speaker, another significant change has been to the municipal revenue sharing. Since 2007, the town of Canora, for example, has more than doubled to 148 per cent. This gives our communities a lot more to do to work within the infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a little more about the growth that we've experienced in Pelly constituency. In 2015 I was invited to attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony in a brand new health and medical clinic in Kamsack. This is a state of the art

facility with the hard work of the community and their dedicated volunteers. This medical centre project cost \$1.8 million and was solely funded by the people of Kamsack. They raised \$1.4 million in a little over three years.

Not long after the ribbon cutting, there was another ribbon cutting in Kamsack — a ceremony opening a Petro-Canada, a car wash, and a Subway restaurant in Kamsack. A Kamsack resident that returned home from Alberta and decided to invest in his community for a need of that type of business — that's growth.

Stenen, with a population of approximately 80 residents, is home to Rawhides, a licensed dining facility that has become very popular, not only to the area, but people from Regina, Humboldt, and all over the area come out for an evening and an outing here. The restaurant has just expanded to demand the large functions, adding 300 more seats and a facility to handle more. And they are currently talking about adding more cabins and expanding to help out with our tourism, and bringing in the fishing and hunting and everything else.

Mr. Speaker, in 2015 Sunrise Health Region renovated and expanded the Canora Hospital and incorporated the collaborative emergency centre, and became home to a modern health and wellness centre.

We now have one of the four CECs [collaborative emergency centre] in our province. We currently have three doctors and a nurse practitioner and 24-7 emergency services. Later this year, with the assistance of SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment], we will be adding another doctor this fall.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few examples of the growth that we have seen in Canora-Pelly constituency, and there are many, many more. This shows that people are not only moving home, but they are building, investing in our great province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also just add that our government had made a commitment to the young people of our province. We have seen this evidence now locally, not only the pre-K, but also to advanced education. Just one year ago, the new Trades and Technology Centre in Yorkton opened its doors to the young adults of our area who wish to remain close to home for their education. And, Mr. Speaker, since 2008 more than 58,000 grads have benefited from the graduate retention program. And now, with the improvements to the program, these grads will be able to use \$10,000 towards a down payment on their first home in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, over the last eight years our government has not only seen growth in our population, but has seen growth in our economy. Our government has reduced taxes for our families. Under the NDP, the government taxes were raised 21 times in 16 years.

Mr. Speaker, health care is very important for the people of Saskatchewan. Since 2007 our government has recruited 650 doctors, over 3,000 nurses, and continues to work towards improvements in these numbers. Our government today has more than doubled the investments in hospitals compared to the record of the NDP. We now have the best surgical wait times in

our country.

Mr. Speaker, since 2007 we have 15 new long-term care facilities, 40 brand new schools, 600 more teachers, 5,000 new child care spaces, 58,000 grads taking advantage of the GRP [graduate retention program]. First Nations employment is up 27 per cent, and much, much more. Gone are the days where we are closing 176 schools, 52 hospitals, closing 1,000 hospital beds, 1,200 long-term care beds, and sending our young people out of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that our province is strong, not only the economy but the strength of our people who live here. With the strong leadership of our Premier I know our province will continue to grow and remain strong. Mr. Speaker, I support the Speech from the Throne as it sets out our plans to keep Saskatchewan strong and continue with our growth. It also shows that Saskatchewan is the greatest place in the world to live. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a privilege to rise in the Assembly today to support the Speech from the Throne. I first want to offer my sincere congratulations on your election as Deputy Speaker.

One of the most common questions I have been asked since I started the process of seeking the Saskatchewan Party nomination in August of 2014 for Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood was why I was running for provincial politics. I've had the opportunity to reflect on the answer to that question over the past 20 months. I've arrived at what I believe is the question behind the question: what's a girl like me doing in a place like this? Mr. Speaker, I'd like you to join me as I embark on a journey that attempts to answer that question.

As I sat eating breakfast last Thursday at my hotel, I could not help but overhear the conversation taking place at the next table. Three colleagues were chatting and one asked the other about her background and where she hailed from. She went on to explain about her parents and her childhood and her extended family. There was some scientific evidence that we carry the memories of our ancestors with us in our DNA, our genetic code. So this is where I will begin my story.

My great-grandfather three times removed was Jean-Baptiste Lagimodiere. He married Marie-Anne Gaboury and they were the first white couple to settle permanently in Western Canada in 1806. He was a French-Canadian trapper who was employed in the fur trade by the Hudson's Bay Company in what was then Rupert's Land. His daughter, Julie Riel, gave birth to Louis Riel. I am a first cousin four times removed to Louis Riel, the leader of the Métis and considered the founder of Manitoba. My roots stretch back to this prominent politician in Canada's history, and it just might be where my political journey began, long before I was born.

Mr. Speaker, my maternal grandmother was Edith Evans. She was born in London, England and immigrated to Canada in 1913 with her family who were searching for a better life. Her father was a shoemaker. My nan worked at Manufacturers Life

in Regina before marrying and becoming a full-time homemaker. She did beautiful needlework, was an impressive seamstress, was adept at crafts, and enjoyed crocheting and knitting. She called me bat eyes, and one of my strongest memories of her was when she would say, you fancy yourself, don't you — reminding us not to boast, as she had a dim view of arrogance.

My maternal grandfather was Emilien Berthiaume. He was born in St. Boniface, Manitoba in 1899 as the oldest of 13 children. He was quiet, soft-spoken, even-tempered, deeply religious, a pragmatist with lots of common sense. He worked all his adult life as a foreman at the Imperial Oil Refinery here in Regina. Gramps raised and raced pedigree pigeons, and smoked a pipe, which I loved. My maternal grandparents were married in 1924 and had five children. They were happily married for over 50 years. They retired to Victoria, and I made many trips to see my beloved nan after my grandfather passed away.

Mary Gnesner, my paternal grandmother, was born in Bukovina, Austria in 1903. Bukovina was under the authority of the Austro-Hungarian empire at the time, however the area was historically Romania. She arrived in Canada with her family in 1914 and they put down roots in Southey, Saskatchewan. When Granny was just past her 17th birthday, she married my much older Polish grandfather in an arranged marriage. They moved to one quarter of homestead land 9 miles north of Cupar to begin a life of farming, and raised six children. They purchased two more quarters of land. Granny spoke German, was a wonderful cook, gardener, and very active in the Catholic church. She loved to crochet and knit just like my English grandmother did. She spent a good amount of time travelling back and forth between Regina and Saskatoon for holidays and looking after us when my parents were away.

My paternal grandfather, Mr. Speaker, was Mathias Wilchuck, and he was born in 1888 in Poland. He immigrated by himself to Saskatchewan in 1908 also from Bukovina, Austria. I know very little of his European family, but I do know he worked very hard, like many of the early settlers of this province. He was hired at the Saskatchewan legislature as a bricklayer, this very building where I stand today. It was another link in my political chain. He went on to a life of farming near Southey and he suffered through seven straight years of crop failures. Can you even imagine that?

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, now to the next generation. My mother, Marilyn Berthiaume, was born in 1930 here in Regina. She was a top student and, after taking a business college course at Sacred Heart Academy, my mother was hired at SGI in 1946 where she worked for 10 years. She married my father in 1955 and went on to give birth to seven children in 10 years. I share my mother's love of reading and baking and involvement in the church. She's a strong example of religious devotion. She stood solidly by my side from the moment I decided to seek the Sask Party nomination. And although she had no previous involvement in politics, she offered me practical advice and encouragement and attended all of my events.

My father was born as Ferdinand Wilchuck on the family farm which was located at section 3, township 24, range 17, west of

the second meridian, Cupar, Saskatchewan. Why so specific, you ask? Because my father is detailed, analytical, and specific. He became an agent and financial adviser with Sun Life in 1951 in Regina. In 1965 he moved his family to Saskatoon to become manager of the Saskatoon branch, and he stayed with Sun Life Financial until 1994 — 43 years. He has continued in the role of independent life insurance agent and financial broker, and remains one of the oldest practising members of his profession in the province.

He has a volunteer history that is so extensive that I will highlight just a few: founding member and secretary-treasurer of the life insurance managers' association of Canada, charter member and president of the Saskatoon Estate Planning Council, president of the Saskatoon baseball association, board member of St. Paul's Hospital, Chair of the Holy Spirit Parish finance committee from 1978 to 1999, member of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon finance committee. You get the picture.

Mr. Speaker, he devoted a great deal of time, energy, and talent to many organizations over the years. Like my mother, he was a model of volunteerism for me. Again like my mother, he was not directly involved in politics but has always had a keen interest and possesses a wide knowledge of both provincial and national political history. Our political conversations over the years were another nudge for me along the path.

So who is this girl I spoke about at the beginning of my remarks? I arrived in this world as Lisa Gail Wilchuck, the middle child of seven in March of 1962 at the Grey Nuns' Hospital in Regina.

At one point I did some research on the middle child syndrome. The positive qualities of middle children include communication skills, an ability to negotiate, and a strong sense of justice. They are known for an ability to see other people's point of view. It is interesting to note that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan's website describes the role of an MLA as a researcher, communicator, advocator, and mediator. My birth order in a large and challenging family full of strong personalities was preparing me for the demands of this position long before I realized.

Mr. Speaker, I carved out my place in this family as a gifted student, as I certainly did not possess the athletic prowess of most of my siblings. I was not naturally gifted. Rather I was diligent, organized, and motivated. Those traits have served me well in my life. I am still trying to uncover where I filed the original copy of a letter I received from the Minister of Education after graduating from high school. This letter informed me that I was the recipient of a Saskatchewan General Proficiency Award in the amount of \$200. Little did I know that one day the current Minister of Education would be a great source of support and guidance during my quest to become an MLA.

I started out my 31-year media career with CFQC radio. You name it; I did it. I remember a poem that Denny Carr commissioned that described me as the jill of all trades at the station. I was assistant to the legendary Denny, and one of my highest compliments was when Denny introduced me as the best researcher he knew.

I was the music librarian for the largest record library in Western Canada. I was secretary to the program director, and assistant music director. I produced the John Gormley open-line show when he joined the staff in 1982. When John became the youngest Member of Parliament ever elected in 1984, Roy Norris took over.

Looking back, Mr. Speaker, this again was preparing me for public life, as I arranged interviews with politicians at all levels and did research. I loved my time in radio and being in the thick of things with all the announcing staff. It was a fast-paced and energetic atmosphere with loads of fun mixed in.

In 1987 I moved to CFQC TV, which later became known as CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] Saskatoon. Operations for the six Saskatchewan TV stations were centralized in Saskatoon. I worked in several roles until 2011, but my main position was in programming, with responsibility for CKBI Prince Albert and CKOS Yorkton. I spent many years as president of the CTV Saskatoon staff association, arranging farewell luncheons and the annual golf tournament and other social events.

Following in the footsteps of my father, I developed a penchant for volunteerism that has continued for the past three decades. I assumed lead roles in the annual fundraising campaigns for the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society, and canvas for the Salvation Army. I volunteered for Kinsmen Telemiracle and the United Way. As a 10-year member of the Lakeridge Community Association, I filled many roles including one term as president. During that time, I chaired the Lakewood Suburban Program Advisory Committee. My family and I served meals at the Saskatoon Friendship Inn for 15 years and I spent four years on the board of directors of that organization.

Mr. Speaker, it was an interesting experience to be the only female on the board of directors of the Zone 2 Raiders Minor Softball League.

After serving a term as president of the St. Luke School Parent Council, I ran for the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Board of Education in 2003. There were ideas that I recognized I would be best able to bring forward as a trustee. Out of a slate of 17 candidates for our at-large system, I was successful in securing one of the seven board positions. I am so grateful for the blessings I received, the friendships I formed, the knowledge I gained, and the experiences I encountered as a member of this board. Here again, the foundation was being laid for my future as an MLA.

I was a committed trustee for 13 years and never missed a duly constituted meeting during that time. I was re-elected for three more terms. The board has one standing committee, the Together in Faith and Action, and I chaired this since 2005. I spent eight years on the board of directors of the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Foundation. I was nominated to serve on two Saskatchewan School Board Association working advisory groups: Education Equity and Education Funding.

Having a keen interest in student health, I was named as one of two Saskatchewan reps on the Canadian School Board Association's National Network on Student Health. I co-chaired

the SSBA's Life Threatening Conditions Policy Advisory Committee as I was instrumental, along with trustee Cindy Anderson from Regina Public School Board, in bringing forward the SSBA adopted resolution that guided the policy advisory work for school divisions across this province. I recently stepped down from the Saskatchewan Catholic School Board Association's board of directors.

I was pleased to participate in planning for the four new joint-use schools in Saskatoon and the new joint-use schools in Martensville and Warman. I attended the grand re-openings of Holy Cross High School and St. Matthew Elementary School, both in my constituency, and am grateful for the major capital project renovations at these schools supported by this government. In 2005 I was honoured to receive the President's Award of Distinction from Volunteer Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, so many people in this province do so much for others and are not recognized in any formal way like I was.

Having inherited my mother's love for baking and my granny's flair for cooking, and my hobby of collecting and trying new recipes, I self-published a cookbook, *Recipes I Stole From My Mum* in 2013. At the bottom of each page, of each recipe page is one of my favourite quotes. I was pleased when Marianne Williamson, best-selling author and lecturer, gave me permission to use this quote. It is at the top of my list:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most . . . [threatens] us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

This quote reminds me of my province. Did we not spend too long playing small on the Canadian and on the world stage? Did we not spend too long in the darkness? I have not forgotten how I felt hearing the Premier's election victory speech in 2007. This is Saskatchewan, and in Saskatchewan, hope beats fear. That speech resonated deeply with me. I felt that night, listening to our new leader, our fortunes were about to change. And they did. It felt good to be liberated from the fear that held us back as a province. It was another moment that played a part in this story of how I came to stand before you today.

This cookbook was not my first foray into the entrepreneurial world as I have worked alongside my husband since he began Precision Controls, a local pneumatic controls company, as an owner/operator in 2004.

Which leads me, Mr. Speaker, to my family. Jim and I were high school sweethearts, and we will celebrate our 34th wedding anniversary this July. He is my strongest supporter and my closest friend.

Education was a priority with our parenting. Amy Peters, our eldest, is the mother of our two granddaughters and works as an auditor with Canada Revenue Agency. She holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree with distinction and is a certified professional accountant.

Middle daughter, Monique Lambert-Wignes, completed a Bachelor of Arts honours degree and went on to earn a law degree. She is a solicitor with the city of Saskatoon with a focus on bylaw prosecution and municipal litigation. We look forward to welcoming two more grandchildren into our family as Amy and Karl are expecting their third child in September, and Monique and Aaron are expecting their first child in December. Our youngest daughter, Janelle, has completed a Master of Public Administration degree.

All received their degrees through the University of Saskatchewan. They benefitted from this government's graduate retention program, the most aggressive youth retention program in the country. Like so many of my fellow members have mentioned, I watched as thousands of bright and capable kids from this province would leave right after they graduated never to return except for summer vacations and visits at Christmas. I wondered what opportunities would be available for our daughters when they completed their education. Thanks to the efforts of this Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker, most of our young people are now choosing to stay because there is opportunity right here at home. I want to ensure that those opportunities continue to exist for my kids, for your kids, for our grandchildren.

Government leaders serve society and the people. When Pope Francis visited the US [United States] Congress last fall, he said, and I quote:

You are called to defend and preserve the dignity of your fellow citizens in the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good, for this is the chief aim of all politics. A political society endures when it seeks, as a vocation, to satisfy common needs by stimulating the growth of all its members, especially those in situations of greater vulnerability or risk. Legislative activity is always based on care for the people.

Mr. Speaker, my volunteer background reflects that service is near and dear to my heart. It fits well with my faith and my world view. I plan to work for the common good of not only my constituents but also the needs of the province as a whole.

What is this place I referred to at the beginning of my remarks? The Saskatchewan legislature is the largest provincial legislature in all of Canada. As our Premier reminded us at the dome restoration unveiling event last week, the message of our forebearers who created this province and our beautiful legislature was that this was a place full of promise, hope, optimism, and high expectations. The Premier told us that it was our first premier, Walter Scott, who stated that Saskatchewan demanded a legislature that would forever represent the character and ambition of the people of the province, and who insisted our legislature would have a dome.

[15:45]

But I am talking about more than this building. I am talking about this province that I love, this province that has more arable land than all the other provinces combined and produces over 54 per cent of the country's wheat. As the government website states, agriculture has a long history in Saskatchewan. It adds to our economy, influences society, and helps the environment. The agriculture industry accounts for more than 50,000 jobs across this province, and it continues to grow. Canada is the top mustard producer in the world, and 75 per cent of that mustard comes from Saskatchewan.

This province that is blessed with rich resources such as potash, uranium, coal, oil, and natural gas. This province that is now the world's largest producer of potash by capacity and a global industry leader in the three essential crop nutrients: potash, nitrogen, and phosphate. This province that is the world's second largest producer of uranium with 25 per cent of the world's uranium deposit. We are the country's sunniest province, and we produce more NHL [National Hockey League] players per capita than any other province. Let's not forget our beloved Riders.

Mr. Speaker, could our forefathers who built this legislature see the promise that was to come, that has now arrived thanks in no small part to this Saskatchewan Party government? The Saskatchewan Party has removed barriers to growth through a change in government policies. Citizens of this province now understand that there is a connection between investment and new business activity and new people coming to the province and more jobs and more money to fund the health care, education, social services, and infrastructure needs of Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, we used to constantly refer to Saskatchewan as next year country. We used to have the attitude that, if things are good now, they will never last. We've shaken off that attitude. I don't want to go back to the way it was. As the people of Saskatchewan exercised their franchise on April 4th, they made a statement that they don't want to go back either.

The new constituency of Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood, the constituency I am honoured and privileged to represent, is comprised of the neighbourhoods of Wildwood, Brevoort Park, Holliston, Nutana Suburban Centre, and a small part of Adelaide/Churchill. I grew up in Brevoort Park and have strong ties to the constituency that I now proudly represent. The church that Jim and I attend is right on the edge of the constituency. How serendipitous that the redrawing of the provincial map created an area that I had deep roots in.

A noteworthy characteristic of Churchill-Wildwood is a high population of seniors. The Home Instead Senior Care website states that "the two mile radius around . . . Market Mall, the Nutana Suburban Centre, has the highest concentration of seniors per capita in all of Canada" not just in Saskatchewan. The Throne Speech confirmed the Saskatchewan Party's election promise to increase seniors' care by hiring more registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and care aids in long-term care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents will benefit from the fact that Saskatchewan has gone from the longest surgical wait times in Canada to the shortest wait times. They will also benefit from

the government's plan to help seniors remain in their homes longer by allowing seniors with household incomes under 70,000 to defer the education portion of their property taxes.

I have always been a volunteer. When I asked others to help me in the past, it was for an organization, a charity, a cause. This election campaign was the first time I found myself asking others to help me, for me. It was not in my comfort zone, but I quickly realized I could not do this work alone to win the election. So I asked and family, friends, and others answered my request for help.

There are too many names to mention, but I would like to publicly thank my campaign leadership team at this time. There was little political experience in the group, actually none, but loads of energy and loads of commitment: Bill Gowen, campaign manager, who did an outstanding job during the writ period; Candace Forrester, volunteer Chair, who staffed the campaign office with two volunteers for two shifts each day and found scrutineers for all 18 of my poll locations on e-day [election day] with the help of her husband Stu; James Hawkes, IT [information technology] Chair, and one of my most dependable door knockers; Bev Hanson, communications Chair; Keith Hanson, constituency president; Deborah Leavitt, office manager; Lorne Sheppard, get-out-the-vote Chair, with the help of Bev Hanson; Don Ravis, campaign advisor.

My daughter, Monique, was my business manager. We had no idea of the work and time commitment that was involved with this position. Monique attended training sessions, helped with all events, door knocked for months, as well as looking after all the finances of the campaign, and now filing the candidate return of election expenses. She was so proficient that I think she could give workshops now to new business managers. All three of our daughters were capable door knockers by the end of this campaign. I feel truly blessed for the hard work of my campaign team and the support of each and every volunteer.

My husband, Jim, was my sign Chair. He had assistance in putting up the lawn signs but looked after taking them down the day after the election by himself. But he was not only involved in lawn signs, he was involved in virtually every facet of the election campaign. He worked from my side for the entire 20 months. If he was not out door knocking or engaged in other campaign tasks, he was at home walking the puppies or making meals, or cleaning the house. Words cannot express the appreciation I have for this man and all he did to support me.

Though we do not share the same DNA, Jim occupies the most space in my heart and in my soul. He might be the biggest piece of the puzzle in my political story.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I came to the realization through my reflection that I've represented people in a number of ways all my adult life. My confidence and ability to manage budgets, make decisions based on common sense, participate effectively in debate, and be the voice for others had grown with each new leadership experience.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share a prayer by Blessed John Henry Newman, a Roman Catholic theologian:

God has created me to do Him some definite service;

He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.

I have my mission — I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

. . . I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for [nothing] . . . I shall do good [work], I shall do His work.

The question: How did a girl like me end up in a place like this?

The answer: How could I be anywhere else?

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to support the Speech from the Throne and the motion my colleague from Saskatoon Westview has made. Thank you.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to publicly congratulate you on your new role as Speaker, and to congratulate the Deputy Speaker on his election as well. As you know, the role of Speaker is crucial to our democracy and the functioning of this Assembly and it plays a large role in maintaining order and decorum. That role is vitally important as it allows this Assembly to perform the duties required of all of us. The level of decorum also directly impacts the public's confidence in this legislature.

Today the task before us is to respond to the Throne Speech, but before I do that I hope that this Assembly will indulge me with some thank you remarks and a little background, as well as a description of the constituency that I stand here to represent.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to serve in this storied building and to be part of the history of this province. I remember fondly as an elementary student taking a tour of this Legislative Building. I did not dream at that time that I would be standing here today delivering this speech. I believe that I'm the first member elected to this Assembly to have attended Lang School. Remarkably, I'm one of five members to have graduated from Milestone High School. Another member sits across from me today, the member for Indian Head-Milestone, and I wish to congratulate him on his re-election. In fact, I would like to congratulate every member in this Assembly on their recent election victories, especially those elected for the first time.

I can still scarcely believe my luck and privilege at being able to serve in this legislature. Regardless of our journey to this Assembly, none of us gets to serve without the hard work and sacrifice of many others, and I'm certainly no exception.

I stand here today first because of the sacrifice and support of my family. My husband, Guy, and our three children, Hannah, Nolan, and Maya, have been patient and understanding as I embark on this journey into provincial politics. Like many families, our children are involved in dance and sports, as well as school and community activities. Guy has a demanding position as the national representative for CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees]. So even before this campaign our calendar was full and demanding, and we all know what the campaign brings.

Guy did not hesitate to support me when I suggested that I was thinking of running for the nomination in Regina Lakeview, and he has been steadfast in his support ever since. He was also a pretty dedicated sign coordinator during the campaign. My children also got to know their way around a mail drop and even tried their hand at canvassing with me. And I hope that we've instilled in them a sense of the importance of our democratic process. I door knocked for almost a whole year prior to this election, and spent many evenings away. Mr. Speaker, to my family, I would like to say thank you for your love and support. Without them I would not be standing here today.

I was also lucky enough to have, in my opinion, one of the best campaign teams in the province. Thank you to each of my team members: Matt, Lesley, Ryan, Chris, Sarah, and Tiffany. The polls on election night reflected all of their hard work, and they were a great group of people to get to spend every day with for a month. I truly enjoyed coming into the office every day.

But I do want to single out my campaign manager, Donna Smith, for special praise. Going into this election neither Donna nor I had much election experience. With her hard work, dedication, and organizational skills, we managed to run a campaign that made it look like we knew what we were doing all along. Thank you, Donna.

A sincere thank you also to the former member for Regina Lakeview, John Nilson, for all of his years of service to Regina Lakeview and to this province. I would also like to thank my opponents in the election, Dan Cooper for the Sask Party, Larry Neufeld for the Green Party, and Stewart Kerr for the Liberals. As candidates are prone to do, we often attended many of the same events. I'm pleased to say that our interactions were marked by respect and good humour throughout the campaign, and I thank each of them for their hard work.

And I would be remiss if I did not thank my parents, Ray and Judy Beck, for their love and support during this election and throughout my life. My parents have never been partisan, but they did impart the importance of participation in our democracy. One of my favourite memories from the campaign was listening to my mom — my mom who would never tell anyone how she voted — calling up strangers on the phone to ask if they would be voting for me. And I distinctly remember as an 18-year-old my dad taking me to cast my very first ballot in a provincial election. It was in the Legion hall in Milestone in 1991, and I was hooked. And I think we all remember the outcome of that election.

My parents also modelled the importance of being involved in your community, of looking out for others, lending a hand or an ear or a shoulder when you can. They also instilled in me a deep sense of the importance of family. My brothers and I grew up on a mixed farm, grain and cattle with a whole lot of chickens thrown in. We spent our winters in the rink and our summers on the ball diamond. My parents were always coaching, in the booth, scorekeeping, and doing at least their part in making sure that the community that we lived in was thriving. Both have served on countless boards, put in thousands of volunteer hours. My mom served on the local school board, and my dad has been a councillor with the RM of Scott for over 23 years. They currently run an outfitting business, and my mom serves as a

lay minister with the United Church.

My two brothers live in opposite corners of the southern part of this province, but they continue to be very involved in their communities. Blair and his wife, Tara, live in Carnduff with their four children. Blair is a school teacher and Tara is the community development officer. Regan and his wife, Meagan, live in Meadow Lake with their four children. Regan works for the Meadow Lake Tribal Council as the controller for NorSask, and Meagan is a speech and language pathologist with the local school division.

The importance of community, volunteerism, and looking out for others is deeply ingrained in all of us. And I was so pleased to find those values strong and reflected in the community that I moved to when I moved into the Cathedral neighbourhood in Regina Lakeview over 20 years ago. The constituency that I represent, Regina Lakeview, is home to several diverse and thriving neighbourhoods and is home to a dynamic mix of people, businesses, and groups.

The Cathedral Village, where I have lived since 1993, is a neighbourhood quite literally rebuilt around the arts. Once a declining neighbourhood, a group of dedicated citizens set about a plan to revitalize their community by banding together and embracing the arts community already present there. The result was the creation of one of the most vibrant communities in the city, with a thriving local business district along 13th Avenue, a busy community centre, and an active community association. And of course, the Cathedral Village Arts Festival which is celebrating its 25th year as we speak.

[16:00]

Regina Lakeview is also home, as you might guess, to the community of Lakeview. This vibrant community is served by the Lakeview Community Association. In Lakeview, community is built and supported through the LCA's [Lakeview Community Association] offerings of recreational programs for adults and youth, community fun days, and the operation of the community outdoor rink.

Lakeview is also home to the Hill business district complete with a local grocery store, restaurants, and local boutiques. Lakeview is home to many beautiful homes and a diverse array of architectural styles, and it's well worth one's time to take a heritage walking tour of either of these neighbourhoods.

The constituency is also home to Normandy Heights, River Heights, and the River Heights shopping district. Other small business districts include the area along Albert Street and throughout the centre square.

Regina Lakeview is also home to six elementary schools, one high school, and one alternative elementary school, Prairie Sky. In addition to the over a dozen churches, including the iconic Holy Rosary Cathedral, Westminster United, and St. Paul's Greek Orthodox, Regina Lakeview is also home to Regina's largest mosque, and the Sikh temple. All of these faith communities add to the fabric and the strength of this constituency.

Regina Lakeview is also fortunate to be home to some of the

most important public buildings and attractions in the city: the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Darke Hall, the College Avenue campus of the U of R and Lifelong Learning Centre, the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] building, the under-utilized sound stage, Neil Balkwill Civic Arts Centre, Regina Senior Citizens' Centre, and the cathedral community centre, as well as the Connaught Branch of the Regina Public Library. They're all part of Regina Lakeview.

Those who came before us invested in these public buildings and services and they contribute to the high quality of life that we enjoy there today. Opportunities for recreation and outdoor adventures abound in Regina Lakeview. Les Sherman Park, Kinsmen Park, Kiwanis Waterfall Park, Wascana Pool, the Lakeview Par 3 Golf Course, and a large portion of one of Canada's largest and most beautiful urban parks, Wascana Centre, are all found in this constituency. The investment and ongoing support of these public assets contributes to the health and well-being of our community.

An ancient Greek quote states, a society grows when old men and women plant trees under whose shade they know they shall never sit in. Thank you to all of those who literally and figuratively planted those trees under which we enjoy shade today. We need to embrace that forethought, that level selflessness and dedication to the future in this province today.

Regina Lakeview is also home to several large seniors' high-rises and I spent a lot of time there during the campaign. Unfortunately it was here that I also heard many stories about just how difficult it is to survive on a lower fixed income today in this province. And this leads me to my formal response to the Throne Speech.

This Throne Speech, barely a mention was made of seniors, those who built our province. There is nothing to address what I heard on the doorsteps — seniors without adequate home care support. I spoke with seniors who had ill-fitting dentures and lapsed eyeglass prescriptions because they simply could not afford what it would cost to replace them. I will never forget one woman who told me that she simply does not walk by the meat aisle anymore in the grocery store because she can't afford it. This woman, who worked her whole life in this province, simply goes without. And I literally heard hundreds of these stories on the doorstep, including from seniors who did not take their full prescription every day because they can't afford the full dose of their medications.

So when I hear this government boast about the strength of our province, I wonder why these voices are not reflected. I also wonder where the voices of children are in this Throne Speech. Between 2013 and 2014, food bank usage climbed by 19 percent in Saskatchewan with the highest rate of increased usage being for children and seniors, I might add. In the middle of a boom, those most vulnerable were ushered to the food bank. Yet in the Throne Speech themed *Keeping Saskatchewan Strong* with the subtitle of a better quality of life, children are not mentioned once. Schools barely warrant a mention other than to refer to previously announced bills. The word education makes exactly one appearance.

Mr. Speaker, the education system in this province is in turmoil. Years of uncertainty and underfunding have taken their toll.

This year's delayed budget and lack of detail have led to a deep concern and tension within the sector. Our classrooms are growing, both in size and in intensity of need. We are at least five months behind on the latest promise for clarity on the funding model, and schools are struggling to make best-guess budgets so they can plan staffing and programming for next year.

And amid all of this, what did this government do? They've cast further doubt and uncertainty by warning that our schools should expect difficult budget allocations and then using . . . After an election in which not a word was spoken of it, I might add, our Premier let slip that our schools can expect transformational change. This change was not even whispered to the public during the election, let alone to the 28 democratically-elected school boards in this province who will be most directly affected.

Mr. Speaker, our schools have experienced a great deal of change in the last eight years and they have met those challenges head-on as those who work in and around our schools are apt to do. However as one veteran school board employee recently told me, we are at a tipping point, at a tipping point, Mr. Speaker. We have experienced a decade-long boom that provided ample opportunity to invest meaningfully in our schools, our children, and our future. This government has had since 2009 to introduce a funding model that is transparent, predictable, and meets the needs of children in the classroom, but they have failed to do so.

Education is the best opportunity that we have in a society to improve our chances for our children. It is one of the best tools to decrease inequality and to allow all children to meet their potential. It is our opportunity to plant the trees that I spoke of earlier, and the shade of those trees is represented in the opportunity to shape our future leaders, caregivers, innovators, and problem solvers for tomorrow. Yet this Throne Speech all but ignores education, and this is nothing short of shameful and it is terribly short-sighted.

And speaking of short-sighted, we have this government's musings on the environment and climate change. Like the rest of the world, Saskatchewan is facing very real challenges today, and we will continue to face challenges into the future. We must look no further than the recent forest fires and flooding events that have hit our province. We are losing the equivalent of 14 football fields of wetland every year in this province. Besides providing habitat for countless birds and animals, these wetlands act as natural filtration systems for our lakes and rivers. We continue to lose our native pasture lands at an alarming rate. Already one of the most endangered ecosystems in Canada, native pastures are home to over 30 species at risk.

We have a history of stewardship over land and our natural resources in this province. Those were certainly the values that were instilled in me when I was growing up. But these challenges present a very real challenge for this province, yet this Throne Speech, we hear nothing about plans to address this situation. Instead we have a Premier who casts doubt on climate science and chastises those who would have us tackle the current climate realities head-on. He set up a false dichotomy between those who care about the environment and those who care about the economy, between those in the agriculture and

resource sectors and those who want to find solutions to deal with climate change. This government seeks to pit neighbour against neighbour and they do so at the peril of both our economy and our natural environment. It is well past time that we tackle the challenges we face head-on in a consultative and open manner rather than trying to score cheap political points.

When I was on the doorstep I was told many times that people are tired of wedge-issue politics. They want their leaders to earnestly seek to find long-term solutions to the issues that face us today. We can plan for the transition towards renewable energy sources today while still concerning ourselves with the very real impact that the downturn in the oil and gas sector has had on this province. In fact I believe that responsible governance requires us to do so to truly keep Saskatchewan strong and growing well into this century.

I will agree with the Premier on this point: Saskatchewan is strong. We are a strong bunch of people and we have strong ideals and a strong history. We have strong traditions and overall we are very privileged to live in this place. As a province we've been especially blessed with an abundance of clean air, big skies, fertile farm land, natural resources, green spaces, forests, rivers, lakes, and wetlands. All of this is true but this is not the whole story.

Mr. Speaker, I love this province. It is because I love this province that I cannot turn away from the full truth. As a social worker and front-line human service worker for over 20 years, it has been my privilege to work alongside the most vulnerable in our province. What has also been growing in this province unfortunately, along with the numbers that the Premier likes to tout, is inequality — the stark contrast between winners and losers in our province.

Growing inequality has very real impacts on the society and not just for those who find themselves most challenged. Inequality impacts the economic well-being of the province. It can diminish the growth when large portions of the population are not fully using their skills and capabilities.

Nowhere in this province is inequality and the failure to address inequality more pronounced than on First Nations and Métis communities. Yet again this Throne Speech is all but mute on that subject. While we have a crisis of mental health and violence in those communities, we hear nothing. The consequences of that silence are dire for all of us. Inequality undermines social cohesion and leads to increased social tensions. It undermines the health of all citizens and impacts rates of violence. And last but not least, high inequality raises moral questions about fairness and social justice.

In 2013 I became the assistant director of a local women's shelter. That year and the next we had a total of over 1,000 women and children on our waitlist. In fact, Saskatchewan has the terrible distinction of having the highest rates of domestic violence and sexual assault out of all provinces. Yet there is no mention of plans to address this serious issue that affects all of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, this government did win a majority but they did not win the right to govern unopposed or without scrutiny. The opposition's main role is to question the government of the day

and hold them accountable to the public. And we have the team to do that, this team that has achieved, for the first time in Saskatchewan's history, gender parity. And I look forward to the opportunity to work collaboratively with this government on behalf of the people of Regina Lakeview when I can.

And I also take very seriously our role in standing up when this government tries to pit neighbour against neighbour or tries to pick winners and losers. I will be voting against the Throne Speech but in favour of the proposed amendment. Thank you.

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a great honour to rise in this House on behalf of my constituents. Mr. Speaker, first I would like to congratulate all those returning and newly elected MLAs for their achievement on April 4th. I would also like to congratulate those across the floor, both new and returning MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say thank you to the Regina Pasqua constituents for putting their trust in me and electing me their representative. In 2012 I decided to run for nomination after volunteering for numerous politicians in campaigns. I had the first-hand experience of excitement and work that goes into a political campaign. I was pleasantly surprised when I found out there would be a new constituency and saw it as my chance to run.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give thanks to my family, my wife, Attia, and three sons, Ayaz, Kashif, and Arsalan, who helped me day and night for my nomination and for my election campaign. Saskatchewan is our home. Our one son Arsalan was born here in Regina. Mr. Speaker, we are happy to live in Regina and have our children attend school here.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to my campaign manager, Trent Blazy, and my best friend, Waqar Bokhari, who was very determined and enthusiastic. Also to the members of my campaign, Jim, Dylan, Brittany, Lane, and Reed. These dedicated volunteers worked tirelessly door knocking, and some days they were in my campaign office from 8 a.m. till 11 p.m. These were long days, Mr. Speaker, but I want them to know how thankful I am for their dedication for my campaign. I also recognize the granddaughter of our member from Melville-Saltcoats. Her name is Brynn and she is 10 months old and she used to visit my campaign as a blessing.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a long journey to settle in Saskatchewan, as I migrated from Pakistan to Canada in July 1995. When I first arrived in Canada, I lived in Toronto. While in Toronto, I was deciding to live somewhere else. I had friends living in Saskatchewan, Brian and Terry Fryklund. Brian was a retired police officer, and his wife, Terry, worked at SGI. They convinced me to come here. Mr. Speaker, they told me that Saskatchewan was the best place to live in this beautiful country and that it was second to no one. I took their words and my journey to Saskatchewan began.

[16:15]

Coming from a country where summer temperatures are usually between 47 to 52, living in Canada has been an adjustment, as

even I found it, it was cold for me in July where the temperature was 22 or even 25 sometimes. But it wasn't just the temperature I had to adjust with. In my previous country, there were massive violations of human rights. Mr. Speaker, since Canada is known as peacekeeping and generous ways, it was very easy for me to adopt these Canadian values, my values, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what Canada gave to me was more than I thought it was possible. I was never allowed to vote in my previous country because of my faith. Moving to Canada, I was allowed to practise my faith the way I wanted to and I am practising now. And I now have the freedom of speech while knowing my family was protected. I owe Canada more than I can give back to Canadian people, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm thankful for the recognition I have received as the first Muslim MLA in Saskatchewan's history. But, Mr. Speaker, I also want to be recognized as the MLA responsible for 23,000 people in my constituency. Regina Pasqua is the biggest constituency in Saskatchewan in population. I want to be recognized as the MLA responsible for these constituents, for the businesses, and for the schools in this area.

I arrived in Saskatchewan in 2008. Since arriving, I had experienced very good employment, the lowest cost of living, and found great schools and teachers for my children. The citizens were friendly and welcoming. Mr. Speaker, I found Saskatchewan was the place for business and agriculture with a lot of credit go to farmers who seed, cultivate, and grow some of the best crops. They really do help feed the world.

As seen in the Throne Speech, in 2015 Saskatchewan Agri-Food exports reached nearly 15.3 billion, surpassing the growth plan target of 15 billion in exports by 2020. When it comes to moving grain, our government is always on the front line and does it as quickly as humanly possible.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take this chance to express my happiness with the investment my government has made, most notably the twin schools in my constituency, which is a Catholic and public school.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency is growing. It is growing because people want to live in Saskatchewan. I like to think of my constituency as representing some of Saskatchewan's most interesting landmarks. For example we have Government House, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] depot, and ever-growing Harbour Landing.

Mr. Speaker, today Saskatchewan is better than yesterday, and tomorrow Saskatchewan is going to be better than today. Mr. Speaker, my government wants to keep Saskatchewan strong. We want to continue growing and building communities. My government is the government to do this. I support the Throne Speech and I am happy to be a part of this team as MLA for Regina Pasqua.

I look forward to representing my constituents and thank them again for putting their trust in me. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate one of my constituents, Wilf Perreault, as he is receiving the Saskatchewan Order of Merit tonight. He's well deserving of this recognition. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleagues for the opportunity to speak in your House today. Also I would like to congratulate all the newly elected and the re-elected members from their victories in the election. And I'd like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your election as Speaker of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I feel very proud and very privileged to be chosen by the people of Prince Albert Carlton on April 4th to represent them in this House. Mr. Speaker, I do commit to the people of Prince Albert Carlton, and all of the people of the city of Prince Albert, that I will serve them with integrity, with energy, and with all the skills that I have learned in my many years in business.

Mr. Speaker, to run a campaign, be it successful or not, takes a great team of volunteers and, Mr. Speaker, I had a great team. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize some of those people that, without their help and support, it would not be possible for me to be here today.

First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, is my wife, Fran. She's my partner in life and for life in everything we do. She has worked by my side and every bit as hard as me in starting our businesses and growing our businesses to the level it has. She encouraged me to give my time and skills to help Prince Albert to be the best that it can be. Since my decision to run for this office in the summer of 2014, she has been by my side as my biggest supporter, my confidante, my adviser, my speech writer, and my biggest cheerleader. She is undoubtedly the love of my life, and I would not be here today without her.

As well, Mr. Speaker, my four adult children and even my five grandchildren who are 7 and down supported my decision to run, and encouraged me to keep going. I'm so very proud of them all, Mr. Speaker, and I'm so thankful for their support. They worked hard for me throughout the months prior to the election, Mr. Speaker. They knocked doors. They did computer work. They did whatever was needed.

I am so fortunate, Mr. Speaker, that all my children live within just mere blocks of me. They all chose to stay in Saskatchewan and contribute to make Prince Albert better and to keep Saskatchewan strong: my oldest son, Trent Hargrave, and his wife, Lisa, and their son Elias; my oldest daughter, Angela Weinrich, and husband, Joe, and their children, Noah and Layla; my son Colby and his wife, Becky, and their children, Hannah and Myles; and my youngest daughter, Jillian Bulych. I am so very proud of them all, Mr. Speaker, for the good people that they are and for the good they have done and will continue to do. I could never have asked for a better family. They are the lights of my life.

Mr. Speaker, I must also thank my team leader and campaign manager, Mr. Rick Orr, for his integrity, for his experience, but most of all for his friendship. He and his wife, Kathy, worked harder than I could have ever expected. He built and led an awesome team of dedicated people that gave unfailing support, people like Patty Hughes, Dave and Clara Fischl, Steve Jeffers, Harvey Agnew, Duane Hayunga, Neil Barnes, Skip Jerome,

Cherie Rustula, Ed Zaparanuk, Brian Rindall, Joy Schewaga, and so many more. I am so thankful for all their hard work and for their ongoing support.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my fellow Prince Albert Sask Party candidate, the former MLA for Prince Albert Northcote, Victoria Jurgens. Mr. Speaker, she unfortunately lost her seat in a very close race; however she worked tirelessly for her constituency for the past four years, and the past year also worked hard to help the constituents of Prince Albert Carlton. Mr. Speaker, she deserves our gratitude and respect.

Mr. Speaker, many people came to me during the campaign and asked me why I am running for political office as I have several successful businesses and I'm slightly over 40 . . . over 50, I'm sorry, I'm slightly over 50. I would tell them I was not looking for a job or a retirement program, but I owe the success of my businesses to the people of Prince Albert, and I felt it was right to give back to my community by giving of my time and my skills that I have learned over my many years in business. It is my hope and my commitment, Mr. Speaker, that I will help Prince Albert be the best that it can be.

Mr. Speaker, many years ago a very good friend of mine, Mr. Ted Knight from this very fine city, gave me some great advice that I truly believe in. He told me if you want to make a difference, Joe, you have to get involved. So that's what I did, Mr. Speaker.

I served on Prince Albert and District Community Futures board for 11 years where we lent out over \$6 million to over 120 small businesses, creating over 650 jobs. Now that, Mr. Speaker, makes a difference.

I served on the Victoria Hospital Foundation Board for six years where we raised several million dollars to help the Victoria Hospital. That, Mr. Speaker, makes a difference.

I served on the Prince Albert Board of Police Commissioners for three years, helping with the transition from a municipal board to a public board. Mr. Speaker, that makes a difference.

I served on the economic development board, the chamber of commerce board, the Rotary Club of Prince Albert, the Hyundai national dealer advisory council, and the Chrysler dealers' advertising association.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that I have helped make a difference in Prince Albert and now, Mr. Speaker, I want to make a bigger difference for Prince Albert by being involved, by being the MLA for Prince Albert Carlton, by being a member of this government who is committed to keeping Saskatchewan strong and moving this province forward.

Mr. Speaker, as I am sure most members of this House know, elections take months of preparation as well as months of knocking on doors. All of this, Mr. Speaker, gave me great insight as to what the people of my constituency are thinking, and what they want to see from our government.

It was more than evident, Mr. Speaker. They want to see the continued strong leadership that our Premier has demonstrated, a leader who continues to speak up for Saskatchewan's

interests. They want to see continued economic growth that this province has shown under this government, a growth rate that has been the best economic growth rate in Canada from 2008 to 2015. They want to see their taxes stay low as they have under this government, not being raised 21 times like they did under the NDP.

And, Mr. Speaker, they want to see the continued improvement and leadership in health care that this government has shown like hiring 650 more doctors and 3,000 more nurses of all designations, like investing in new hospitals throughout the province and not closing 52 hospitals like the NDP government did, like taking this province from the longest surgical wait times in Canada under the NDP government to the shortest surgical wait times in Canada under this government, Mr. Speaker.

They want to see the record job creation that this government has overseen to continue in this province. They want to see continued investment in education of our youth that this government has shown since coming to power, where nearly \$1 billion has been invested in 40 brand new schools or replacement schools and 25 major renovations. They want to see the continued record investment in our highways, Mr. Speaker, that this government has shown.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk a bit about the city of Prince Albert. The city is the third largest city in this province and it has a very, very diverse community. It is the gateway to the many parks, lakes, and rivers of our beautiful northern half of the province. Prince Albert is also known to be a community of people who give tirelessly of their time to help others in need.

I'm very pleased to mention, Mr. Speaker, that Prince Albert and specifically Prince Albert Carlton is home to two recipients of prestigious awards in 2016. Mr. Dale Ebert was recently awarded the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal and Mrs. Isabelle Impey who is the recipient tonight of the Saskatchewan award of merit. I as well as all the citizens of Prince Albert are very proud of them and the work that they do and have done.

[16:30]

Mr. Speaker, while Prince Albert has faced its up and downs over the years . . . But with this stronger economy overall that this province has enjoyed since this government took office, there has been solid economic growth in Prince Albert with both new and renewed businesses. Mr. Speaker, since 2007 the Prince Albert area has witnessed increased commercial expansion like the Cornerstone retail development, four new automotive dealerships, new chain restaurants, new hotels, new construction of existing businesses like Farm World, Redhead Equipment, and new Lakeland Ford, plus Pineview Terrace, Caleb seniors' Village, Alfred Jenkins Field House, the Rotary Trail, and new SPCA [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals] and many, many more. That, Mr. Speaker, that has meant new jobs in Prince Albert and many more new businesses are looking to locate in Prince Albert because now, Mr. Speaker, Prince Albert is getting known as a place to do business.

Our government has shown its commitment to Prince Albert as well, Mr. Speaker. To the city, Mr. Speaker, this government

has shown a 156 per cent increase in municipal revenue sharing; a 231 per cent increase in municipal police grants; \$37 million in infrastructure to both the Prince Albert Correctional Centre and the Pine Grove Correctional Centre, Mr. Speaker; \$3 million for the green energy park; \$16 million for water treatment plant and reservoir upgrade; 6.8 million upgrade to the Diefenbaker bridge and roads; \$62 million investment in twinning of the Highway 11 between Saskatoon and Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, and God knows how many lives that has saved; a commitment to participating on the P3 [public-private partnership] model to construction of a second bridge in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, that this government will live up to.

In the area of health care, Mr. Speaker, our government has given \$2 million for the planning and renewal of the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital; \$85 million increase in funding for the P.A. [Prince Albert] Parkland Health Region; 18.2 million for the 60-bed, long-term care facility, Mr. Speaker.

In the area of social services, Mr. Speaker, this government has invested \$40 million to develop over 300 rental and homeowner units and repair more than 400 homes — that's the equivalent of eight city blocks just in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker.

Almost \$1 million for the Habitat for Humanity and the great work that they do, Mr. Speaker. And a solid increase in funding for the women's shelter.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of education, the government has again contributed to investment in our youth. Total pre-K to 12 capital allocation is \$35.2 million. We've added over 370 child care spaces and we've added 14 pre-kindergarten programs. And investments, major investments in Carleton High School and St. Anne's School. Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that this government will continue to show its commitment to our great city.

Mr. Speaker, my father was born in a soddie near Beechy, Saskatchewan. And like many of his era, he served his country proudly and bravely on many fronts in World War II. While losing many friends overseas, he was fortunate to come home. It was these brave men and women, like my father, that were prepared to give their lives, and those that gave their lives. They gave us the freedoms that we all have today: the freedom of speech, the ability to debate different beliefs and ideals like we do in this House, the ability to vote in a democratic election like we did on April 4th. We owe all our veterans our great respect, because freedom is not free. Mr. Speaker, freedom, it comes at a very high cost. And thank you to all of our veterans who know that all too well.

My father's picture, along with his medals, hang very proudly in my office in this very building. When my father returned from World War II, he met and married my mother, and they spent their next 64 years together. Mr. Speaker, my father spent most of his working life farming, then as a grain buyer for the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. My brother, three sisters, and I were raised in the small, small farming town of Chelan, in the northeast part of the province. As the youngest of five, it was my job to run for water. That was all we had, was me running down the basement for water. And it got a little cold in the winter when we had to go to the bathroom, Mr. Speaker.

My parents taught us that what defines us as a person is our faith, our morals, our integrity, our work ethic, our commitment to our family, and our commitment to our community, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm so proud to call Saskatchewan my home and I'm so happy to see the positive change in attitude from the way things used to be under the complacent, defeatist attitude of the former NDP governments to that of the new, positive, open-for-business model of our government, Mr. Speaker.

We have seen that attitude continue with the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker. This party did not make a lot of costly promises during the election, like the NDP did, but we did commit to keep Saskatchewan strong by keeping the economy strong, by keeping the province's finances strong, and by standing up for Saskatchewan interests, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to make major investments in infrastructure like highways, hospitals, schools, and long-term care facilities. Our government is not interested in closing schools and hospitals like the previous government. Our government, Mr. Speaker, will continue to implement new ideas to reduce wait times in the health field like expanding the model used with the MRIs to include CT scans. And, Mr. Speaker, our government will continue its support for seniors and seniors' care by reducing health region administration cost and redirecting that savings to front-line seniors health care workers.

This Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, I believe shows our government's commitment to Saskatchewan to keep Saskatchewan strong. It demonstrates our commitment to being fiscally responsible so that future generations can benefit. Mr. Speaker, this is the footprint that my government chooses to leave as their legacy, and not one that leaves subsequent governments to clean up their mess. Mr. Speaker, that is why I'm supporting the motion put forward by the member from Saskatoon Westview and oppose the amendment. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Olauson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to thank my colleagues for this welcome. I am humbled by the opportunity to represent the constituents of Saskatoon University during this twenty-eighth sitting of the legislature. I am pleased to offer my support to the Speech from the Throne, but first I'd like to take a few moments to recognize some of the people whose help and support enabled me to be here.

Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of this journey, my partner, DonnaLyn Thorsteinson, has been my source of strength and encouragement. I am sure all members can confirm that running for public office is not for those faint of heart. Perhaps no one knows this more than our spouses.

Since my nomination 18 months ago and throughout the election period, my partner has been by my side, and I want to sincerely thank her for that. She has taken on every role that has been asked of her: mother, manager, scheduler, volunteer, cook, and supporter. Without her, I would say that the task would have been very daunting and perhaps even insurmountable.

Every person who runs for office knows that we are but the tip of the iceberg, the part that people see. But we all know that 90 per cent of the iceberg is under water and most of the work is done behind the scenes. DonnaLyn has been that part and much more of the iceberg. Thank you, and I love you very much.

To my mom, Joan Olauson, who has the amazing ability to both keep my spirits up and yet take me down that notch when I needed it to keep me humble, thank you. It is going to be a tremendous journey, and I love that she's a part of it. She has been the rock my entire life, and I know that without her and her support, this journey would have been very different. She has been able to keep all four of us kids on the straight and narrow, and we've all kind of turned out all right. For her leadership and her . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Kind of. For her leadership and her strength, I thank her from the bottom of my heart.

Mr. Speaker, if there's one job in the world that supersedes all others, it's the role of parent. I have the good fortune of being the father of four great kids. They are all unique and special to me in their own way, but I can tell you that I couldn't have done any of this without their love and support. Connor's my oldest, and he's 18. He's graduating this June from Walter Murray Collegiate, I hope, and will be entering the AST [automotive service technician] program at Sask Polytechnic. Connor has been a source of immense pride and joy for me. He's always willing to lend a hand, be a support, and do the job that needs to be done.

As a parent, it's such a blessing to hear someone else praise your child. This happened on election day as one of our volunteers told me just how proud I should be to have Connor as my son. He was polite, courteous, and very helpful. Although you hope you've succeeded as a parent, you're never quite sure how good a job you've done until you hear from someone else. I'm very proud of him.

Our three youngest children attend my alma mater, École Cardinal Leger School. Thankfully, the teachers and administrators are all new since I attended, or our kids probably wouldn't be able to catch a break. I spent a little bit of time in the office when I was attending there.

Abigail is 11, in grade 6. Although it isn't cool to like anything your parents do, Abby thinks this politics stuff is pretty neat. She's also a good humbler as she takes me down a peg whenever my ego gets too big. She reminds me that it's hard work, not showmanship, that is the true value of a leader and that in order to be a success, hard work is the only path. I enjoyed walking and talking with her all those evenings on the doorsteps. It was a special kind of bonding time for us, and I love her for sharing her time with me.

Mr. Speaker, Danielle is 10 and in grade 5. She's quite the kid. Very smart and athletic, she's always willing to jump in with both feet into any challenge. Whether it was trying to say everyone's name exactly right while we were out door knocking or being at every rally asking a million questions, Danielle was there for me. She's a special kind of cheerleader. Having someone that young who is so engaged is also very humbling, and I love her for that.

Rebecka is the youngest. She is 8 and in grade 3 in Ms. Shappert's class. Her class is super fun, and I visited a few times during the last year, Mr. Speaker. Becks is a cutie and was a good worker throughout our whole campaign. She had some very good questions and concerns that were very well thought out, and sometimes really hard to answer. I'm sure she'll make many trips to her legislature in the next four years, and I hope I'm up for that. She is smart and inquisitive, and I love her for that.

To my team under the leadership of my campaign Chair, Michael Couros, I was truly blessed by your hard work and support. Your notes of encouragement and endless efforts mean more to me than you can imagine. Our team included a large youth component that were so exuberant to the cause, kept the whole team energized and, for many of them, voting for the first time only confirmed why I made the decision to run for public office.

Mr. Speaker, all of us know that it is very humbling to have people, some of who you have never met, come out and volunteer to help you get elected. Every time we would head out the door for knocking, even in the dead of winter, there was someone giving up their time to move forward our goal. So thank you to the Saskatoon University board and all of our volunteers, some of who I am sure I'm going to miss here, but I'm going to try anyway. Here we go. So there was Ron, Sophie, Edna, Sharon, Al, Gerald, Bev, Iris, Judy, Rod, Elias, Preston, Angie, Nick, Mary, Randy, Lauren, Tiffany, Eden, Rhode, Katie, Preston, Ross, Monica, Lana, Frank, Thomas, Mahad, Winston, and Zach. I'm truly blessed for all you have done and all you will do for me. Mr. Speaker, I believe we are the only constituency who had volunteers ranging from two to over 101 years of age.

Mr. Speaker, I could never express enough my sincere gratitude to the people of Saskatoon University who have given me their support and their trust. I give them my word to do all that I can to represent them with the respect and honour they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, my journey began not unlike many others. I was born in Saskatoon, raised and educated in College Park. I am the son of teachers. My father was an elementary school principal in Saskatoon for 28 years and retired in 1997. My mother was a teacher for 27 years and retired in 2003. We were never rich, but we never went without anything either. Summers were spent at Chitek Lake where my family built a cabin in 1977.

I am the oldest of four siblings. My oldest sister, Claire, is a teacher in Calgary with her husband, Cam. She is the mother of two super kids, Bridget and Henry. My brother, Glen, works for Revenue Canada with his wife, Jennifer, and is the father to three great kids: Anna, Sophia, and Joseph. My youngest sister, Erin, lives in Calgary and is a geological engineer and project manager. We were all blessed with great parents who always had us as their first priority.

Mr. Speaker, after high school I was one of the fortunate ones who got to stay here and attend post-secondary education. Many, many others in my graduating class at Holy Cross High School received luggage for graduation and headed to Alberta. That's what we did back then. We graduated and headed west

because there just weren't opportunities here.

I entered the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], expecting to go into education because my parents had, and I hoped that in four years I could graduate and use my dad's pull to get me a job in Saskatoon. That was my goal. That was my hope. I was very short sighted but I was like everyone else here — think small, don't shoot high, and settle because you had to.

Mr. Speaker, I quickly recognized, and the university recognized for me, that it just wasn't going to happen. So I enrolled, Mr. Speaker, in the recreation and leisure diploma program at Kelsey SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] institute. I thought if I was going to work at something for the rest of my life, then I'd better enjoy it.

I graduated in 1993 with my diploma and I got set to set the world on fire. However, Saskatoon and indeed Saskatchewan had a different take on things. There was no opportunities here. It was as if everyone had given up on Saskatchewan and its people.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, it was pathetic. The first job I was offered was in a small town close to Saskatoon, and I remember some of the conditions of employment. I had to move to the town. I had to buy a house there. My contract would be for one-year terms only, and I had to fundraise half of my salary. This was in 1994, Mr. Speaker, and I was going to be the recreation director. That simply wasn't possible.

So I worked two jobs, Mr. Speaker, until our first child was born. Then I was fortunate enough to only have to work one, and referee hockey on the side in the winter. That's what it took to stay in this province, Mr. Speaker. Those nights travelling to Macklin, Blaine Lake, Hafford, and Wakaw, among others, in the dead of winter to referee was extra money that helped put food on the table. We met a lot of good, hard-working people on those nights and we had a lot of fun, but it didn't have to be that way.

I got my start in trucking in 1998, Mr. Speaker. Starting small and working my way up, I eventually landed a pretty good role at a mid-sized family trucking firm in Saskatoon. Things were starting to look up, but not as big as they could have been. Most of our clients were still in Alberta and west. They were the companies ordering equipment and supplies. They were prospering. Saskatchewan was barely holding its own. We were treading water. We were exporting very little and importing even less. All the freight went to Alberta and hardly any was coming to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, that all changed around 2007. All of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, our economy started to grow. People started to move here. Jobs were being created. We became a have province instead of always depending on others. Our attitude became very different. No longer did we envy others for their success, but we asked ourselves, how do I do that too? It used to be when our neighbour bought a new car or truck, the first things that we said were things like show-off, or boy I wish I could afford something like that, or where did he get the money for

that? Now people were seeing the new vehicles or houses or new clothing, and saying, good for him. I want that, and how can I get it? What do I need to do to have what he has? We became happy for others and proud of our province. Mr. Speaker, it was about time.

Mr. Speaker, as our family grew and I became more involved in our community, I found it hard to sit on the sidelines. Our community was in need of some lights in our park that would help light the walking path for our seniors and our new moms, so I joined the East College Park Community Association, and we set out to make this a reality. Our small community raised over \$32,000 to get those lights, and they were installed in 2012.

Along the way it was noted that our city councillor would be retiring that year and wouldn't run for re-election. So I decided to take the opportunity to help not only our community but our city as a whole. Through a lot of dedicated volunteers, my campaign Chairs Joceline Schreimer and Gary Broste, I was elected in October 2012 to Saskatoon City Council, representing the fine folks of ward 8.

For a first-time politician it was like drinking water from a firehose, Mr. Speaker. It was an excellent opportunity and I would never trade it for anything, but it was a lot of information very fast. I enjoyed helping people, and being a municipal leader is as close to the people as you can get. Whether it was talking about roads, snow, potholes, or taxes, everyone has an opinion about what you should do and has no problem sharing that opinion. The public is very engaged in everything that is done, so you have to be in front of them as much as possible. I loved the experience of being so close to the citizens and being in the trenches helping people.

I enjoyed and respected my colleagues on city council. They didn't agree with me all the time, but they all wanted the best for the city. I also enjoyed working with the staff at city hall. They are all good people who have the city's best interest at heart and I look forward to working with them again, although in a different capacity. Saskatoon has many needs and I will advocate for them once again, just from a different perspective.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that it is our Premier and this government that has been investing in cities, from record infrastructure investments to a 173 per cent increase in revenue sharing from when the Sask Party first formed government. That translates to an increase of sharing from 17.8 million in 2007-2008 to 48.5 million in 2016-17. I know first hand that our government is the right partner for our municipalities.

When I started my political journey, Mr. Speaker, I had only one objective: make Saskatoon and Saskatchewan a better place for our children and our grandchildren. I wanted my kids to be able to get their education here, enjoy a career here, and retire here, period. I don't ever want them to have to make the decisions and the choices I did when I was younger. If they want to stay here, raise a family here, and retire here, I want them to have that choice. And we are quickly achieving that goal. Saskatchewan is now not the place to be from; it is truly the place to be.

Mr. Speaker, another big piece of Saskatoon University is the

University of Saskatchewan. I believe you and all my fellow colleagues can attest to the world-renowned and reputable school that our University of Saskatchewan is. The U of S holds membership in the U15, which is a group of the top 15 research universities in Canada — highly impressive indeed.

Students in Saskatchewan know that the Saskatchewan Party values their talent and has taken several measures to ensure they thrive in this province. The benefits are rewarding long after graduation. High school graduates who attend a post-secondary institution are eligible to receive monies toward their tuition. Post-secondary funding has increased on average, Mr. Speaker, over seven and a half per cent per year or over 61 per cent since 2007. As well our popular graduate retention program is to be enhanced as promised in our election platform. This contrasts the NDP record from when they were in government when they increased funding for post-secondary institutions by just 20 per cent over 16 years, Mr. Speaker, an average increase of just over 1 per cent per year.

One of U15's principles is advocating an open, honest approach to tackling complex issues, engaging all points of view, and making difficult decisions. Mr. Speaker, U15's principle perfectly describes our Premier, our party, and our mandate. Our Premier is the envy of the country. While many neighbouring provinces are struggling with high unemployment, market uncertainty, and job loss, our Premier is innovative, well respected, and forward thinking. We can all sleep a little better at night knowing he has our best interests at heart and will make those difficult decisions that other leaders either neglect or overcorrect, which often leaves those most vulnerable picking up the pieces.

Speaking of fixing past mistakes, Mr. Speaker, under the leadership of the NDP, residents in Saskatchewan saw their taxes raised 21 times in their 16 years of power, including raising the PST [provincial sales tax] four times and the gas tax twice, while our party has steadfastly delivered record property tax reductions and record income tax reductions. Mr. Speaker, it's no wonder Saskatchewan so overwhelmingly chose the Sask Party to represent them at home and on the world stage just a short month ago.

Mr. Speaker, some other notable institutions of Saskatoon University is Royal University Hospital and the new children's hospital. One simply does not go through life without using the services of a hospital, specialist, or a lab, either for themselves or for a family member. We are fortunate to be able to walk into a hospital and receive world-class care. The children's hospital of Saskatchewan will be a tremendous addition to our suite of health care options.

I have a niece with special needs, Mr. Speaker. People like Anna will no longer have to spend so much time away from home to get the treatment they need. From my family's experience, treatment closer to home would have relieved some of the extra stress that is incurred by all who have to take time away from work, hire additional child care, pay for accommodations away from home, and not sleep in their own beds. This is an important facility, Mr. Speaker, not only for the patients but for their families as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne that we are debating

here today shows that our government can be trusted. We are keeping the promises we made during the election. During the campaign, the Premier and our party made measured promises to help keep Saskatchewan strong. This contrasted with the NDP's platform where they had hundreds of millions in uncosted promises. We are going to move forward, not back.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to note a few of the items from the Throne Speech that are going to have a positive and lasting impact on my constituents. By introducing a new patent box tax incentive, the first of its kind in North America, to create jobs and investment through the commercialization of patents and intellectual property in Saskatchewan, we will foster the entrepreneurial spirit that is very much alive here in Saskatchewan like nowhere else in the world. I think we'll see a lot of ideas coming from Innovation Place at the U of S campus, and I look forward to supporting those initiatives with this new tax incentive, Mr. Speaker.

Expanding the two-for-one model recently introduced for MRI scans to also include CT scans is another made-in-Saskatchewan initiative that can only ensure that people get timely diagnostic care. This is another win-win for Saskatchewan people and another great selling point when people are looking at moving to our province. As our population ages, it is important for our government to ensure that not only are our seniors cared for but the people providing that care have proper supports as well. Amending *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* to ensure that those caring for a family member in the final stages of life will be eligible for 28 weeks of leave per year is a common sense initiative that fits well into the continuum of care and growth plan that our government has followed these past eight years.

Through all these initiatives we will work to keep the economy strong, to keep the province's finances strong, and to keep Saskatchewan's place in Canada strong by always standing up for Saskatchewan's interests. Whether you have just started growing your family and are requiring child care, moving out for the first time, sending children to school, or supporting an elderly loved one who is transitioning into long-term care, our party is the only party that can be trusted to ensure Saskatchewan remains strong and continues to benefit its residents.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne was a document that I'm prepared to support and keep Saskatchewan strong. It is without hesitation that I support the motion by the member from Saskatoon Westview, seconded by the member from Estevan, in supporting the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Merriman: — I'd like to thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much. I'm very honoured to get into the debate on the Speech from the Throne and join my colleagues in the support from the member from Saskatoon Westview on this huge step forward for Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan. We have been given a huge honour here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to keep moving Saskatchewan forward, to be able to move the province into the potential that we've always seen within our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But before I get into the Speech from the Throne, I have to thank a few people. And certainly, first and foremost, I have to thank my family, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my wife and my children who are there to be able to support me, as my son has just recently reminded me that I've missed a few hockey games and I've missed a few of my daughter's events as well. I miss a lot of things as all members do, being able to serve for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it is a difficult choice to serve the people of Saskatchewan. And as the member from P.A. Carlton had just said, it's a service that we do this. I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't do this for the money. There are other opportunities out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We do get compensated very well as MLAs but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do this because it's more of a calling for ourselves to be able to improve Saskatchewan and to be able to take Saskatchewan into a place where we see it being for now and into the future.

There are a few other people I want to thank, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My campaign manager, Dan Wiks, and his wife, Arlene Wiks, who were instrumental in helping me get elected in 2011 and getting me re-elected, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They were absolutely fabulous, couldn't have got elected without them. They organized the team, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They created some fundraisers for me. They really help. And none of us would be here without the people in behind them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be able to step forward, put our names forward. But the people of Saskatchewan only get to see the members that are elected . . .

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

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

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