



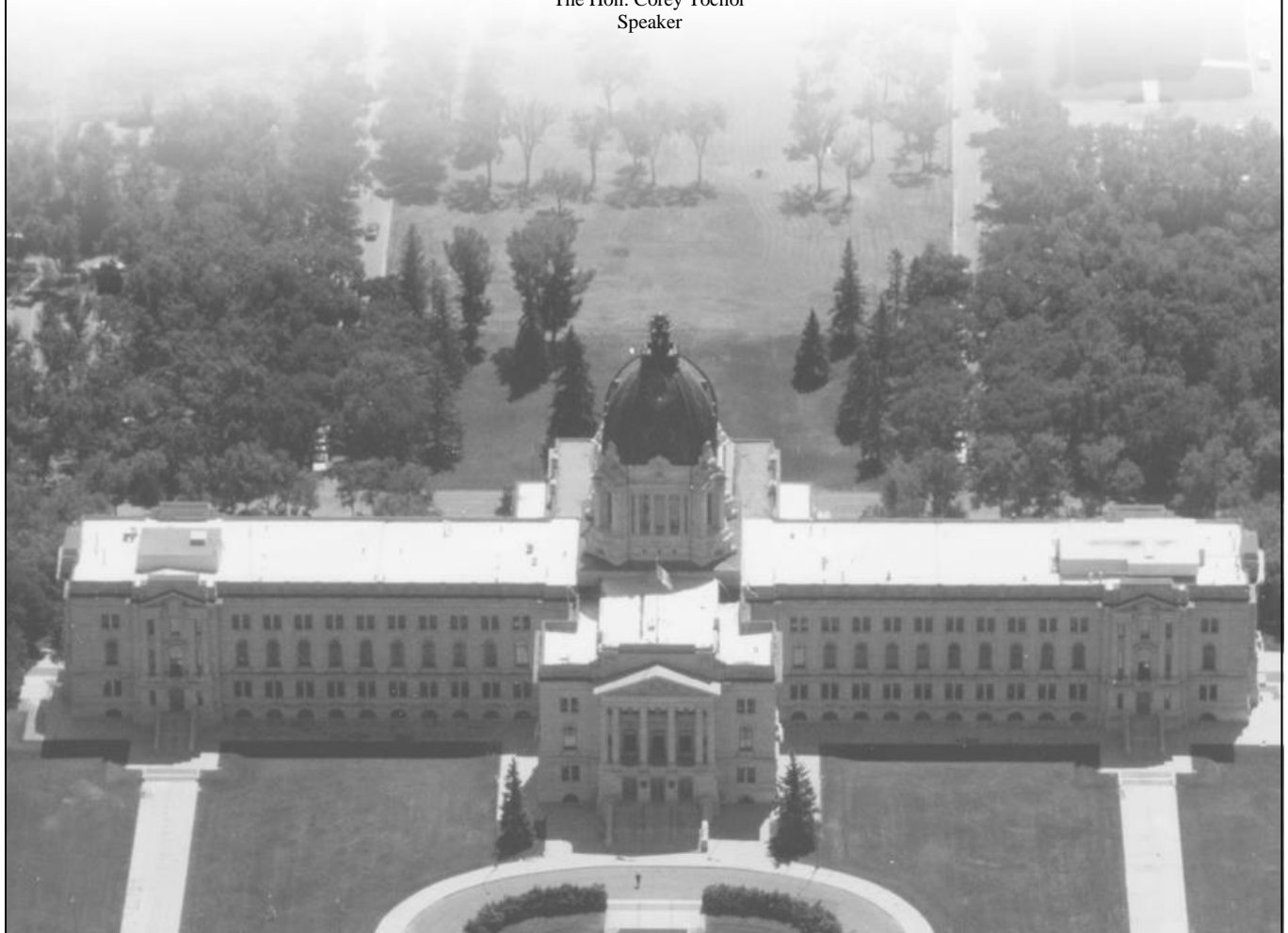
FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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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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 Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and all the members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce Mayor Garth Harris and all the people from Preeceville and area. Welcome here today on the west side. We understand you have some health concerns, and it's nice to have you here today. Rural health in Saskatchewan's a long-time problem and we're working to fix it. And I understand your problems, and I look forward to not only meeting with you today but working with you all through this hard times. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite and welcome the many, many, many guests from Preeceville and Sturgis and Endeavour that have joined us here today, many throughout the region that are certainly taking a stand for something in their community and to the lives of many. And certainly would like to welcome His Worship Mayor Garth Harris and just all of the people that have come here today to meet with us. I enjoyed the meeting, and we'll see what kind of outcome we can find together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Today visiting us from Manitoba we have a school group in from Riverdale School. Could you get a wave, please? It is grade 6 . . . There are 12 students from grade 6 to 9, and their teacher, Darcy Wohlgemuth, is with the group. And I welcome everyone to please, to our neighbours, give them a warm round of applause for joining us today.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise again to present a petition today to improve PTS [post-traumatic stress] coverage for Saskatchewan workers. The petitioners point out that post-traumatic stress disorder can severely impact the lives of Saskatchewan workers, and the fact that a delay in diagnosis and treatment for PTSD can be detrimental to recovery and that PTSD is not on the list of workers' compensation illnesses presumed to be work related in Saskatchewan.

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: to cause the government to make the necessary changes to ensure that if Saskatchewan workers are exposed to traumatic events on the job and are then

diagnosed with PTSD, it is presumed to be caused by the worker's employment and the worker will subsequently be covered under workers' compensation and receive the same benefits as others with work-related injuries.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens of Saskatoon. I so submit.

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 for heritage languages here in Saskatoon. And many, many people are very disappointed that after 25 years, the Government of Saskatchewan is discontinuing all support for heritage language learning here in Saskatchewan.

Since 1991, heritage language schools have depended on this modest funding from the Ministry of Education that helps sustain their programming. Now as a result of the announcement by the Ministry of Education, many of these non-profit heritage language schools will be faced with a difficult decision of whether they can continue to operate. In addition to providing language and cultural classes, these schools offer a welcoming environment and crucial support for newcomers who are searching for a way to feel at home in their new surroundings here in Saskatchewan.

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, these people signing the petition today come from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Social Worker Receives Saskatchewan Order of Merit

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to recognize Isabelle Impey from Prince Albert who was one of the recipients of the 2016 Saskatchewan Order of Merit which was awarded last night.

Ms. Impey is a social worker and child advocate who has worked tirelessly in Prince Albert. She is active in indigenous traditional healing and First Nation and Métis child advocacy. She helped establish the Interval House, the first women's safe shelter in Prince Albert, and an annual Prince Albert

community Christmas dinner which provides meals to the lonely and poor on Christmas Day. She operates the Second Harvest program which provides food to those in need. She's a member of the Prince Albert Aid to the Homeless and the Hungry, and the West Flat Community Centre where first-hand outreach is done.

Ms. Impey is a former member of both the Canadian and the Saskatchewan Human Rights. As well, she has been a board member of the Canadian Centre on Police-Race Relations, First Nations University, and the Saskatchewan Penitentiary citizen advisory committee.

Mr. Speaker, Isabelle Impey has accomplished all of this in her quiet but determined manner and has earned the love and respect of the people of Prince Albert. I ask that all members join with me in recognizing Isabelle Impey's contributions and in extending congratulations on receiving the Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

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

Hooping It Up With Best Buddies

Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to talk about the Best Buddies Hooping It Up free throw competition. Last week, I had the pleasure of attending St. Marguerite Bourgeoys School in the heart of Gardiner Park to shoot some hoops with the students in support of the local chapter of Best Buddies.

The Hooping It Up free throw competition is a national event held in schools across Canada annually — several were held in Regina that day — to raise funds and awareness for the Best Buddies program. The goal is to sink as many free throws as you can in 60 seconds and, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to put it on the record that I was able to sink 12 — somewhat mediocre, but it was a lot of fun. The students loudly cheered every one you managed to get.

The Best Buddies is a program designed to foster relationships between those with intellectual disabilities and their peers. It's the goal of the organization to help make schools and communities more inclusive and accepting of those with special needs. As their teacher, Amanda Labatt, said about the program, "A lot of the students have really jumped on board and the community has been very supportive. We start with recess buddies and the peer buddies came once a week to show my students how to play different sporting games."

Well this is the first year the Best Buddies program has run at St. Marguerite. Happy to announce it was a great success. I ask all members in the House to join me in congratulating the students at Marguerite on their successful event. It was a pleasure to join them as they concluded a successful year of the program. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

North Central Family Centre Fun Run

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, for the last two years the North

Central Family Centre, located in the heart of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, has hosted an event specifically designed to promote community pride and to build a stronger, safer, and healthier community. Some call it the Fun Run but you can walk, run, bike, rollerblade, or skateboard the 5-kilometre distance through the neighbourhood. Myself, I had a good time on two wheels.

While it certainly was a fun time, there's another, more serious purpose besides, and that is to serve as a memorial to the late Ivan Amichand. Along with Sandy Wankel, Ivan Amichand helped found the North Central Family Centre, and passed away at far too young an age a couple of years ago.

The event provides an opportunity to honour Ivan's memory and reflect on the many contributions he made to our community, but also how we ourselves might make our own contributions and to ask, what can I do as an individual that will make a positive difference in my community? Perhaps the largest lesson Ivan taught us is that individuals make all the difference.

I want to thank Alliance Energy who sponsored the event, and the great number of people who participated: firefighters, police officers, University of Regina nursing students, Queen City Marathon staff and volunteers, as well as a tremendous turnout of folks and families from the neighbourhood. And of course, a big thank you very much to everyone at the North Central Family Centre for the day and the good work they do in our community each and every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Quilts of Valour

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 6th I had the honour and privilege of bringing greetings at a quilt presentation ceremony hosted in Regina by the Quilts of Valour - Canada Society.

Mr. Speaker, Quilts of Valour is a registered charity through which quilters from across Canada make and donate quilts to comfort Canadian Armed Forces members and veterans who are suffering from physical and mental injuries. At the ceremony, four quilts were presented to recipients to help comfort them in their time of need and to honour their service and sacrifice. The recipients were W. John Sheppard, Janet Bennet, Eugene Bennet, and Andrew Hollick.

This ceremony was held on the 71st anniversary of VE [Victory in Europe] Day, and those in attendance had the rare privilege of hearing World War II veteran John Sheppard read a letter that he wrote his mother on that day 71 years ago. Mr. Speaker, it was an incredible experience to hear John read his letter, and it served as a powerful reminder of our responsibility to preserve and honour the memory of those who sacrificed so much to protect our very freedoms.

I'd ask all members to join me in thanking Cheryl Dvernichuk and all the volunteers who have given their time and talents to the quilts of valour program, and also thanking the quilt recipients for their service and sacrifice in defence of our great

country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Sikh Parade Day

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise in the House today to celebrate our province's first ever Sikh Parade Day. Over 3,000 people participated. It truly was a great party. We enjoyed bagpipes; the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] in their red serge; men in orange carrying traditional swords; plus the beautiful, bright, traditional saris. The main parade float was beautifully decorated in rose petals and carried the holy scripture. Men sang, which were echoed by the crowds.

The amount of participants is indicative of the growth of the Sikh community within Saskatchewan, but here in Regina. Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that the Sikh population in Regina has grown from just a few dozen that were here in the 1970s to hundreds today. This speaks to our province's proud tradition and respect for multiculturalism and helps us to understand and live up to our motto "from many peoples, strength."

Celebrations like the Sikh parade help us build a better understanding that we can all foster more harmonious relationships with those with unique cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It helps us ensure that our communities are more beautiful places that we can all live together. I'd like to congratulate all the organizers and volunteers who participated in this wonderful, bright day. I look forward to many more in the future. Diversity is one thing we all have in common. Let's celebrate it every day. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Saskatchewan Mining Supply Chain Forum

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Mining Association, the Saskatchewan Ministry of the Economy, and the Saskatchewan Industrial and Mining Suppliers Association held their eighth annual Mining Supply Chain Forum this year at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon. The forum provided information to manufacturers, construction, and equipment service providers on how they can access mining supply opportunities. There was also a session providing information on engineering, maintenance, reliability, operations, and productivity.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, this forum has become the most successful natural resource supplier event in Saskatchewan. It brings together all major operating mines in Saskatchewan as well as local, national, and international suppliers. This forum continues to put Saskatchewan mining first and foremost on the international stage. Mr. Speaker, events like this are critical in spreading the word about our great province and what it has to offer.

Of course events like this cannot be possible without the countless hard-working organizers and volunteers. I'd like to thank the Saskatchewan Mining Association, the Saskatchewan Industrial and Mining Suppliers Association, and the 1,100

people attending for inviting me to speak and tour the convention floor. This forum is just one of the ways we're letting the world know what Saskatchewan has to offer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Rural Municipal Administrators' Association Conference

Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association hosted their 96th annual convention here in Regina. The RMAA represents the senior administration of the province's rural municipalities.

Our government has always valued the strong relationship we have with rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We know the contributions of our rural municipalities and our rural administrators are a large part of why Saskatchewan remains strong. I am proud to have worked closely with the RMAA throughout my municipal career and my time as SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] president.

Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to recognize my friend, the RMAA's executive director, Kevin Ritchie, who will be stepping down after 14 years with the association. Kevin has held several roles with the RMAA including division director, vice-president, president, and executive director since 2008, and sat on the SARM board ex officio.

Kevin was the recipient of the Lou Jacobs Award at this year's convention, Mr. Speaker. The Lou Jacobs Award recognizes outstanding service in municipal government and is the RMAA's highest honour. Kevin joins the prestigious list of recipients, and some maybe not so prestigious, Mr. Speaker, like previous years' recipients the Minister of Government Relations and myself, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I proudly have my Lou Jacobs Award hanging in my office in this building.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join in congratulating Kevin and thanking all rural municipal administrators for their outstanding work each and every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Rural Health Care Services

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, over a decade and a half ago, Dr. Ken Fyke was tasked with making important recommendations to change the health care system in Saskatchewan. Yesterday he said the government has "lost a tremendous opportunity in the last 10 years to make real change in the health system."

Mr. Speaker, hospitals are understaffed. ER [emergency room] wait times are staggering. Surgery waitlists are growing. Old infrastructure is crumbling, and the new buildings don't suit the needs. Through all this the government is ignoring front-line workers and Saskatchewan families. And unless you count a specialist in car assembly lines, they're ignoring what the experts are saying too.

Why has this government wasted their opportunity to implement the expert recommendations and bring meaningful and positive improvements to the health care that Saskatchewan people rely on?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for raising the question, and I know we'll be able to talk specifically about the situation in Preeceville. I want to welcome all of those folks to their Assembly as well and thank them for working towards better care for Preeceville and area, just as we have been trying to do for all of rural Saskatchewan.

I would point out, in terms of the Leader of the Opposition's questions however, there are some misstatements perhaps, or some facts that are in error. Number one, the Fyke Commission, Mr. Speaker, was commissioned by the NDP [New Democratic Party] government. The Fyke Commission's recommendations were to the NDP government. So if he's wondering why they weren't implemented, he might want to consult with members on his own side of the House.

And here are some . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Perhaps the member for Athabasca who wants to participate in the debate from his seat can explain why they ignored the commission.

Here's what our party did, Mr. Speaker. While we acknowledge there's more work to do, when we took over from the NDP, Saskatchewan had lost 450 nurses and 173 doctors from 2001 to 2006. Since the Saskatchewan Party was elected there are now 650 more doctors practising, 3,000 nurses of every description now, more practising than under the NDP. And the member said there were fewer front-line workers. The Leader of the Opposition just said that. That's not the case.

We took over from a situation where the NDP had closed 52 hospitals in the province of Saskatchewan. We've been opening facilities, long-term care facilities. We have been completing the build on hospitals like Preeceville and working hard to recruit doctors to rural Saskatchewan, including the 25 communities we can discuss here later on in the debate. We've been able to stabilize, Mr. Speaker. We readily admit there's more work to do.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, those lines are growing awfully tired. They're pretty disrespectful to people like those that are here from Preeceville here today, Mr. Speaker. Just last week on behalf of a mother who is very concerned about access to critical health services for her son with a severe allergy, we asked the Minister for Rural and Remote Health what he was going to do to keep their hospital and its services open. He said, "All current systems and all current available services are still in place." That is a smack in the face to the good people of Preeceville that are with us here today that know that in less than a week that government will be closing emergency and acute services at the Preeceville Hospital.

Along with the Health critic, we met today with the mayor and the delegation from Preeceville. And let me tell you, they are understandably and rightly concerned and they're taking a stand

to keep their hospital open. Does the Premier stand with his minister or will he finally do the right thing and announce that the services at the Preeceville Hospital will remain open?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I want to thank the people from Preeceville and area for joining with us today. I want them to know that their interests indeed are the interests on this side of the House in terms of better health care for Preeceville and area. But right across rural Saskatchewan, they have a strong ally and a voice of support in terms of the member for Canora-Pelly and the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Mr. Speaker, the situation in Preeceville is one born of the fact that doctor recruitment across rural North America is posing challenges. The government can't force doctors to practise in certain places and neither can they force them to stay. What governments can do and what we've worked hard to do, Mr. Speaker, is recruit doctors to rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there are 25 hospitals that I could list when we . . . that we inherited government, were having doctor recruitment and retention issues. We've been able to meet the challenges in those communities, and I believe we'll do the same in Preeceville. And we want to work with the community to achieve that.

Mr. Speaker, I hope it's an indication of our support for the Preeceville facility and health care in the area that since 2007 when we were elected, we have added to the nursing complement from six full-time equivalents to 14 full-time equivalents. Since 2010, five physicians have been recruited. We've been working hard to recruit doctors specifically to Preeceville . . . Well the member is shaking his head. These are earnest efforts on behalf of the government to deal with the issue. Four physicians have been offered contracts.

I can tell the House that a rural locum is being currently provided, that we've recruited a full-time physician through SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] who has decided to limit her practice only to clinic practice. We've also recruited another SIPPA doctor in May, just earlier this month. If successful, that recruitment will start in the fall of 2016.

Mr. Speaker, our intention is that full services are provided at the Preeceville hospital. That's why we moved to complete the facility. That's why we've increased resources. Rural health care has been a priority for this side of House. It will remain a priority for this side.

The Speaker: — I'd like to take the opportunity to remind our guests that we are thankful that you're here today, but please do not take part in the debate, and that includes clapping.

I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that answer clearly displays that that Premier is completely out of touch with what's going on in Preeceville, and the people of Preeceville are here today. You know, that government has had a . . .

[inaudible] . . . and they've had record revenues, and all they've got is a whole bunch of excuses. Let's be clear. When this government has a standard that it can't meet, that it's set, all it does is lower the standard. That's what's going on with Preeceville right now. The Sask Party is closing hospitals and shutting down services. One of those communities is Preeceville, and that's why they're here today.

Mr. Speaker, this community raised an impressive \$3.5 million for this very important facility. Their mortgage will proudly be paid off on June 24th. But as a sad disgrace, three weeks before that, this government will be closing down the services at that hospital, Mr. Speaker. You know, instead of more talk about ancient history, tired excuses, and spin, Mr. Speaker, will this Premier finally take some responsibility, will he stand up, and will he finally do the right thing and ensure that this beautiful new hospital remains open to the thousands of people and lives that depend on it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes, we have since 2007 been working to improve health care services in Preeceville. That's why there is a larger nursing complement there, it's why we've been able to offer four physicians contracts since 2010, and five physicians have been recruited. Mr. Speaker, I say to my hon. friend, and indeed to members of the community that are here, through you, Mr. Speaker, that we are working hard to recruit doctors so that full services are restored at Preeceville.

We've done that in 25 other communities very successfully, communities that we inherited from the previous members when they were government, where there were doctor shortages, and service interruptions, and hospital closures. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day we need doctors to cover for emergency service. And we cannot force a doctor to stay; neither can we force doctors to locate to a certain community.

What we can do is provide incentives. We've added to those in bursaries. What we can do is train more doctors in the province. We have done that, Mr. Speaker. What we can also do is expand the number of countries from which we can recruit foreign-trained doctors. We've done that. We can add the nurses.

I want to assure the members from Preeceville and area that we are going to work very hard to restore those full services, to recruit the doctors that are necessary, with one, an additional SIPPA doctor, starting in the fall in a rural locum under way now, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we have people here today that have fundraised, that have put together \$3.5 million for their brand new hospital that serves a region, that serves 6 to 7,000 people. Next week that hospital and those services are being closed by that government.

My question was really clear to the Premier; the people here today deserve a clear answer. Will he ensure those services remain open? Will he ensure he scraps the closure, the

shutdown of those services here today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Rural and Remote Health minister.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier has been very clear. And again, we do hear the concerns of the community. The local MLA's been very vocal, and we are listening, Mr. Speaker.

In fact some of the comments we heard even last week when the family was in. I met with them personally. One of their concerns and other concerns I've heard from community members over the past week and over the weekend where I've been contact with a few members, one of the challenges they say, the short-term challenges, has been access to the primary health clinic, Mr. Speaker.

In that regard, I've been in contact with the CEO [chief executive officer] of the region. She's committed to getting a locum in place. Won't commit to ER services, but he's committed to ensuring that primary health services and clinic time is increased, which will alleviate some of the stress that has been on the emergency services, Mr. Speaker. In fact a lot of the people I did talk to over the last few days have said that they were accessing the emergency room because they had a difficult time accessing primary health services. We're going to ensure that that's increased so it alleviates that pressure.

In the meantime, while we're recruiting physicians to bring back acute services, Mr. Speaker, we are increasing the coverage of the ER and we will be relying on the acute care paramedics in the area to deliver emergency services.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Note to that minister: he is the minister. He can make sure that ER services are open on June 1st.

Almost a decade in government and they still won't take responsibility. How can the Premier and his pair of Health ministers stand there, look these people in the eyes, and just make excuses?

Last week, the minister said Preeceville doesn't need a hospital because there are highly trained paramedics available. We've heard from the paramedics in the area and they say the minister doesn't get it. He's "missing the big picture."

Of course the paramedics in the area are very committed to the health of their community. Of course they are. But in their own words, "trying to replace an ER with ambulance services is like trying to fix an amputation with a Band-Aid."

After hearing from paramedics in Preeceville, does the Minister for Rural and Remote Health want to take the opportunity to admit he was wrong about the severity and the reality of the situation?

[14:00]

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, much of what the member just said is factually incorrect. You know, Mr. Speaker, at no time did I ever say Preeceville did not need a hospital. In fact, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the members across, it was the former NDP Health minister that said the suspension of hospital services in rural Saskatchewan is just a fact of life.

Mr. Speaker, that's not acceptable to us. That's why we've committed to the many resources that the Premier has just talked about: doctor recruitment; doctor retention; the most generous compensation package in, I would argue, the country; the most generous recruitment and retention package for rural physicians in, I would argue again, in the country and many other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker.

We focused on specifically on Preeceville to this extent, Mr. Speaker. Since September 2015 when I visited with some other members that had issues in the area and wanted to bring to our attention, Mr. Speaker, 89 per cent of the regional locum coverage through Sunrise Health has been directed to Preeceville. That does not include locum coverage through the Saskatchewan Medical Association or the primary health teams that have been accessed from Yorkton, Mr. Speaker. It shows there is a commitment by this government and the region to focus on Preeceville and get services restored.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, allow me to quote the paramedics again:

With no ER in Preeceville and no access to the ER in Canora every single night, transport to an ER is going to be at least an hour, not to mention the fact that now that crew, that ambulance is away from the service area and unable to respond for a minimum of three hours.

Mr. Speaker, three hours. This time frame concerns paramedics. It concerns the people of Preeceville and surrounding area, and it should concern the Premier, the Health minister, and the Rural and the Remote Health minister. To the Minister of Rural and Remote Health: how can this government continue to ignore the community of Preeceville when it is clear they could be left for hours without an ambulance crew?

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, one more fact I need to clarify from the member's previous question, Mr. Speaker, is that emergency service cannot be opened without a physician. Mr. Speaker, we have one physician that is doing primary health services. We have another one that's been recruited to fill the services when they do come, when they do get through the SIPP program. We have other locums in the area that were helping do emergency coverage that are unable to do that service at this point, Mr. Speaker.

But we are not replacing emergency service with advanced care

paramedics and ambulances, Mr. Speaker. As any members will know in the House, in the case of a 911 call, if there is an emergent situation, the ambulance responds anyway. We have the advance care paramedics. We have full confidence in their ability. We have two cars in Preeceville. I've been assured by the provider too in Canora with four ACPs [advanced care paramedic] that are available between the two communities and they are confident that they can fulfil the services until we get the services restored in the fall.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, let me remind you that every chance he gets, that Minister for Rural and Remote Health claims that health care and health care in rural areas is the priority of the Sask Party — that's what he says. But every chance he gets to save a rural hospital and health care services, he fails.

The people of Preeceville and the surrounding area are concerned for the safety and health of their kids, their parents ... [inaudible interjection] ... Outrageous. Outrageous. Absolutely outrageous, Mr. Speaker, the heckling.

They're concerned for their safety and health of their kids, their parents, their grandparents, and their neighbours. More than 1,000 people have signed a petition. Although it's not in order, Mr. Speaker, I think it speaks volumes.

Will the Minister of Rural and Remote Health commit to not only meeting with the people of Preeceville but commit to meeting with them, listening to their concerns, and actually taking action to address them?

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, again I just have to point to our record. I'm not going to go over the NDP's record. That's obvious; we talk about that quite often in the House. But our record with the commitment to training more doctors and focusing them on rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, directing them towards rural Saskatchewan. In fact directing through the Saskdocs recruitment program and the SIPP program, the international physician practice assessment program, Mr. Speaker — 180 of those doctors, and 87 per cent of those have been directed to rural health care.

When we look at nurse practitioners, Mr. Speaker, we've doubled the training of nurse practitioners in this province. We have doubled them practicing and 75 per cent of those serve in rural facilities, Mr. Speaker. That's the work of this government. That's the commitment of this government to rural Saskatchewan.

We can point to again the incentive programs, all the different programs we've put in place when it comes to rural Saskatchewan; the commitment to building new facilities that serve rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker; the STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] program that has been very popular that helps to supplement rural health care and emergency situations in the province, Mr. Speaker. So I know

we have more work to do, but I'm proud of our record when it comes to rural health care.

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

Ms. Chartier: — More work to do is the biggest understatement I think I have ever heard, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have spoken to many residents of Preeceville and surrounding areas and we have listened. We've heard about \$1,200 ambulance bills, a tragic death, and we have heard stories of folks living with chronic conditions such as asthma and diabetes. Many of these conditions, as you know, are manageable and complications can be avoided if proper primary care is available.

The Minister of Rural and Remote Health likes to claim that closing ER and acute services allow for better access to primary care from doctors. But even if you follow that logic, it still takes the people of Preeceville from four to six weeks to get an appointment with a doctor. Mr. Speaker, without regular care from a doctor, complications from these conditions are allowed to grow and people are even more likely to need acute care services and the emergency room. To the minister: how does this make any sense?

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, a couple more clarifications I have to do. But one answer I never gave with the last question was in fact a meeting with the representatives, and we're happy to meet with the representatives of the community, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we met with the family last week. I've been on the phone with a number of different residents over the week. A few in the area have my cellphone and they called me and texted me over the weekend to voice their concerns, as well as at a wedding I attended in town here with some local area residents that voiced their concerns. So we're happy to meet. In fact, I believe shortly after question period I have a meeting scheduled with the Premier, the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Canora-Pelly, and some area elected representatives to talk about the situation there, Mr. Speaker.

But again a clarification, we are not looking, and it was never the plan of this government or this ministry or this minister to replace emergency services with primary health care. Primary health care is a foundation of our health care system. Any medical professional . . . Talk to the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association]. They will tell you that primary health care is the foundation. Focusing on primary health care will reduce the pressure on emergencies while we address those concerns with the emergency services physicians, as well as ambulance services, Mr. Speaker. That's a chain; that's a strong link in the chain of our health care system when it comes to emergency services in Saskatchewan, rural Saskatchewan, and we will continue to focus in those areas.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about services that are available to the people of Preeceville that are hundreds

of kilometres away. We know that even when they arrive at these larger centres, they will have issues accessing these services. Throughout the last month, RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] was consistently over capacity with upwards of 20 people who were admitted without a bed. Yesterday in Saskatoon, for just RUH [Royal University Hospital] and St. Paul's, there were 74 overcapacity beds in use. Today we have seen that number jump to 87.

So we have a government that is closing rural hospitals and taking away services from smaller centres, all the while our larger centres are bursting at the seams. To the minister: what is the plan to fix this and when will timely access to health care be a priority of this government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are not closing hospitals in this province under this government. That was the record of the former government, the NDP. That is not the record of this government, Mr. Speaker, and as I think my colleagues have demonstrated, Mr. Speaker, we have worked very hard over the last two terms of this government to increase the supply of physicians in this province so that we can ensure that we do have services across this province, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of capacity pressures in the cities of Regina and Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, in part that problem was caused because we had bed closures under the NDP in Regina and Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, we have in fact opened beds in Regina and Saskatoon. There were rooms in our hospitals in Regina that I have visited that, under the former government, were used for storage closets. They are now used for hospital beds, Mr. Speaker, in fact a 12 per cent increase in hospital beds in those two cities under this government, Mr. Speaker. We have a long way to dig out where we were left by the NDP government but we're going to keep doing the work.

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

Ms. Chartier: — The irony is incredible, Mr. Speaker. June 1st they lose their ER and acute services. June 24th they burn their mortgage. It's an awful irony, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in February the capacity levels for Saskatoon hospitals were at a, quote, "critical state." It was so bad that health region officials said, "We . . . felt like we were one patient away from being in a bad situation." Well hospitals continue to be so full that patients' lives are at risk.

And on top of being dangerously full they are also understaffed. Overcapacity issues also mean that surgeries have to be postponed and people are shuffled to other regional facilities. But we see this government making cuts to regional facilities. The people of Preeceville are losing their acute care services and can't even get in for a doctor's appointment in the same month. Everywhere in this province people are struggling to get the health care they desperately need. To the minister: what will it take this government to recognize that our health care system is in crisis?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear about this. There have been no cuts when it comes to health care in this province. Mr. Speaker, in fact every single health region in this province in the past budget have received an increase in their budget, Mr. Speaker.

We are seeing more doctors practising in this province. We are seeing 3,000 more nurses of all designations practicing in this province. Mr. Speaker, we've increased the seats for training nurses and doctors. We've put incentives to ensure that we do have a good supply of nurses and doctors practicing in rural Saskatchewan.

I can't imagine what the health care system would be like in this province if the members opposite would still be the government, where we would be losing nurses and losing doctors because that is their record, Mr. Speaker.

We're going the other way in this province, where we are ensuring that we have a proper complement of physicians and ensuring that we do have the right number of beds in the province, Mr. Speaker. And we're also putting investments into the community to ensure that we are doing things like repatriating patients back to their home hospital more quickly, which is a good use of resources and a good use of those resources in their regional hospitals, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, enough with these tired lines. Will this minister, will this pair of Health ministers commit to these people from Preeceville today that they will still have ER services and acute care services on June 1st?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I will commit to, to these people and to the people of this province, is that this government will continue to act as the way we have in the past, and that is to ensure that we have more doctors practicing in Saskatchewan as opposed to the members opposite who lost doctors when they were the Government of Saskatchewan, to ensure that we have incentives in place like the comprehensive rural program that provides a ten point five per cent boost to a rural physician's payment if they practise to a full complement of skills.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to put other incentive plans in place to ensure that we can attract those physicians to rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, ensuring that we have a made-in-Saskatchewan training program, an assessment program for foreign-trained doctors, unlike the members opposite who used to buy seats from Manitoba if they had seats available, Mr. Speaker.

They totally neglected rural health when they were the government of the day, Mr. Speaker. That's not the record on this side and we're going to continue to work hard to ensure that we have services all across this beautiful province.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 8 — *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2016*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 8, *The Summary Offences Procedure 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. 8, *The Summary Offences Procedure 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.

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

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

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

Bill No. 9 — *The Enforcement of Canadian Judgments Amendment Act, 2016/Loi modificative de 2016 sur l'exécution des jugements canadiens*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 9, *The Enforcement of Canadian Judgments Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

[14:15]

The Speaker: — It is moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 9, the enforcement of Canadian judgments 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.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Set for next reading at the next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

Bill No. 10 — *The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2016*

The Speaker: — I recognize the House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 10, *The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 10, *The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2016* be introduced and read for the first time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

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

Bill No. 11 — *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2016*

The Speaker: — I recognize the House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 11, *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read for a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Bill No. 11, *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2016* be introduced and read the first time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, next sitting of the House.

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 for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I certainly support the Throne Speech and I do not support the amendment. So I figured I'd get that in before the end, just in case I forgot for some reason.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your election as Speaker, and I want to thank the previous Speaker for the fine work that he did during the last session. I'll tell you what: you couldn't pay me enough to do that job. So you guys, honestly you people do a great job, and I thank you for putting your names forward for doing that.

I also want to thank and congratulate all the new members of the House, on both sides of the House. It's something; it's an honour and a privilege to come and serve in this House, to serve your constituents. And it's really something when you first walk up the stairs; I know for the new members it's very exciting. It takes a long time to learn all the different procedures of the House. I've been here for eight and a half years. I haven't figured it out yet, but it's coming. I figure, you know, give me a few more years, I might get it.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, to the new members on the other side that sometimes I may get just a little carried away. And in this place you have to have a little bit of a thick skin, so you know, don't hold it against me too much if I say something that could be just a little derogatory.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of Carrot River Valley for electing me again for the third term. It's great to be back here representing them. Like I said before, it's a humbling experience. And you know, I was actually quite surprised because I . . . that I made it in by a fairly large margin, because the more, the longer I've been in, the more people I have met, and that was getting a little shaky on whether I was going to get back in or not. But surprisingly, it even went up in the polls.

And I want to thank of course my executive for helping me on the election, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's not just done by us as members. We all know that we have great executives back behind us to help us along. And the other thing, the other people I want to thank, obviously, are my constituency assistants who've been with me a long time. And as everyone knows here, the constituency assistants are the ones who do a lot of the work, especially when we're away. They do a fantastic job, and I really want to thank, I really want to thank them for the work that they do.

Of course I also have to thank my family, my wife. My wife has to be without me a lot of times when I'm down here. I can see a few people looking and smiling. Apparently they've met my wife, and they know that she actually doesn't mind it when I'm

down here for quite a while. But anyway I do want to thank her for allowing me to continue on this job.

Mr. Speaker, I can go back to when I first decided to run. I know I've told this story before, but a lot of the new members haven't heard it. But when I decided to run, I had to ask my wife's permission, and she kind of questioned me a little bit on it. She said, well what's the deal here? And I said, well I said, you know, our kids are getting older and, you know, they were going to be coming out of school. Actually Morgan was in university at the time. And I said, I'm getting tired of seeing our kids being given a suitcase basically when they graduated. I wanted to see our kids working in the province.

And she said, well what's the remuneration for this job? I already had a good business. I said, you know, I don't have a clue. And honestly, I did not have a clue. And she says, you're going to apply for a job and you have no idea what the remuneration is? And I said, yes. Nobody said I was that brilliant. I said, yes. And she said, well why? And I said, because it's the right thing to do. And to this day, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is the right thing to do.

We have in this province, we have a Premier that is willing to stand up for Saskatchewan. And the Premier has a love for this province that nobody, nobody would believe that he has this great passion for Saskatchewan and wants to see Saskatchewan moving forward and to keep it strong.

And a real good example of how good this is — compared to the other side of the House, which I like to call the shuffled deck, Mr. Speaker; they lost the race but they've still got a couple of the jokers — Mr. Speaker, you know, they went to the great federal NDP convention and there the Leap Manifesto came out.

We all know Saskatchewan is a great exporting province. That's what we do here in Saskatchewan. We're exporters. We make things the rest of the world wants: food, potash, uranium, oil, diamonds possibly, all sorts of things. And the Leap Manifesto wants to basically shut down trade all the way across. I can't believe that members on the other side of the House didn't stand up to their federal cousins and say, this is wrong. Even the Premier of Alberta stood up to them and said, no, this isn't a good idea. That's the difference between the Saskatchewan Party and the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, you know, as we go through on our Throne Speech, we didn't make a ton of promises that we couldn't keep. And you know, when I take a look at what has been happening within Saskatchewan, with what has been happening just within Carrot River Valley . . . We just heard the story that members over there were questioning the health system. When I was first elected in 2007, we used to get probably three calls a day on our health system because, you see, they had shut down, under the NDP, the hospital in Arborfield, the hospital in Carrot River. Who knows? They were probably going to get ready to shut down the one in Nipawin. There were only four physicians, four physicians in Nipawin. We have 12 physicians in Nipawin now.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good outcome. This is being done under the Saskatchewan Party, not under the NDP, where they were

just going around closing down, as has been said many times, the hospitals. They had no foresight. They didn't want to keep Saskatchewan strong. They didn't want to keep Saskatchewan moving forward. Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, we would get about three calls, three calls a day on the health system. Now we maybe get one a week into our office. This is the difference.

Then you hear the Education critic the other day and was complaining about the education, after they shut down 176 schools in the province, Mr. Speaker. Now in Carrot River Valley constituency, we have a brand new school we just opened at Hudson Bay. My seatmate's constituency just had a brand new school open — what was it, three years ago? — in Porcupine Plain. What a difference. What a difference. And they sit there and say, well you know, these teachers, these poor teachers, what are they going to do? Hey, now the teachers have a job. They were the ones that were firing the teachers. They were the ones that were getting rid of them. What do you think happened when they closed those schools? Where do you think those teachers went?

An Hon. Member: — Alberta?

Mr. Bradshaw: — Alberta, BC [British Columbia], various different places. But I'll tell you one thing, it wasn't here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we can go on and talk about different things in here, and I want to talk a little bit about Carrot River Valley and some of the things that have been happening up there. You know, Carrot River Valley, and I've said this many a time, I still think . . . And I know every MLA wants to say this, they think they have the best constituency. I do. I'm sure I do because I'm right at the end of the Great Plains and the beginning of the forestry. So we have great agriculture. We have very forward-thinking farmers up there which will grow just about anything. And then we have the forest industry, and we've got the lakes where we've got our tourism, you know, with great fishing. For some of the people that go up there and know how to fish, Tobin Lake. We won't mention any names; some people can catch fish there, some can't.

But, Mr. Speaker, our forest industry has moved forward. Now when did the forest industry kind of shut down? The forest industry shut, the forest industry shut down under the NDP. Now we have the forest industry back up and running, making a great contribution to our province. In Hudson Bay, we have Weyerhaeuser going in with their mill there. And then we had a brand new company come in from British Columbia, Edgewood Forest Products, bought up the old Weyerhaeuser mill in Carrot River. Not only did they just buy up the mill, they have enough confidence in this government and in this province that they built a \$25 million expansion just this past summer, and it's up and rolling here now.

Mr. Speaker, these are all good things for our communities. It puts people to work in Saskatchewan so they can be out there paying taxes, raising families and having a great life.

Mr. Speaker, there's something that my good friend brought up from Melfort, the MLA from Melfort, and he was talking about the agriculture end of it and how the critic for the Environment likes to bring up about the carbon footprint per capita in

Saskatchewan. They forget that Saskatchewan is a very large province. We have to travel over large miles and the other catch is, Mr. Speaker, we have very large farms.

[14:30]

And I can tell you right now, coming from the farming community, our diesel fuel has gone down, usage per acre has gone down. One of the reasons is up in northeastern Saskatchewan we almost invented no-till seeding. I have land on my farm that hasn't been summerfallowed for 30 years and . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Premier obviously doesn't come from a farming background. The Bourgault Industries, which is in the Melfort riding, were the chief developers of the no-till seeding equipment, and is a very large employer there.

Now all of this taken into account, all of this farm land taken into account is a huge carbon sink. This happens every year and that has never ever been brought forward by the people on the other side because, well first off, none of them know anything about agriculture. And it's never ever been brought forward. And then we have our carbon capture plant which they criticize but yet is a world leader. There are people coming from all over the world to look at the carbon capture plant.

Mr. Speaker, we got talking here a little while ago about . . . Or I shouldn't say we. The former Highways minister, the member from Athabasca, was talking about our highways, and admittedly our highways are a problem. It's something we've been working on but it's a heck of a lot better than what they ever did. You know, he went on to say that all we were going to do is spend \$70 million on our highways in four years. Mr. Speaker, we have spent record amounts on our highways. This government will invest \$2.7 billion on highways and transportation in the next four years — \$2.7 billion.

Now we made in our proposal, our election proposal, we put it forward that we would put an extra \$70 million in. For some reason apparently the member from Athabasca didn't read the whole thing and he doesn't understand that it's not just \$70 million, it's 2.7 billion. Now that's a big difference, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the member there . . . Like I think maybe when he was Highways minister, he maybe spent \$70 million over the 16 years he was over there. By the look of the highways, I think that's what happened.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on here but also another thing that I wanted to talk about, what we've done is with our revenue sharing with the different RMs [rural municipality] that we have, with our different rural municipalities . . . This government believes in rural Saskatchewan and that's why we're working, Mr. Speaker, that's why we're working on our health care systems out there. Rather than closing hospitals, we're building them. I could bring up about the long-term care that we just finished opening up in Tisdale. You know, after they shut down 1,200 beds, we're building.

Mr. Speaker, we can keep on going around on all these different things, these schools that I just talked about. The NDP wasn't building them. We're building them. But under the revenue sharing, when you start looking at the differences, in 2007-2008, the RM of Connaught, which happens to be in Carrot River Valley, went from 131,000 to 290,000. The RM of

Moose Range went from 245,000 to 417,000. RM of Nipawin, 216,000 to 383,000. Now that was for last year. That's not saying on this year's. Now okay, we take a look at this. This is what we're doing for our communities, plus our various different towns and whatnot.

Now the member from Athabasca was sitting there saying, well we never did anything for the North. Let's just take a look. Creighton, Creighton went from 452,000 to 1.247 million. La Ronge went from 634,000 to 1.719 million. Air Ronge went from 322,000 to 978,000. Beauval, 382,000 to 764,000. Buffalo Narrows, 541,000 to 1.222 million.

Mr. Speaker, we are working for people all across this province and, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the reasons that I'm going to be supporting the Throne Speech and will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's certainly a pleasure to enter into the Throne Speech debate. I guess I have to admit I have lost count on the number of throne speeches I've been part of. I guess it's 16. The Deputy Premier has reminded me, although I may not have spoken to all of them, but it's been a while. And it's always a privilege to stand and share some thoughts and some comments with other members and with our vast viewing audience, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't congratulate you on your election as Speaker, Mr. Speaker. I certainly look forward to working with you during the term of this legislature. And I'd also like to congratulate all the newly elected members on both sides of the House. I haven't listened to all of the new members' speeches but the ones that I have caught, listened to, and been present for, I must say you've been outstanding and you've set the bar very high. So that puts a lot of pressure on those of us that have been around here for a while, you know, because we sometimes leave things to the last moment before, in preparation, and so sometimes when we get up here and when we stand we really don't know what's going to come out. And that sometimes can get a little exciting and a little unsettling, I must say.

I have some thank yous, as other members. We need to thank our families and I certainly thank my wife, Marlene, for all the years that she's put up with me and enabled me to be here. We do have — and I've mentioned this a number of times and I'll mention it again — since 2010 we have two granddaughters that are living with us and going to school. The oldest one graduated from high school last year, finished her first year university at the U of R [University of Regina], and is currently a summer student over here at the Royal Museum here, just down Albert Street. And we're very proud of her. The second one is 14, going on 17, causing Grandma quite a few grey hairs, and I think Grandpa got a little greyer too. But we certainly enjoy her and it makes our life interesting, and people keep telling us that it keeps us young. And we'll let you know in about another five, six years how that's working out. There are days I'm not so sure that that's going to work.

I should also, Mr. Speaker, and I need to thank the constituents

and voters of Last Mountain-Touchwood for once again placing their trust in me to represent them. It is always a humbling experience during an election when the polls or the ballots are counted and you realize that you have been re-elected again. And that is something that, you know, I don't think, no matter how many elections that an individual runs in, that you'll never quite take that . . . or you should never, and I don't think you will, and no one in this House takes that for granted. It is a real responsibility.

And I guess one of the things, you know, when you serve in this House for a number of years, there are things that will stick with you for the rest of your life. And one of the things that will stick with me was maybe the first or second year after I was first elected and sitting on that side of the House in the back row. And I did get into the Chambers early which that's amazing because quite often I'd just sort of be just-in-time arrival or a little late.

And the visitors' guide was talking to the group of students above us and pointing down to the floor and saying — at that time there was 58 members — and telling the students that the members in the seats, they are the people that speak for us. So what she was telling the students, we speak for our constituents. But when students are involved, it kind of drives that point home. And so I, like I said, I certainly would like to thank the voters and the constituents of Last Mountain-Touchwood for once again putting their trust in me.

I'd like to just make a few comments about our most recent campaign in Last Mountain-Touchwood. We had a full slate of candidates. We had the representatives from the four major parties — of course Sask Party, New Democrats, Liberals, and Green Party. We had a candidate for the Western Independence Party and we also had the Saskatchewan Progressive Conservative Party. We had a candidate in the . . . The candidate happened to be their leader, Mr. Rick Swenson. I have to say that the other candidates, besides Mr. Swenson, really weren't visible a lot during the campaign.

The New Democrat candidate had signs, had a campaign office. I did see her vehicle with her signs on the vehicle and so on, but I can't honestly say, and I don't recall voters in various communities saying that they had seen Mary Ann. But I would like to certainly congratulate her because she certainly did, you know, in the manner of her campaigning, you know, conduct herself in what I think was a very, you know, very fair and honourable way.

The other parties were virtually not present, other than names on the ballots, but I think there was no one else besides the New Democrats, ourselves, and the PC [Progressive Conservative] Party. None of them had any mailouts and so on.

The one candidate that did put a fair bit of effort into the campaign besides myself was Mr. Swenson, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. He was out and about. He had a team working with him, did the mailouts, all those kind of things, held some open houses, and, you know, worked quite hard. You know, I must say that in my years . . . Of the five elections I've run in, you know, this was the only campaign where I think things got a little personal between Mr. Swenson . . . mostly with Mr. Swenson making some comments about the

incumbent and so on. But I mean that's fine. That's all part of the game, and you roll with the punches and so on.

And I guess probably the one thing I will remember from this past campaign is I was out in one of my small communities because that's all Last Mountain-Touchwood has. We're a very rural constituency with all our communities are less than 1,000 people living in them. But anyway, this one day I was in a small community and we got talking about the campaign and the candidates, and this older gentleman says to me, he says, what's with that Swenson fellow? What's he doing here? He lives in Moose Jaw and running in Last Mountain-Touchwood. And I was way over on the east side of the constituency near Melville. And he says, does he think we're going to elect him? He says, well I'm going to tell you something, the old gentleman said. He said, you know what we're going to do? He says, he thinks we're going to send him to Regina but we're going to send him back to Moose Jaw. And, Mr. Speaker, that's what the voters of Last Mountain-Touchwood did. And I might add, \$100 poorer also, Mr. Speaker. So it was an interesting campaign as all of them are. And we'll always remember parts of the campaigns that we've run in.

Something else that I'd like to just spend a few minutes on, as other members have done, is give a bit of an update as to the happenings in their constituency. As I mentioned a few moments ago, Last Mountain-Touchwood is largely a rural constituency with quite a number of small communities. There is though one part that I refer to as a suburban area, and that's made up of the resort areas along the east side of Last Mountain Lake and the north side of the Qu'Appelle Valley, communities like Katepwa, Sask Beach, and Kannata Valley and Island View, and a whole host of resort communities. And there is certainly a difference in their issues, as one might expect, between the resort communities and the rural communities of say, Balcarres and Strasbourg and Ituna and Southey.

And of course agriculture is certainly the most important and probably the only industry that we would have in the constituency. We have a number of small manufacturers and so on, but by and large agriculture is the main industry.

[14:45]

And this year, unlike last year, we had very little runoff, which is a good thing because last year particularly the west side of the constituency had excessive runoff and massive flooding and some major issues. There's still a lot of water from the excessive moisture that we've had in the last five years, but I see they're getting a little smaller. We didn't have any flooded highways or anything this year and the farmers are out there. The producers are out there well into seeding and in fact in many areas in the wrap-up stage. So you know, with the moisture coming I think, you know, producers I think are fairly happy as opposed to last year where we had an extended dry spell and there was, for the late-seeded crops, some problems with germination.

But there is a new and exciting thing happening in Last Mountain-Touchwood, and that is a proposed solution potash mine that is being proposed by a company called Yancoal Canada. This company has done their exploration over a number of years and have submitted their environmental impact

statement. In fact, that statement is now in the public review and comment period. And so I have met once or twice with some of the senior people with the company and the impression I get is that they are quite intent on building a mine, and they are well into the process. There's been no actual construction activities, but they are well into the regulatory process.

As you can imagine, this proposal, there are a large number of people that view it very favourably, but there are also some people who have some concerns, and that's legitimate, Mr. Speaker, you know, and they do have an opportunity to raise their concerns. I've certainly listened to them, worked with them, worked with the local municipality. Last July municipalities had an information meeting in the evening where I helped them make sure that we had the appropriate officials there to answer questions and so on. The company was there. And there's been a number of public meetings about this project. I guess we'll see where it goes once they go through the regulatory process to see whether a permit is issued and then go from there. Something else, Mr. Speaker . . . I think that basically sort of gives the highlights of what's happening in Last Mountain-Touchwood.

A couple of things I'd like to make a few comments about the . . . Well perhaps I should go back. I missed one thing, highways, of course. Highways is always a problem in Last Mountain-Touchwood, as it is in many rural constituencies. The very first highway that I dealt with, had to deal with that was in very desperate condition, was Highway 310 between Balcarres and Ituna. Over a period of years since we formed government, we managed to get that one upgraded and repaired, and it is now in good driving condition. Particularly the residents of Ituna are very happy about it because when they're coming to Regina it makes their lives a whole lot easier.

The second highway was Highway 22, and some members may remember that highway was another very bad highway with excessive moisture and so on. School buses would get stuck in the middle of the highway and so on. That highway between Southey and Earl Grey has been upgraded significantly and there's an excellent highway serving those two communities.

We do have some problems on the very west side of the constituency in the resort areas of Saskatchewan Beach, Kannata Valley, Silton, all the way up to Rowan's Ravine, Highways 322 and 220. And I'm very pleased that in this Throne Speech, reference is made to the additional \$70 million surge fund that our government is putting in place to help address some of these situations. And I'm very hopeful in next week's budget that there may be some funding to address some of these challenges that we have. So I guess we'll wait and see. That's a week from today. But like I said, I'm hopeful that we will see something.

I'd like to now turn my comments to, I guess, partly stemming from my role as the Deputy Speaker, also since I was Deputy Speaker in the last legislature. It seems when one is placed in the position of a presiding officer you tend to take a lot more interest and take your responsibilities quite seriously. Particularly I think it's very helpful and very useful to attend the presiding officers conference which happens at the end of January every year. There are presiding officers from across Canada, from the House of Commons and the Senate and all the

legislatures all across Canada including the territories, and you quickly find that I think the experience that you go through when you're first put in the position, most members, presiding officers of other legislatures go through this where they realize that it's up to the presiding officers to make sure that the legislature, in our case, operates according to the established rules and proceedings that have gone before us to preserve the integrity. I know Speakers from across Canada, it's quite a fraternity where they depend on each other when they get into difficult situations, and I know they call one another and ask for advice from their counterparts. And I, you know, I think this is something that is important and every presiding officer should consider this.

I should comment, I guess, on where I sit in this legislature, which is new. This is the first time since I've been here that we have had two seats over here. And I have to admit, the day that we were sworn in and I took my seat here and I sat and I looked across, first of all I thought I might need binoculars to see the member from Carrot River Valley. And then the thought popped into my head, well that's maybe not such a bad thing, you know, although I appreciate him. And then I kind of thought, you know, here you are off against the wall. It's a little bit like being in the orphan pen, you know. But then I reflected on it a bit more and there are other legislatures, at least two that I am aware of, where their practices are somewhat different than ours. They're older legislatures and have more members, and that being the legislature in Victoria and the one in Toronto, where they have Deputy Speakers from both sides of the House. So you'll have two Deputy Speakers plus the Deputy Chairs and so on, and their seats are separate from the rest of the members. And when I asked them about that they said, well that is not only for them to be non-partisan but to show that they're non-partisan. They sit separate from the other members, but they also do wear the gowns that our Speaker and the Clerks do. So that's the context that I take this in. It is actually quite comfortable here, so I think it's not a bad idea.

The other thing that I would like to comment is on the role of the legislature and parliament and such. For some reason I guess, when we got the list here last week of new books in the library, one caught my eye. It's called *The Constitution of Canada: A Contextual Analysis*, by Jeremy Webber, published in 2015. And I have to admit, I just looked at certain sections. But one of the sections that did catch my eye, when he talked about parliamentary sovereignty. And there's just a very brief history on how, you know, through the British parliamentary system, how parliament eventually became sovereign and so on.

And it talks about, of course, the very parts of what we call government: you know, the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch. But it also talks about the importance of following precedents and established procedures and rules that parliaments and legislatures have set out for themselves.

And today we saw that when we had first reading of a number of bills, where the Speaker, where the minister rises and moves first reading of a bill. And then once it's agreed upon to accept the first reading of the bill, then the Clerk stands up and simply says, first reading of the bill. And you know, I mean, I wondered for years too, why do we have to do these things in that sort of order? Because it's part of our precedents.

And I think what I'd like to do, if I can find the quote here, I'm going to quote one paragraph that perhaps explains this as to why it's important that we as a legislature follow the rules and precedents. And I'm quoting now:

Parliament's ostensibly absolute power is, however, subject to important internal limitations. First, Parliament must follow its own procedural rules in order to make laws. This follows from the fact that Parliament is not a natural entity; it is only when it is duly constituted and following procedures that its enactments deserve recognition as Acts of Parliament. As a result, in Canadian law, Parliament can bind itself for the future when it comes to questions of procedure. This means that it must follow the procedural rules it creates, although it can modify or repeal those rules if it follows the prescribed procedure.

But I think there's a lot of wisdom in this. I just wish that the font was somewhat larger. It makes it a bit difficult to read with these progressive glasses. And I do intend to spend more time on this, and if members are interested, it is from our library here, and it does offer some insight as to why it is we do the things we do.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, I know other members would like to enter into the debate and so I think I will, fairly soon here, bring my comments to a close. So if I just check my notes and make sure that I have covered the things that I intended to do.

I guess maybe I might conclude with this, Mr. Speaker, nothing profound. Yesterday afternoon a group of members after recess had the opportunity to take a tour of the dome on the exterior. And it is quite amazing what work was done there, the craftsmanship. It really drives home the craftsmanship of the original builders of this legislature, and particularly the dome. And I would highly recommend — I understand there is another tour tomorrow — and I'd highly recommend to members who are interested, definitely take the tour. One word of caution: if you're afraid of heights, it's not bad, but you may want to be a bit careful.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will say that I will be supporting the motion, and thank you for giving me this opportunity.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar-Sask Valley.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First I'd like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your election as Speaker, and also thank the other two candidates who ran for the position, and also the Deputy Speaker who was unopposed. So thank you. Congratulations to him as well. Obviously I'd like to congratulate all our colleagues and candidates who ran in the last election. You know, it takes a special person to commit to this job and I believe you've got to hand it to everyone who has made that commitment.

And I'd just like to thank my team in Biggar-Sask Valley. It's a new constituency, which I assumed the Sask Valley part. So communities like Hague, Dalmeny, Hepburn, and Waldheim were new to me, and that joined with most of the old Biggar constituency that I represented. I lost — to me it's a loss —

because it was interesting the last time I went to communities like Wilkie and Vanscoy and Delisle and Perdue that went to two other constituencies, it was actually . . . I felt quite, I don't know, emotional actually at the Remembrance Day services because I always went to Delisle and Wilkie to the Remembrance Day service. I told the people that'll be the last time I'll be, as their MLA, be going to their Remembrance Day services. So it was an interesting . . .

But you know, it's just a joy to have the new part of the constituency, very solid support for the Saskatchewan Party, and quite humbled by the vote and the response I get obviously.

[15:00]

You know, a lot of . . . Most of the credit has to go the Premier and our government, and to the former member that represented that area, the member from Martensville-Warman.

First of all, I better not forget my family: my wife, Cindy, who is my business manager; my eldest daughter Lacey who is going to be having a baby early July; my youngest daughter Alexandra who is going to university; and my son Marshall who works in Saskatoon. So I want to mention them and thank them for their support.

My campaign team, my campaign manager was Janet Hanson who is also my constituency assistant. She's been with me now for four years and is a very excellent constituency assistant and worked hard doing the campaign. She staffed the campaign office, which was in Hepburn, and she worked very hard and did a great job helping me get elected.

Some of the other people I need to mention is the mayor of Biggar, Ray Sadler, who is my constituency president. He helped as much as he could. He runs a restaurant, so it's difficult for him to get away. But he took time off from his restaurant to go help me put up signs, and we had lots of fun.

Taking signs down was even more exciting and fun because it was raining and snowing and high winds. And Ray's just a little guy. He's about half as big as I am or at least weighs half as much as I do. And we joked about him blowing away in the wind, and I swear when he had a 4-by-8 sign that he actually did leave the ground. But anyway, I got him home, so that was fun.

And on the leaders' debate, we held a function in his restaurant. It was closed; it was a private function. We invited many supporters and friends over to watch the debate in his restaurant and ate pizza and drank some pop.

Other people that I need to mention is someone that's new to my constituency and my team, Joe Whittaker. Joe's a veteran. He was in Bosnia, and actually he does suffer from PTSD. I don't think he'd mind me saying that. And so he has some challenges, but a very nice guy. So he helped me put up signs too and take signs down. So we had lots of fun again during that, and he came out to my grand opening and things like that.

Another person that did a lot of work was Larry Trischuk from Borden. Larry's 70 . . . I think he's 73 years old. He's obviously a political animal, and he's worked in federal campaigns and

volunteered to help in mine. So he helped me. He put up signs and was at the returning office when the results were coming in and helped a lot. So he and his wife came down to the Throne Speech last week, and brought his wife who had suffered a stroke about a year ago. So they have some challenges, but they're doing well.

One other person I want to . . . I'll just move on to some of the things in the constituency. In Biggar, we have one of the 13 new long-term care homes. So it was attached to the hospital, and so it's basically an integrated facility. So it's very rewarding to have that in Biggar; it's helped the people a lot there. So we've had some challenges with having doctors, and that was looked after a few years ago. We need three doctors and we always had two, so we finally got the third doctor, came out of Manchester, England. She and her husband and small child came to live in Biggar. She's had another baby since she's in Biggar. So we have three doctors.

It's interesting right now. There's always a challenge in rural Saskatchewan to keep physicians and nursing staff. And we've always had an adequate number of nursing staff, but we, in the last year or two, we've been a little short on nurses. And so the hospital has been on bypass occasionally. So I've got to give a thank you to the health region for getting adequate nursing staff, and now the hospital, other than the odd time that it's on bypass, it's open and servicing the community very well.

You know, I can go through the Throne Speech. My colleagues have done an excellent job of quoting and reading many parts of the Throne Speech into the record. But there's one thing, one area I just would like to enter into my speech, and it comes under the part about, you know, the number of companies that have announced major new investments and expansions in Saskatchewan.

And so in Biggar there's a company called AGI Envirotank Ltd. So they're a company that, at its peak before the price of oil dropped down, they had about 85 to 90 people on the road installing tanks, delivering tanks in the oil patch around Western Canada. And they had another 70 to 80 manufacturing in the town of Biggar. So yes, they had some job losses when the oil price went down, but they received an award.

And I just want to read this award from the website into the record, you know, just to highlight what a fabulous employer this company is. And you know, they do such a great job, obviously, because they won this award.

Just before I read this in, I'd just like to say that they got a contract with K+S and they're building the mine shaft for K+S. So a lot of workers from Biggar are going out there and working their shifts and installing the mine shaft. But this award goes to them. It's about their work with tanks. So it's:

AGI Envirotank Ltd is humbled to announce that AGI has won "Shop Fabricated Tank of 2015" as awarded via the Steel Tank Institute.

And in brackets it says, "This is the Grammys for tank geeks."

The Steel Tank Institute is an international association of

Tank Fabricators, Tank Erectors, Pipe Manufacturers and Pressure Vessel Fabricators. The Association was formed in 1916 and has around 380 members.

Each year the members vote on who should receive the award. AGI received the award for an Amine Storage Tank that . . . [we] built for SaskPower's Carbon Capture Facility.

When I say we, it's a quote from their website:

We are proud to participate in a carbon capture facility. We believe the facility is good for the environment and Saskatchewan. Amine is one of the liquids that attaches itself to the CO₂ and captures it so that the CO₂ can become a sell-able product rather than an environmental waste.

We do big things in Saskatchewan and AGI fabricates big plate works in Biggar. AGI built the largest shop-built, double-wall stainless steel tank we believe that has ever been built and transported in one piece. The tank was 33 feet in diameter and 65 feet tall. We built it on a very tight schedule and delivered 4 days early.

AGI would like to thank our peers for voting for us and we are already working on next year's tank. (38 feet in diameter and 70 feet high. So watch out, Saskatchewan, you will see us coming.)

So I'd just like to congratulate the Burton family from Biggar and AGI who are a very important part of the Biggar community.

And it's interesting, Dave Burton, the founder or the father, he really likes hockey, so he has donated much time, energy, and finances to keeping the Biggar Nationals hockey team, to resurrect the Biggar Nationals hockey team. He employs people from all over Canada and, some of them, the question is, do you play hockey by any chance? And if they're good enough to play for the Biggar Nationals — and they also need to weld and fabricate products — he will hire these mainly men and bring them to Biggar. So he's quite an interesting guy.

But just in closing, like I say, I won't read everything in the Throne Speech that other colleagues have spoke to. Obviously it's a very important Throne Speech. It speaks to our campaign and our campaign promises: and you know, I mean keeping Saskatchewan strong, better quality of life, and jobs. That's what keeps this province going and keeps families going healthy and strong, is jobs and well-paying jobs. And our government and our Premier is dedicated to job creation and keeping the economy going.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech, and I will not be supporting the amendment brought down by the opposition. Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege and honour to be able to stand in the House today and

respond to my first Throne Speech as a member of the Legislative Assembly. It's a particular honour, Mr. Speaker, to be one of the youngest women elected to this Assembly and presently, to the best of my knowledge, the youngest member elected in the most recent election. I am gracious and mindful that this meeting takes place on Treaty 4 territory. This treaty was first signed in 1874, almost a decade before the colonial settlement of Regina began.

I would like to extend warm wishes to all the new members of the Legislative Assembly on both sides as they undertake a new role to best represent and to be accountable to their constituents. Mr. Speaker, we know that to take a seat in this House does not come without hard work. A special shout-out to the two new members sitting with me on this side of the House: the members for Prince Albert Northcote and Regina Lakeview. Three new women added to a small yet mighty caucus. I think our reference to a canoe versus a battleship is apt, and I couldn't be paddling with a better group of colleagues.

Speaking of our caucus, Mr. Speaker, I must also make note of our caucus's election of Leader of the Official Opposition. The member for Regina Rosemont has a great deal of respect across the province, and I could not think of someone more suited for the job. His strengths in building bridges is one of the reasons I am able to speak before you today. Without our leader's encouragement and commitment, as well as the encouragement of our former leader, Cam Broten, I would not have ever thought myself appropriately fit for this role.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss not to congratulate you on your election to your post, and to the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood for his election as Deputy Speaker.

In lead-up to my response to the Throne Speech today, Mr. Speaker, I find it of utmost importance to thank some very important people who have helped me find my seat here in the Assembly today. I did not make this journey on my own; in fact, it's a journey that started long before I even thought of seeking the nomination for my party in Regina Douglas Park.

First, I want to thank the residents of Regina Douglas Park for giving me the opportunity to represent them. The responsibility of representing their interests in this Legislative Assembly is one I do not take lightly or take for granted. I had the opportunity to meet many of the constituents while door knocking over the past 16 months, and I'm looking forward to meeting many more at barbecues and annual general meetings, at the constituency office, and on the doorsteps.

The community is very diverse and passionate, as most communities are in Regina. They care about their neighbours and the area they live in. I humbly look forward to working for them in the future.

I would be remiss not to thank my campaign team. The hundreds of folks on our team were second to none. I've never seen a group of volunteers so hard working and passionate. We had such a mix of people: students, retired folks, professionals. We had party stalwarts and brand new activists engaged right from writ drop through to election day. It was truly inspiring for me to see. I was particularly humbled to see some of my lawyer colleagues come to the campaign office right after work, take

off their blazers, roll up their sleeves, and door knock with me.

I also want to especially thank the former MLA for Regina Douglas Park, Harry Van Mulligen, and his wife, Judy Young, for their long hours volunteering on the campaign. It meant a lot to me to have them by my side, and having Harry as my mentor and guide has been invaluable and continues to be.

Our campaign leadership was young; dare I say, the youngest in all the province. Not only was it young, Mr. Speaker, but it was queer and women leaders who are taking on these roles. I am honoured to have worked so closely with such a great, young, professional team. The key folks on my team speak to the type of community we've begun to cultivate in Douglas Park, and the type of movement New Democrats are building across the province.

I do not wish to name everyone's names as it may take up my entire time, but I will thank Ben Diaz as my campaign manager for coming in and filling in the role last minute, and for his time, and doing so as if he had been doing campaigns for dozens of years. I also want to thank Carly Greco and Dave Currie for their hard work, passion, and sound volunteer management. Lastly I want to thank Krystal Lewis for her wealth of knowledge and calm, steady hand on election day.

[15:15]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to give a special mention to my former fellow trustees at the Regina Catholic School Division. Elected in 2012, I had the opportunity to work and learn from the trustees — some have been at the table for over 30 years — about public service and local grassroots politics. I feel I have grown a lot as a public servant over the past three and a half years, and I hope to bring these lessons to the legislature and to my constituents in Douglas Park.

I need to also thank my family and especially my parents, Donna and Owen. When thinking about lessons I had from them growing up, many came to mind. But the ones that really stuck with me are, when trying to sneak backstage at a concert, always act like you're just lost and looking for the bathroom, and make sure you always steal a set list for the band to sign after the show. I also can thank my parents for exposing me to some great poets of their time like the ones who said, "If you don't like what you got, why don't you change it? If the world is all screwed up, rearrange it." That would be the great poets called Trooper, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for those who didn't catch on. Those are the life moments that have helped shape who I am today. All kidding aside, I'm honoured to have the family I have, and I realize how lucky I am. They are my rocks and were my best volunteers throughout the entire campaign. I know not everyone is given that head start in life. We all don't begin at the same starting line. Words cannot express how grateful I am to them.

And I also want to give special mention to my sister Stacey, who wasn't in town for most of the election but certainly helped to keep me sane and level headed. She is an inspiration to me as she works as an engineer in a profession that is still heavily male dominated, and she steps out on to those construction sites like the boss she is every single day.

I want to thank my friends who supported me through this process, many of who are not traditionally politically active but who were great volunteers for me. Several of them are currently on maternity leave, not planned on their part to be off work during my election campaign, but I was grateful to take advantage of it.

I do, however, want to name a very close friend of mine, Erin Lawrence who lost her life when we were both 20 and 21 respectively to a very sudden and hard battle with stomach cancer. If you ever heard of the non-profit, Teddy Bears Anonymous, that was the silver lining born out of her death. It's been almost 10 years since we lost her, but not a day goes by when I don't think of her. Losing her when we were all so young instilled in me to never take tomorrow for granted, never put off accomplishing your goals and dreams, and that a life of service to others is a life worth living. I hope she's proud.

Mr. Speaker, I've already spoke of it, but I am unbelievably proud to represent Regina Douglas Park. This constituency extends west to the edge of downtown Regina, the heart of the city, the vibrant commercial and cultural core. In the north, it straddles the CN [Canadian National] rail line, a traditional artery and historical lifeline connecting the city to the rest of Canada. Regina Douglas Park's eastern border is the Ring Road, and finally the southern border of my constituency is the northern shores of the beautiful Wascana Lake, the lake on which shores this Assembly sits.

Within these boundaries is the place I represent, including wholly or partly the communities of Heritage, Eastview, Al Ritchie, and Boot Hill. The communities themselves are very diverse. Some of our city's poorest and our city's wealthiest call Regina Douglas Park home. Young professionals and retired folks call Regina Douglas Park home. Single-parent families, nuclear families, mixed families, and multi-generational families call this area home. People from a host of cultural backgrounds call Regina Douglas Park home, including peoples from many of our indigenous nations and peoples with ancestry like mine, from German and eastern European communities.

Douglas Park has many commercial districts that serve my constituents well. I'm pleased that our new constituency office will be opening soon on the 1200 block of 15th Avenue in a small yet vibrant commercial area: along with our office, Hemp Haven, Frank's Barber Shop, and the soon opening Hunter Gatherer Vegetarian Diner. Across the street a unique space with T + A vintage and vinyl, 33 1/3 Roasters, and Malty National have turned this neighbourhood into a vibrant hub of activity.

As I turn to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, it's clear to me that it lacks in any sort of inspiring vision, which is truly a missed opportunity. Third terms are usually an opportunity for a government to really be visionary. Even in tighter financial times, there are countless governments who have made real progress for their electorate in later terms. It's unfortunate that this isn't the case here. I'm humbled to have been given the duty of being critic for Justice, Corrections and Policing, Immigration, women, and SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority]. All of these are busy and exciting files and I'm sure I'll have a lot to touch on in my time on these issues.

Justice is an area I have the most personal experience with, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have some big shoes to fill in stepping into the role after John Nilson, our former MLA for Regina Lakeview, who came into the role with decades of experience, both as a critic and as a former Justice minister. Although he is retired, luckily for me he's still readily available as a mentor, and I'm grateful he takes time out of his days for me.

I've been working for the last five years as a lawyer in the area of access to justice in the legal system in Saskatchewan, and I have to say that there's so much work to be done. This province is filled with kind and generous lawyers. And I know that those adjectives are not normally used with lawyers by some but I stand proud by my statement. These lawyers give of their time to help those in our community who fall between the cracks. And those numbers are huge, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are thousands in the province who have to struggle their way through the legal system on their own or who are unable to address their legal issues at all.

I, on a regular basis, provided legal advice to many people, typically women, who were fleeing situations of domestic violence but weren't able to access legal aid because they were working. Women trying to make ends meet on minimum wage, working full time at places like restaurants or cleaning agencies, with three or four kids, don't qualify for legal aid in this province and are left on their own. Situations like these are too common and they break my heart.

Domestic violence is another issue that has been woefully ignored by this government. In fact, it was only a few short months ago when the government stated that they would deal with this issue once the economy improved, in terms of funding dollars. Strange how this issue goes ignored while the government has no problem addressing what they consider more pressing issues like home bakeries or KFC buffets during tight economic times, while ignoring a threat that historically gets significantly worse when families are struggling to make ends meet.

We have the highest domestic violence rate among the provinces in the country. That is a sobering fact. And if one needs to be so callous as to put dollar figures on this issue to see progress, we save money in terms of Health and Social Services spending and time spent outside of the workforce when we address this issue.

There are some great examples in our neighbouring provinces to the east and west of some legislative address that, while they will not solve the issue of domestic violence itself, will help to ease some of the unaddressed consequences of our high domestic violence rates, and cost no or very little money for our government to implement.

This is an issue that is not just one for my Justice role but also an important one in my role as critic for women. One thing that I think is apt to point out is that this is the 100th-year anniversary of women having the right to vote in Saskatchewan. I would be remiss not to point out that this doesn't mean that all women were granted the right to vote in 1916. Indigenous women were not given that right until much later. This is a sad part of the story that cannot be forgotten.

Despite this milestone, women are still woefully under-represented in places of leadership and authority in our society, and this legislature is no exception. Despite being over 50 per cent of the population, women only make up 26 per cent of those elected today in this House. And I think that might be the best we've ever done here. Canada is right now 46th, as of 2013, in the world in terms of equality in representation.

Why does this matter? The United Nations has emphasized time and again that a critical mass of women in decision-making roles is needed to create change in areas of public policy that women traditionally have carried the torch. When more women are at the table, more creative and collaborative decisions are made. Women have a unique perspective on problems and solutions that must be utilized on behalf of this province.

Studies show that one of the reasons why women are under-represented is because they do not run for office. One of those reasons why, many studies show, is because there is a gender gap in ambition to run for office. Women do not have political ambitions at the same rate as men do. Why do men see political life as a realistic career goal while women do less frequently? The recent emergence of female political leaders has not done anything to change this gap. In fact studies have found that it is widening.

So when we celebrate this 100th-year anniversary, Mr. Speaker, of the vote for non-indigenous women, let's make sure we aren't patting ourselves on the back on how far we have come and wiping our hands of the need for this discussion. The conversation is needed, and without a concerted shift in how society operates, will we see any gains in this under-representation? That being said, I'm so proud to be a part of a caucus that has achieved gender parity.

One of the reasons why I ran was because of the increasing inequality I saw in our communities. While some are more successful, many others are simply not able to get ahead and are falling through the cracks in our system. I saw these people every single day in my previous work. We strove to improve access to justice in a system as one of those barriers for those who are struggling to get ahead as an ability to try to take one hurdle away from those who have more hurdles than anyone here could ever imagine.

Another issue that was not touched on in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, is the rate of missing and murdered indigenous women in this province. This is an issue of colonialism, sexism, and racism, one that affects many families and loved ones in this province. Nobody should be discarded as less than in our society, but that is the unfortunate reality for some. I need to pause and point out that comments that the members opposite said yesterday about women needing to stop playing the victim narrative and just pull themselves up by their bootstraps should maybe have a conversation with those families and stop the regressive rhetoric that ignores systemic barriers that exist in our society.

Corrections and Policing, Mr. Speaker, is another file I inherit from Mr. Nilson, and I am again glad to have his wisdom guiding me. I look forward to meeting with the stakeholders in this area in the coming months. *Maclean's* magazine came out with a very powerful investigative report in February of 2016

that shed light on some of the issues in Canada's prisons, calling them the new residential schools. Much of their article, despite being Canada-wide, zeroed in on issues in Saskatchewan. It mentioned that, while Canada's rate of crime is decreasing, our remand rates have skyrocketed. Jails are overcrowded and our hard-working correctional staff are being forced to work in more and more precariously dangerous situations. The use of segregation in jails is increasing and is resulting in inmates leaving prison not rehabilitated but more damaged than before. I want to highlight one quote in particular that hit home with me from that *Maclean's* article:

The main reason Indigenous women — who account for 78 per cent of all self-harm incidents in prison — are moved to higher security levels is due to self-harm, including suicide attempts, according to a 2008 report by the Ontario Women's Justice Network.

Kinew James, who died months before the end of a 15-year sentence while incarcerated in Saskatchewan, is frequently compared to Ashley Smith, who strangled herself to death at Grand Valley Institution for Women in 2007 as guards watched. Both were incarcerated as teens. They struggled with mental illness and self-harm, were frequently moved, and spent long stretches in segregation in a system that didn't know how to deal with them.

We are failing so many people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These aren't souls that should be forgotten. I agree with Jimmy Carter who once said that a society is measured by how it treats its most vulnerable.

Gang violence is also on the rise, Mr. Speaker, and those living in Regina in particular can attest to this and speak to their own concern for their safety. But the solution is not any of those mentioned above. We need to reinvest in preventative measures and anti-gang strategies. Putting people in prison does not make anyone less inclined toward gang life, but addressing the root causes of why someone would fall into a gang is where the solution lies. And there are many experts in the community with the answers. We simply need to tap into that resource. This is another issue left out in the Throne Speech.

I haven't even begun to speak about the recent issues surrounding the state of the prison food and the flippant statement of the Premier that those who do not like the food should stay out of prison, or the closing of the Yarrow Youth Farm.

Moving on now to my role as Immigration critic, I am always in awe of how diverse our province has become. I had the pleasure of coming across a family of Syrian refugees while door knocking a few months ago and their openness, despite us not sharing a common language, in welcoming me into their home was truly inspiring. I met many individuals with immigration challenges in my previous work, particularly in the struggles surrounding the long reunification of families and the issues around temporary foreign worker designation in the province.

Last but certainly not least is my critic portfolio with SLGA. I am encouraged by all of the activity in the province over the last few years in the areas of craft brewing and distilleries. It's great to see so many local folks creating businesses and

supporting the community. I will work to ensure that their businesses thrive.

I will also strive to keep the government to account in their work. I will work to ensure this government will be open and transparent throughout their process and ensure their word in keeping everything cost and revenue neutral.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, if you would for a moment indulge me in revealing to you and all members my age in this Chamber, I wish to make reference to the maiden speech of the former member for Saskatoon Nutana, delivered to this House the year I was born. Pat Atkinson, a fellow New Democrat, also took her seat in this Chamber in opposition to the Progressive Conservatives in 1986. I had a chance to read over her very first remarks to this House, Mr. Speaker, and the government of the day was criticized for many of the same socio-economic issues as the government today.

Ms. Atkinson said much of the repercussions of unemployment at the time. The government can trot out old and outdated statistics about the resilience of the Saskatchewan economy as they did then, but statistics do little for the un- and underemployed people of this province. She spoke of how the economic downturn has a disproportionately adverse impact on women and young people. Women and young people are more likely to be in precarious lines of work and as human services jobs disappear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the incomes many families rely on have dwindled or disappeared.

Minimum wage earners, once again most commonly women and youth, have seen their purchasing power continue to decrease to the point that their income is a fraction of a living wage. We had record use of our province's food banks in the 1980s, and 30 years later we witness again unprecedented use. Even during the much-lauded boom, food bank use skyrocketed along with the amount of children living in poverty in Saskatchewan. We can do better, and our government needs to do better. Our producers feed mouths around the world, yet many of our own do not have enough.

As I continue my work in this legislature, I will endeavour to be reasonable to work with, motivated by my passions, and accountable to my constituents. And I will close in a way similar to my colleague opened 30 years ago. If the members opposite deal with the challenges of governing our province in a manner that is fair and reasonable, then I'll be an ally to the members opposite. However, if they don't, if the rights of any individual or group is threatened, then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll be a critic. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as my remarks indicate, I will support the amendment moved by my colleagues to the Throne Speech. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise here today after five years of not being able to speak on behalf of Cannington, and I think it's time that Cannington's voice was heard. But first I would like to congratulate the new Speaker in his new role. It's a challenging

position. It can be a lonely position because the Speaker's position is to be impartial and fair to both sides of the House. And in doing so, quite often neither side of the House is impressed with the decisions of the Speaker.

I would like to thank the Clerks-at-the-Table for their support while I was the Speaker in the last parliament. And I would like to thank the member, the Deputy Speaker. So if I was the Andy Griffith of Speakers, that would make the Deputy Speaker Gomer Pyle.

I would like to thank the support of Cannington. We had a very tight race there in this past election, but the voters in Cannington did come through again for the seventh time in sending me to this legislature. You know, at the rate of increase in the percentage of the vote, I will need another two elections to get 100 per cent. I'm not sure that the people of Cannington or the members of this House are prepared to put up with that.

So I'd like to talk a little bit about Cannington. Cannington's main industries are both agriculture and the oil industry. Agriculture is doing very well. We've had sufficient rain this spring to get the seeding done. We're probably in the neighbourhood of 80 to 90 per cent complete, and the crops that are up are looking very good.

The oil industry, on the other hand, is struggling. There are a number of businesses whose doors have closed because of the lack of business, and a number of employees have been let go. That's one of the reasons why this government was promoting extending EI [employment insurance] benefits and asking the federal government to provide that kind of support for those employees that have lost their jobs. We have the lowest capacity or capability for EI across the country.

Previously, if you were in the Maritimes or in other locations in Canada, you could get EI with a much lower amount of work and those benefits extended for a great deal longer time. Well in my area those benefits are needed and would be appreciated if the federal government would come through. And I applaud the Premier for raising that issue with the Prime Minister and with the federal cabinet in seeking to extend those benefits.

But it's not all doom and gloom in Cannington. Our schools are full. There have been new schools built. Oxbow comprehensive high school was built since we formed government. It's a great new school and a great community centre for that community, which invested additional monies to expand the gymnasium theatre to be utilized by the entire community.

You know, in the last census everybody across rural Saskatchewan was concerned how the numbers would turn out, whether their constituencies would shrink or grow. Well in Cannington's case, it grew. So the net result of that was I lost some parts of my constituency that went to Weyburn which, while I regretted that happening, there was some compensatory territory that came into Cannington. And that was some townships on the west side of Lampman that Cannington received from the Estevan constituency. While it covered territory, there were very few people actually living there. But I did gain one new constituent over the last five years. The Minister of Health now resides in Cannington, so I would like to thank him for his financial support in the last election.

An Hon. Member: — Tomorrow check your records.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I did. You paid.

You know, it's sort of like the Roughriders that can never win a Grey Cup while the NDP are in power. In Cannington, we can't get a new hotel while the NDP are in power. In the late 1960s, the last hotel was built. But in the last eight years, there are six new hotels built in this constituency because the Sask Party was in power. And they have been full until this past year.

So new hotels in Stoughton, Arcola, Carlyle, Redvers, Wawota, Carnduff, and Oxbow, and some of those communities have more than one new hotel. So it's been . . . The Saskatchewan Party being in power has represented huge economic opportunities for my constituency and for the province of Saskatchewan.

Now there is a note here about the Minister of Advanced Education that he stuck in here. Something about him being a rock. Okay, I'm not sure what that's about.

An Hon. Member: — A pet rock.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Maybe it's a pet rock. That's true.

You know, we had the discussion today in question period regarding acute care services and long-term care. In the community of Redvers where I was actually born, we now have a new long-term care facility to replace the old one. It's integrated into the acute care facility. Now that acute care facility was built in the 1990s with 100 per cent community money, but the former minister of Health Judy Junor showed up for the ribbon cutting while her and her government did not contribute a single red cent to that construction. But yet they went around the province and closed 51 hospitals.

This government has not closed a single hospital. Yes, there have been hospitals that could no longer provide acute care and emergency coverage for a period of time. Redvers was one of those. But the local community went to work in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and brought in doctors recruited by the local community to reopen that acute care facility. And now that facility and its doctors are providing community care, not only to Redvers and the immediate surrounding area which was its normal drawing area, but has also, in discussions with the Carnduff health foundation, has opened up clinics and is now providing doctor services to the community of Carnduff and that surrounding area. Plus they are opening discussions with some of the other communities in that area to provide that support to them as well.

So it's a growing health base in the very southeast corner of the province, yes. Do we need more doctors? Absolutely. But doctors have changed their work habits over the last 20 years. Previously Dr. Murphy and Dr. Pesenti in Redvers would work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. That's no longer the case. Now doctors, like every other profession, want to have family time. They want to have free time. Therefore we need more doctors to provide the coverage that we previously had. But the new programs that this government has put in place is bringing more doctors into the province. I think we have, what, 650 more doctors now to provide that kind of service, and those numbers

are growing, along with new training facilities and new training capabilities at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan].

You know, I listened to the member for Saskatoon Centre and his comments today about health care, and it does raise some concerns that it was acceptable when he was in government and the NDP was in government to close 51 hospitals, to close the Plains hospital in Regina, and yet when . . . And those facilities were indeed closed. Plywood was placed over the doors and two-by-four over the windows, and two-by-fours across the doors so they would never, ever be open again.

Yes, we have some facilities that are on bypass. Those facilities will open as soon as doctors are available to work in those facilities. Just as Redvers was closed for approximately a year and is now reopened with three doctors, so will Preeceville.

The member for Saskatoon Riversdale was talking that in 10 years this government has never taken responsibility for its health care decisions. She kept repeating that — 10 years, 10 years. Then I realized that was typical NDP math. The election was in November of 2007 when the government changed. Today it's May of 2016. That's eight years and six months. I recognize that it feels like 10 years to her, but it's really only eight and a half.

[15:45]

The member for Regina Douglas Park commented on a hunter and gatherer restaurant. That kind of caught my eye, my ear. I went to a place like that in Africa. It was called Carnivore and served wild game, African game. So hopefully that's what hunters and gatherers restaurant will be like.

This building is a historic monument. It's a heritage place for the province. The dome renewal has taken place, and I look forward to the scaffolding coming off so we can really see the brilliance of the new copper on the repaired dome.

You know, it's up to us as members of the Legislative Assembly to maintain and sustain this heritage building. The members of the past and the people of the past in this province have allowed us to have a say on how this building will be maintained and sustained into the future. And it's incumbent on us to accept and take that responsibility to ensure that this building will be here in a beautiful condition in 100 years. Penny-pinching and failing to carry on the maintenance that needs to be done here condemns us to failing in that need. We need to continue to repair and maintain and sustain this Legislative Building.

You know, as my colleague the Deputy Speaker was saying, that there are three branches of government: the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch. We need all three of these branches of government, but they need to operate independently of each other.

So even though the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the cabinet, usually has a position in this Chamber as MLAs, it is the fact that they are MLAs that generally gives them the ability to be in cabinet. It is possible to be a cabinet member and not be an MLA, but it's the fact that this Chamber is here, the fact that members are elected by popular vote to represent their

constituencies is the reason we have a Legislative Building. If it wasn't for this Chamber, if it wasn't for the legislative branch, if it wasn't for elected members, we could simply have a Premier's mansion where governing would take place from.

It's the fact that the members who sit in this Chamber and vote to determine what the law of Saskatchewan is, is the reason that we have a Legislative Building and we have a legislative democracy. Each of those branches need to operate independently. The legislature does not tell the judiciary what to do. The judiciary does not tell the executive what to do. We all need to operate separately.

I knew that was going to take some time, so I only have three areas of comment from the Speech from the Throne, which is why we are here. Keeping promises — \$70 million surge for highway repair. If you drive across Saskatchewan today and compare it to what the situation was like in 2007, there is no comparison. It's umpteen times better than what it was back then.

However, there are still a few roads that need some consideration. And so I am imploring my colleagues to give some consideration to Highway Nos. 318, 361, and 47 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I recognize none of them go to Weyburn, but Weyburn already has some very, very good highways. So there are some areas in my . . . where the oil is hauled. 361 and 318 have the main terminal for oil in southeast Saskatchewan, all goes there. So if we're getting resources and taxes from that oil, maybe a little bit of it could help out.

On Highway 361, we also have a gas plant east of Alida where they haul one to two tanker loads of propane a day down to the US [United States] and get paid in US dollars, which are more valuable today than an equivalent number of Canadian dollars. So again, we need to make sure that this economic activity continues.

Also in the Speech from the Throne, under "Keeping our economy strong," is a comment that Crescent Point Energy has announced it will spend \$800 million of its projected 950 million capital budget in Saskatchewan in 2016. So the member for Weyburn and I share Crescent Point's activities in our constituencies. I think most of it's in mine; he might disagree with that. But Crescent Point has a lot of wells and a lot of property to develop yet in that area, and it's great to see that happening. It needs to be encouraged and continue to facilitate.

One of the things that Crescent Point has done, has created an oil loading terminal for loading oil onto the trains that come from Stoughton up to Regina and then across the continent. This has been a great investment for the people involved in that area and certainly does a lot to maintain the economy in southeast Saskatchewan and all of Saskatchewan.

Finally, standing up for Saskatchewan, I think that's the role of government. And I think that's the role that the Premier has played very well since becoming Premier in 2007. People still comment about his role of supporting Saskatchewan on the BHP takeover of potash. They still remember that and recognize the importance that has to the economy of Saskatchewan. But it's also members' responsibility to help promote and protect Saskatchewan and our economic activities

as we tour, as we visit other jurisdictions.

I had the privilege to go down to Toronto a few weeks ago and meet with the leadership of, I think it was seven US states in the Midwest and four provinces. There, the newly elected MLA, one of the newly elected MLAs for Alberta, an NDP member, was promoting their ideas of climate protection: increasing taxation, more restrictions and restraint on their industry. So I pointed out to him that there are other ways to accomplish the same goals — such as BD3, Boundary dam 3, and carbon capture and sequestration — that rather than just simply taxing people, we were actually taking carbon out of the atmosphere, where it would have been expelled, and injecting it underground which is saving hundreds of thousands of tonnes of CO₂ from going up to the atmosphere. So that was an alternative to simply taxing businesses to the extent they could no longer produce, they could no longer work, and therefore there was less carbon being expelled because the industry was shut down.

It was very interesting to note at that conference that the American leaders that were there took the NDP member for Alberta to task, and it didn't really matter what their politics in the US was. Both the Republicans and the Democrats took that member to task for trying to destroy their own industry.

So you know, I think that when you look at some of the ideas that come forward such as the Leap Manifesto, which is not that a big a leap from the *Regina Manifesto*, I think it's our job as elected members in government to protect our industry, our economy, and the people living here from ideas which would destroy this province.

I will be supporting the main motion and not the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start today by congratulating all of the re-elected members on both sides of the floor, as well as first-time members. And I want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on being elected to your new role and to the very important role that it is. And I also want to thank our previous Speaker who served us with distinction for his term in the Speaker's chair.

There are many people to thank, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my constituents, the constituents of Lumsden-Morse and formerly Thunder Creek, for entrusting me to represent them for a fifth term. It's an honour and a privilege to represent them always, and I will do my level best to do that in a way that will justify their continuing support of me, our Premier, and our government.

Mr. Speaker, only a sprinkling of the population of this great province ever have the opportunity to serve our constituents and our province in this beautiful, historical building. There is rarely a day that goes by when I don't take a few seconds to appreciate the building, to reflect on the history that has been made here in over 100 years, and to consider the responsibilities that I have been granted and to be thankful for the opportunities that have been granted to me by the good, honest, hard-working people of Lumsden-Morse, people that I am proud to serve.

There are always so many to thank after an election. My constituency assistants, Terry Lynn Carefoot and Bev Leaman; my constituency executive, all of them who all worked so hard during the election campaign as well as year in and year out running the affairs of Lumsden-Morse; numerous volunteers from across my huge constituency; and those that donate money to the constituency and attend fundraising events to generate funds that it takes to run a successful campaign. Are those people at my door the morning after the election with requests of one sort or of another? Certainly not. They all do it to make our democratic process to work and to provide the best government possible for our beloved province.

I want to take a short time to brag about my family, Mr. Speaker, something that I haven't done enough in the past. First, Mr. Speaker, my wife, Linda. Linda has always supported me, whether in my efforts on the school board, RM council, farming in Canada and the United States, hockey, stock car racing — all the things that I've been able to do because of her support. And I try to give her opportunities to pursue her interests as well, but I could never repay what she has given me.

My two daughters are the oldest of our three children, and unfortunately they left the province before 2007 when the economy and prospects here were dismal indeed. They were bright and ambitious, and I can't blame them for going elsewhere in those dark days here under the cold, hard hand of socialism, like most young people of that era did. Now they want to come back, but it's difficult when they have spouses, children, and careers in Ontario. Stewart and Jack are Stephanie and Gabe's boys, and Liberty is Alison and Shawn's daughter. I wish they were closer, and I will never forgive the NDP for chasing them away.

[16:00]

Our son Lee is a few years younger and we managed to keep him here until he could see opportunity for himself after the 2007 election. Lee is the boss on the farm now. And Lee and his lovely wife, Jessica, have a daughter Josie and a brand new son named Sam who was just born in the middle of the most recent election campaign.

This will be the first speech that I have made in here that my dad will not be watching on TV. He passed away February 22nd, just four days short of 101 years of age. He is missed every day.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the industry that I have been part of since birth — the agricultural industry. There is good news throughout the industry, Mr. Speaker. In 2015 Saskatchewan producers exported a record \$15.3 billion worth of agricultural products. That's the fifth consecutive year of record exports. We led the nation again in 2015. Under the NDP in their last year of 2007, Saskatchewan was able to export only \$6.4 billion worth of agricultural products. That's a 139 per cent increase in exports in agricultural products since 2007, Mr. Speaker. Canola was the top export commodity in 2015 at 2.6 billion. And Saskatchewan, for interest's sake, exports nearly 25 per cent of Canada's total agri-food exports of \$61.6 billion.

Cattle prices, Mr. Speaker, have softened some but in 2014 were very strong with \$2.7 billion in exports. Highest on record,

64 per cent above the five-year average. The growth plan goal for 2020, for instance, was to produce \$2 billion worth of cattle by then and we beat that by \$700 million, five years early. Crop production, the second-largest crop ever last year, in 2015, at 32 million tonnes. That's 13 per cent above the 10-year average. The growth plan goal of 36.6 million tonnes was actually topped in 2013 with a crop of 38.4 million tonnes, Mr. Speaker. That's seven years before the deadline of 2020. Realized net farm income in 2014 was \$3.1 billion. That's 53 per cent above the five-year average.

Trade agreements, Mr. Speaker. The European economic trade agreement and particularly the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about today a little bit, and specifically the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is Canada's top agri-food exporting province. In 2014 — here's another statistic, Mr. Speaker — 95 per cent of agricultural products from Saskatchewan were exported. Only 5 per cent of our agricultural products produced in this province are consumed in Canada. In 2014, agricultural exports to TPP [Trans-Pacific Partnership] countries were \$6.2 billion, representing 45 per cent of Saskatchewan agri-food exports.

The Asia-Pacific region is of critical importance to Saskatchewan. Japan is among our top five export destinations. The region contains about 800 million people who each year become more prosperous than the year before. Their standard of living is increasing. Their disposable income is increasing. And they're demanding the things that we can produce, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely critical to the economy of Saskatchewan that we become signatories, Canada becomes a signatory to the TPP.

Saskatchewan's largest value-added gain would come from canola with canola oil access to Japan under the TPP. Canadian canola growers indicated that the TPP commitment to eliminate tariffs on canola over five years would provide \$780 million annually in additional oil sales.

Beef cattle. If we don't move toward TPP, Mr. Speaker, our ranchers will lose footing in markets like Japan where we would be stuck at 38.5 per cent tariff on beef while our competitors, principally the US and Australia, would move to a tariff of 9 per cent. Pork. The Canadian Pork Council estimates that its sector could lose at least \$330 million in export sales if Canada is not part of the agreement.

Wheat. Saskatchewan will gain from the Canada-specific quota for food wheat into Japan starting at 40 000 tonnes and increasing to 53 000 tonnes in six years. And barley, our producers will gain from the TPP-specific quota for food barley into Japan which starts at 25 000 tonnes and grows to 65 000 within eight years.

Mr. Speaker, if we are not signatories to the TPP, there's no going back to the status quo. We will be virtually frozen out of those markets by tariffs. It's the most important thing. It's probably more important to Saskatchewan than NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement], and NAFTA's been a boon for trade for this province.

I want to talk about some of the things now that I've covered. I think our most important pending trade deal, TPP. Some of the initiatives of our government in agriculture, Mr. Speaker:

International Trade Centre here in Regina, \$22 million; Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence near the University of Saskatchewan, \$10 million; the Food Centre in Saskatchewan, \$13 million; Western livestock price insurance program, a program that started in 2014 that's been very successful and gaining popularity every year; western crop insurance coverage of \$216 an acre for this crop year, Mr. Speaker, and a crop insurance budget of \$166 million. That 216 million, or dollars an acre now is best appreciated when compared to the \$86 an hour, or dollars an acre, under the last year of NDP government in 2007.

Increased crop insurance unseeded acreage benefit options for 50, 70, 85, and \$100 per acre versus a maximum of \$50 an acre under the NDP government in 2007. Committing to fully fund fed-prov programs upfront, which the NDP always refused to do. Increased irrigation capacity to help to drought-proof our province, programs to increase market access for our products, farm and ranch water infrastructure program, compensation for livestock killed or injured by predators. The NDP wouldn't do this, Mr. Speaker. 100 per cent wildlife damage compensation, and it was 80 per cent under the NDP. Increased agricultural research funding by 96.3 per cent over the NDP's record of 2007. Beaver control program which was not available under the NDP. Our government, Mr. Speaker, brought AgriStability administration to Saskatchewan, improving processing timelines and turnarounds. The NDP didn't want to bother.

Increased funding for rat control, \$1.4 million. That's 159 per cent increase over what the NDP did in their last year, 2007. The largest education tax reduction in Saskatchewan history, record revenue sharing with RMs. We're keeping Saskatchewan strong by keeping agriculture strong, Mr. Speaker.

Pierre Cl  roux, VP [vice-president] and chief economist for the Business Development Bank of Canada, spoke at a conference in Saskatoon on May 2nd and he calls Saskatchewan agriculture our province's bright spot. Demand for Saskatchewan products is still very strong around the world and that's the reason the prices are up and demand is strong. So this sector is moving up, growing, and creating jobs. According to the chief economist, a lot of thanks has to go to the provincial government who apparently had a great plan throughout the recession. Saskatchewan was in a very good financial position to face this challenge. The debt ratio was one of the lowest in the country so the government had some room to manoeuvre. End of quote.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with much of what he said except that the credit for our agricultural success goes to our producers and agribusinesses.

Mr. Speaker, the Leap Manifesto, it reads like this:

Moving to a far more localized and ecologically-based agricultural system would reduce reliance on fossil fuels, capture carbon in the soil, and absorb sudden shocks in the global [food] supply — as well as produce healthier and more affordable food for everyone.

We call for an end to all trade deals that interfere with our attempts to rebuild local economies, regulate corporations and stop damaging extractive projects.

Mr. Speaker, I've never read two paragraphs which voice more ignorance of a subject than these two in my whole life. They couldn't have gotten it more wrong. This is absolutely the opposite of the truth, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to go on and give you some facts to support that. But the NDP support the Leap Manifesto. They do. The member from Nutana's the Ag critic, and she supports it. I have the greatest personal respect for her but it's a disgrace that the Ag critic in this province supports the Leap Manifesto, a socialist document that would kill agriculture as we know it in Western Canada. It wouldn't harm it; it would absolutely wipe it out, not to mention, not to mention resource extraction.

They're laughing over there, Mr. Speaker. They think it's funny. They think it's funny that they're openly against our major industries in this province and the industries that employ most of the people in this province. I think they missed the point of the last election, Mr. Speaker, but they'll get the smiles wiped off their faces in four more years.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to climate change, Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers have been leaders for decades in adapting practices which reduce greenhouse gases and increase carbon sequestration. In 2013, Saskatchewan soil sequestered 10.9 million tonnes of carbon. This can be attributed mainly to the adoption of zero-till.

Thirty years ago, Saskatchewan was a net emitter of carbon and released 700 000 tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and now it sequesters 10.9 million tonnes. Outside the Prairies, agricultural soils are emitters of carbon still. Without Saskatchewan and the good practices of our farmers, Canadian soils would release approximately 3.5 million tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere still.

Farmers have virtually eliminated the practice of summerfallow. Thanks to improvements in feed efficiencies and gains in productivity, greenhouse gas emissions from beef cattle have declined significantly over the past 30 years. From '81 to 2011, greenhouse gases from beef cattle declined by 14 per cent for methane, 15 per cent for nitrous oxide, and 12 per cent for carbon dioxide, due mainly to better knowledge of nutrition and the use of growth hormones.

The addition of pulses to crop rotations has had a significant impact on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Research shows that growing one pulse crop in a four-year rotation can reduce greenhouse emissions from the cropping system by 13 to 25 per cent, and many farms grow one pulse crop in three.

In 2011, the use of biotechnology reduced CO₂ emissions enough that it was like taking 10.2 million cars off the road for a year. Agriculture is a leader and plays a valuable role in caring for our environment and producing cheap, healthy food for Canada and tens of millions of people around the world.

The Leap Manifesto is wrong-headed because widespread starvation, increase emissions, and abandon the practices that are restoring our environment.

[16:15]

Let's talk about the NDP record in agriculture. They closed 31

agricultural offices, Mr. Speaker, cut extension services, eliminated the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] program after farmers had signed the contracts — tore them up. Increased crop insurance premiums without increasing coverage, refused to address education property tax, cut spot loss hail coverage twice, ignored agriculture disasters; lost taxpayers' money in private investments — SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], Navigata, and the beat goes on. Closed 52 rural hospitals, closed rural schools, 176 I think. Am I right? Ignored rural roads and highways. Off-loaded costs to RMs and farm families.

Same old NDP, stuck in the past. No plan for growth, no desire for growth, no understanding of growth. Didn't believe growth was possible. Didn't want growth. Here's their idea of how to run an economy, Mr. Speaker. In agriculture alone, they had a little thing called the Agri-Food Equity Fund which carried on from '94 to 2002 under some illustrious NDP leaders and members opposite. They invested over \$31 million in private agri-businesses, Mr. Speaker. To date, they've lost 24 million of that.

They made 25 investments: Thomson Meats, \$8.1 million invested and 7.9 million written off; Dura-Fibre, 7.13 million invested, 7.1 written off; Schneider's Popcorn Parties — anybody ever hear of that? — 350,000 invested, 316,000 written off; World Wide Pork, 4.3 million invested, 1.5 million written off; Canada Livestock Services, 750,000 invested, 750,000 written off; Northern Lights Gourmet Mushrooms, \$250,000 invested, 240,000 written off; Notukeu Processing, \$700,000 invested, seven hundred . . . That's not even half the list, Mr. Speaker, but I'm running out of time. I'd love to finish it, but . . .

And they, you know, didn't restrict their foolishness to agriculture, thank goodness: 15 million lost, Channel Lake; 2 million lost in Guyana which was a South American power company — that was a wise investment . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . yes. 16 million lost in NST Chicago, a US Midwest fibre optics company, another brilliant investment; \$9.4 million lost in Persona Inc., a Newfoundland cable company. Mr. Speaker, the beat goes on: 24.7 million lost in Retx.com, an Atlanta-based dot-com company; 6.7 million lost in tappedinto.com, a Nashville-based dot-com company; 3 million lost in clickabid, a failed internet auction business; 5.6 million lost in Soft Tracks Enterprises Ltd., a wireless electronic payment company; 90.8 million lost in Navigata Communications, a BC telecom; 10 million lost in Craig Wireless, Manitoba internet company. Seventeen point . . . Oh, I'm depressed, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to have to stop this for my own mental health.

Mr. Speaker, I think I've made my point. I think, and the voters in the most recent election, they agreed with me and my other colleagues that have spoken in this debate. And, Mr. Speaker, accordingly I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne and not the amendment.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to

participate in this Throne Speech debate. May I begin by congratulating you on your election as Speaker of the Assembly. I have confidence that you will lead the House with discipline and respect and look forward to working with you.

May I also congratulate all members on their re-election and election to this House. I'm sure that we all realize the importance of the task ahead, and we will work to serve the people of Saskatchewan to the best of our abilities. I am proud to stand with my fellow caucus members. We come from all areas of the province, have diverse backgrounds, and are the first ever caucus with gender parity.

Before I begin my remarks on the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the constituents of Prince Albert Northcote for the faith that they have placed in me to be their representative in this legislature. I will approach my duties with as much principle and honour as possible, and I promise that any decisions that I make will have their best interests in mind.

I also, Mr. Speaker, want to thank the workers who helped me get elected in this Legislative Assembly. They worked especially hard on phones, computers, baking, knocking on doors, and putting up signs. Whatever there was to be done, no matter how big or small, my very dedicated team found a way to get it done. Without their support and countless hours of volunteer work, I would not be here representing Northcote.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank my constituency assistant, Rose. Rose is well respected by members of this Legislative Assembly and, most importantly, the people of Prince Albert Northcote. Rose has many years of experience serving constituents in Northcote, and through the years I have heard stories from the constituents about how Rose has helped them in the past. Rose always has a welcoming smile, compassionate heart, and works hard to come up with solutions for constituents' issues. Her passion is to help people, and it's evident in her work ethic. I am thankful that Rose has decided to return to work as the Northcote constituency assistant, and I'm excited to work with her.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my family for their never-ending support for me to pursue my dreams of serving the people in this beautiful province. I think many members here can relate to having spent many days and evenings away from home and, despite the demanding schedule, my wonderful family does not complain. They were also dedicated workers in my campaign and would offer many words of encouragement.

Mr. Speaker, there are two particular family members that I feel the need to be recognized for their hard work during my campaign. First is my daughter Melissa. My daughter is a young single mother that was working two jobs and finishing her first year of university when the election was called. But that did not stop her from coming into the campaign office as often as she could to help canvass or bringing baking for the election workers. Melissa was an excellent canvasser and was knowledgeable on the issues related to constituents, and she especially enjoyed visiting with the more senior constituents.

Also, Mr. Speaker, my partner, Darren, was extremely busy with the election campaign. Darren would spend hours putting up, fixing, and replacing signs. He handled most of the

household chores and watched our grandson so Melissa could help out and provided an abundance of encouragement.

Mr. Speaker, I have lived in Prince Albert the majority of my life, and prior to moving to Prince Albert I grew up in St. Louis, a village 20 minutes south of Prince Albert. I am the youngest of eight children and have learned a lot about teamwork and compromise with such a large family. My parents raised their children to be respectful to all people, work hard, and have social democratic values. My parents instilled in us the belief that all people in our society deserved to live with dignity and respect, and I believe it's important to continue to share that belief system with my children.

My parents also believed that you should be a member of the local credit union, shop at the local co-op, and support small local businesses. The importance of serving your community was also important in our family, Mr. Speaker, which included volunteering for many organizations in the community. It also resulted in my mother becoming a school board member, my father becoming an alderman for the village of St. Louis, and my brother serving as the mayor of St. Louis, and now myself serving as the member of the legislature.

Politics was always discussed in our home, and as children, we were encouraged to know about local issues and how our government was managing them. Election time was an exciting time since both my parents usually spent a lot of time volunteering. And on election night, the regular bedtime routine was disrupted so that I could watch the results. My father would especially get excited when he would see women candidates running for office and would often tell me that he believed more women needed to be involved in politics. My father passed away seven years ago so was unable to help with my campaign, but I know he would have been extremely proud of my accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, I was very happy to have my 81-year-old mother attend my swearing-in ceremony. This was her first time at the legislature and she was impressed with the history, decor, and the fact that her youngest daughter can now call this her workplace. Much of my success is the result of my mother's upbringing and role modelling. My mother is very independent, determined, dedicated, loyal, and hard-working. And I work hard to exhibit those traits as well.

Life hasn't always been easy, Mr. Speaker. I was a young lady when I discovered that I was pregnant with my first-born. I was scared when I thought about providing for a young child but lucky for me, this all happened when we had an NDP government in power, an NDP government that believed in investing in families.

At this time in my life, the NDP invested in a program designed for disadvantaged people that provided them an opportunity to receive a post-secondary education. I jumped at this opportunity to receive a hands up and went to further my education by receiving my business administration certificate at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology]. Furthering my education was a challenge with a young child but it was the best thing I could do to become independent and show my children that hard work will pay off.

After I completed the certificate, I was fortunate enough to get employment with Crown corporations, SaskTel and SaskPower. Being employed with these Crown corporations showed me how important Crown corporations are for our province. It showed me how important it is for the province to invest in good-paying jobs for Saskatchewan people and how province-owned businesses invest back into communities.

When I was employed at SaskPower, I was involved with the union and occupational health and safety committee. I learned how important this was to ensuring that standards in the workplace were fair, equitable, and safe. I have since always been employed in unionized jobs and see how unions set standards not only in the workplaces they represent, but because of the standards set, other workplaces benefit as well.

Having a career where I can be a voice to people that are disadvantaged has always been a goal of mine, Mr. Speaker. This is what led me to pursue my education in social work. And previous to this election, I was employed with the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region and worked as a social worker at the mental health and addictions outpatient centre. Using the skills I learned from being a social worker will help me with advocating for Prince Albert as I feel strongly that Prince Albert needs more from this government and deserves more. I also believe that my experience as a social worker in the community has provided me insight to some issues that the constituents regularly deal with.

My partner, Darren, and I have a busy, blended family with two sons, two daughters, and two grandsons. Darren has been an educator for over 20 years and works for Prince Albert Grand Council. Darren and I have discussed issues in education and in particular First Nations education. Darren is passionate about providing quality education to First Nations children, and I admire the hard work and dedication he demonstrates. Darren and I support as many local events as we can. And, Mr. Speaker, I admire Darren's dedication for Prince Albert with his involvement with the local Kinsmen Club and their hard work with fundraising and investment in many important projects for Prince Albert. Darren and I are also very sports minded and enjoy playing sports ourselves as well as watching our children participate in sports.

It is an honour to stand here today to represent Prince Albert Northcote. And now if you don't mind, Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell you a little bit about what makes Northcote so special. Prince Albert Northcote is entirely within the city limits of Prince Albert and is on either side of the North Saskatchewan River. North of the river, it goes as far east to the previously-functioning pulp mill, which has many acreages that enjoy the country lifestyle just minutes outside of the city.

[16:30]

Northcote includes the city airport, many parks, the downtown core, post-secondary education, the hospital, First Nations reserve land, and much more. Prince Albert Northcote is home to people from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds, race, religion, and culture.

According to historians, Prince Albert Northcote is referred to as Old Prince Albert because it was the starting of the

settlement of Prince Albert, and many Victorian-style homes are still used including my house that was built in 1909. First Nations and Métis people used to meet on the North Saskatchewan River bank which was called *kistapinānihk*, the gathering place. It is still a gathering place for residents in the community.

This year is a special year in Prince Albert as we are celebrating 150 years as a settlement. Prince Albert developed from a missionary settlement, then into a lumber town, and now it is more known as a jail city since it is home to a federal penitentiary, a women's, men, and youth correctional centres.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of Prince Albert Northcote, I want to discuss some of the issues that the constituents are concerned about. While canvassing for the election, I had the chance to talk to residents about issues they are facing due to poor decisions this government has made. When I asked people if they feel that they are in a better position now than they were in 2007, I get an overwhelming response of no.

The cost of living continues to increase and people are left with less and less every month. This concerns me, and this concerns me more knowing that the province was booming and had record revenues for multiple years. But why are our food banks being used more and more? And why do we think it's okay that almost half of the people using the food bank in Prince Albert are children? This is wrong.

This government has alienated the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in this province. Prince Albert has one of the highest unemployment rates in the province but yet more and more jobs are being eliminated. Many people were left unemployed when laundry services and food services were privatized, which had a major impact for Prince Albert and area residents.

This government has simply ignored or forgotten about Prince Albert. What have they been doing to support us? Residents are concerned that since this government has mismanaged their money that there will be more jobs lost. This government can't solve their financial mismanagement by selling off good mortgage-paying government jobs. These decisions have a major impact on the economy in Prince Albert and impact Prince Albert families.

The other issue, which isn't a new issue, is the fact that Prince Albert needs a second bridge. This is not only a city of Prince Albert issue, but a provincial issue that needs to be addressed. Prince Albert is a primary access point for individuals travelling to northern communities or resort areas. The northern part of this province is rich in tourism, mining, forestry, agriculture, and many other industries. Every spring and summer there are issues with regards to wait times for crossing the bridge because much needed repairs are being completed. If this government is serious about wanting to invest in business, they will assure that businesses north of Prince Albert were accessible.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be one of the loyal, hard-working opposition members in the current legislature, and was honoured when our leader appointed me to be the critic of Social Services, community-based organizations, municipal

relations, provincial disaster assistance program, and forestry. All of these areas are so important. And this will be a big task, but I will work hard to provide proper representation and, when needed, provide constructive criticism.

Social services, Mr. Speaker, is a service that is often provided to the most vulnerable in our community. And I believe that people accessing services from Social Services deserve to be treated with respect. This includes the many youth that are in care and foster parents that work so hard to provide a structured, healthy lifestyle for youth in their care. I think that the Children's Advocate, Mr. Bob Pringle, was accurate with many of the suggestions he listed in his report, and I plan to hold this government accountable to implementing his suggestions.

I have had the opportunity to meet with many community-based organizations in Prince Albert and look forward to meeting with organizations in other regions of the province. One issue that seems to be familiar to most of the organizations is the lack of funding that this province provides so that these organizations can provide the services that the community needs.

Prince Albert Mobile Crisis has been one of those agencies that has suffered due to a lack of funding from this province, which is resulting in them needing to eliminate their daytime crisis services. This is going to have a negative impact on many other agencies in the community, including but not limited to Social Services, Prince Albert Parkland Health Region, and the police services. Having to reduce crisis services available in a community that is well known for many social issues — including drug and alcohol use, high rates of domestic violence, and high rates of suicide — just doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker. Crisis does not have a time frame and can happen in the evening and daytime. And when issues arise, the people of Prince Albert deserve to have trained crisis workers attending to help reduce the level trauma to the victim and anyone else involved.

This government needs to look at the long-term effects of their decisions. I've already started discussions with municipal leaders and look forward to developing relationships with leaders in this province. Issues in small and large communities seem to be abundant and have been ignored by this government for far too long.

Also being the critic for the provincial disaster assistance program will be a great complement since many of these communities worry about having to use the provincial disaster assistance program because the government fails to address issues before they become an emergency. The residents of Prince Albert and the northern communities experienced this last summer with the devastating forest fires that displaced thousands of children and families and put communities in harm's way. Some wonder if the cuts to fire management had an impact to the extent of the devastation, and if there was more invested in prevention and early detection, would we have had the devastation that occurred?

Prince Albert has a history of being a lumber town, but our forestry sector has been mismanaged and abandoned by this Sask Party government. Much more needs to be done to invest in the abundant forestry sector and the workers affected by the

decline. Even though this government has been provided many different options for utilizing this sector, nothing is getting done. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to being a strong voice for the forestry industry.

Mr. Speaker, due to all the issues that have not been addressed, I will not be supporting this empty Throne Speech, and I support the amendment. I look forward to the challenge of the next four years. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the members in the Assembly here today who are sure going to be in for a thrilling speech here for the next 23 minutes or so. But, Mr. Speaker, as is customary in a reply to the Speech from the Throne, I do want to extend some thank yous and some congratulations. First of all, I think congratulations to each and every member that was elected to represent the people from their respective constituencies across the province wherever that may be. I do want to congratulate, on both sides of the House, all of those that ran their campaigns and were successful and are now down in our provincial capital for the next number of years to represent their constituency and their people with the issues that are important to them.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take a minute and congratulate you on your successful election to Speaker, Mr. Speaker. It was a first order of business as we come to this Assembly for the next four years, and I want to take a minute and congratulate you and look forward to serving with you in your capacity as Speaker over the next number of years.

As many others have done, they've extended thank yous to those that have helped them get there, get to this seat to represent the constituents in their constituency, Mr. Speaker. And in Rosthern-Shellbrook, it's no exception, Mr. Speaker. There's many, many individuals that helped on our Saskatchewan Party campaign in that constituency in the months leading up to the election, and in particular during the writ in the last month, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I think of names like Bevra Fee, my campaign manager, Mr. Speaker, and the effort that she made. And many of these people as well are in their jobs, their careers during the day and helping on weekends and evenings and taking days off when they can: Mr. Speaker, Grant Hladun, Lyle Banda. Mr. Speaker, we have Brent Miller. We have Lyle and Rose Fox, Mr. Speaker, Jason Ranger. We have a number of youth that came out, Mr. Speaker, as well, and I just cannot thank them enough on behalf on myself. And I think all of the constituents in Rosthern-Shellbrook for the effort that they made, Mr. Speaker, in running a successful campaign and a successful election in our constituency.

I do also want to take a moment, as many in this House do, to thank our families, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, serving in this Assembly is not an individual effort. It's an effort of people that help you during your election and help you with input and guidance during the time that you're here.

But it's also, Mr. Speaker, indicative of the effort that our

families make as many of us serve away from home days at a time and weeks on end from time to time. And I want to thank my family, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my wife, Krista. I want to thank my two kids, Carter and Taryn for the effort, for allowing me to serve in this constituency on behalf of the people in Rosthern-Shellbrook.

And, Mr. Speaker., I'd also like to thank my father-in-law, Garry Thiel, as well as my parents, Don and June Moe, Mr. Speaker. They have given us a great grounding in our family and allowed us some good guidance in becoming the family that we are. And they have given, along with my late mother-in-law, Karen Thiel, Mr. Speaker, they have given us great role models to model ourselves after in raising our children in the community of Shellbrook.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Throne Speech that was presented to this Assembly and to the people of the province here just a short while ago, Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter a few comments. And there has been some comments about the vision of that Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and I think the vision represents very much where we are as a province at this point in time. But, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech, if you will, is setting out the direction of the government over the next number of weeks, days, and months, Mr. Speaker, and is really a rung in the ladder, if you will, in *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* that we have released as a government a number of years ago, Mr. Speaker. And this Throne Speech again is one more rung in that ladder to achieving those goals in *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* that we released on behalf of the Saskatchewan people.

And I think it's important to remember that document, Mr. Speaker, that came about. It wasn't plucked off a shelf or out of a number of people sitting in a room, but it came about through an extensive consultation process with Saskatchewan people across the province. And I was part of that consultation process, Mr. Speaker, as the member in Rosthern-Shellbrook at that time. And I met with a number of people, and I think we even sent out questionnaires across the constituency to the number of communities, the 11 villages, the five towns, the 15 RMs, Mr. Speaker. And we had some reasonable input that came back to us on how the people of Saskatchewan would like to see their province and their communities in the year 2020 and beyond. And, Mr. Speaker, it's important to remember that this Throne Speech was just part of that plan for growth.

Mr. Speaker, today we had, you know, a number of visitors to their legislature, Mr. Speaker, voicing their concern with respect to a challenge in their community of health care. And, Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time or the first community in rural Saskatchewan that has had challenges in relation to access to medical professionals and relation to access to the medical needs that they may have in their community, Mr. Speaker. I can think of a number of communities in my constituency that have had those same challenges over the last decade or a little bit longer even.

Mr. Speaker, we have three communities that offer health services to a degree in the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook, the first being Rosthern, Mr. Speaker, where we've fluctuated between eight and ten physicians in that community. They have a fully functional hospital in that community and they continue

to function quite well.

Mr. Speaker, we have the community where I live in Shellbrook where we do have a new facility, Mr. Speaker, one of the 13 new facilities that was announced by this government and delivered on by this government. And it's paid for, Mr. Speaker, and it's functioning quite well, Mr. Speaker, with a number of medical professionals that are available, and not without its challenges over the last number of years with some of the framework that we were required to work with over the last number of decades.

[16:45]

And we have Spiritwood, Mr. Speaker, that lost their services in 2006 in the community of Spiritwood and are just now able to regain some of those services, Mr. Speaker, with an up and running daytime model, a collaborative emergency centre, Mr. Speaker, which was new and introduced by this government. I think a lot of the work was done by the member from Biggar-Sask Valley, Mr. Speaker, and continued by the current Rural and Remote Health minister. And the community there now is up and running with six medical professionals operating in that community, Mr. Speaker, from a low of zero just a few short years ago.

Mr. Speaker, this is indicative of many communities across the province where there has been challenges, Mr. Speaker. I think back to the days of trying to recruit physicians and other medical professionals into our community, the days when we had the CAPE [clinicians' assessment and professional enhancement] exam, for example, Mr. Speaker, and we were trying to recruit physicians from basically the seven Commonwealth nations around the world.

Mr. Speaker, it was this government that consulted with communities across the province and made some significant changes, significant changes to our international medical graduates and how we can bring them into the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And it came through consultation with the Saskatchewan Medical Association and others in the sector, Mr. Speaker. And we were finally able to bring in the SIPPA program where now, Mr. Speaker, we've run enough international medical graduates through that program where we are actually now able to recruit physicians from not just the seven Commonwealth nations around the world, but we can now bring them in from a number of different nations all over the world, Mr. Speaker.

And I can think of people from Niger and other areas of Africa, as well as the UK [United Kingdom], that are working now in the community where I live, Mr. Speaker. And much of that is due to the change in the way that we're able to certify our medical professionals in the province of Saskatchewan and in our communities. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, that program is very much a part of why we have now 650 more physicians working in Saskatchewan, working in communities across the province of Saskatchewan, including communities like Rosthern, Spiritwood, and Shellbrook.

Mr. Speaker, another change that has been made with respect to recruiting physicians into our rural communities, Mr. Speaker, has been a number of incentives that have been paid to

physicians, Mr. Speaker, as a return for service, for them to practise in our rural communities, Mr. Speaker. And I know a number of physicians personally that have made use of the cash incentive that is available for a five-year return for service in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, returning their services to not only the primary health care model but also to the emergency services that we all want to offer in many of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the changes that were made to the old CAPE examination, to now the SIPPA process, there's been some changes made, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the number of physicians that we're training within our own institutions here in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, at the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan, we were at a point where we were training 60 undergrad medical students, Mr. Speaker. We've now increased that to 100, Mr. Speaker. And on the residency positions we were training, we had 60 positions open, Mr. Speaker, for residency positions. We've now doubled that to 120, Mr. Speaker. This is the long-term sustainability that we need in our communities, large and small, across the province, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to medical professionals being available to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I couldn't help but think of that today as we had a community in here concerned with the medical access that they have in their community, Mr. Speaker. And I can only say this: there's been other communities that have been challenged with this, and they've worked together with the regional health authority, Mr. Speaker. They've worked together with their MLA. And I know they have an MLA here today, Mr. Speaker, that is representing their views and their wants and their needs, Mr. Speaker, in their community. And I know that we'll be able to find . . . that we will be able to be successful in that community in sustaining our services like we have in many other communities across the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, maybe a couple of comments with respect to the file that I work in, Mr. Speaker, the Advanced Education file here in the province of Saskatchewan. Maybe before I start that, Mr. Speaker, I'd just address a couple of comments that came up earlier with respect to investment in the area that I service and maybe some of the neighbouring areas, some of the neighbouring areas, Mr. Speaker.

We've had a substantial investment in the constituency that I serve, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned the new Parkland integrated health facility that was built there, Mr. Speaker — \$21.4 million of provincial money went into that facility, another 5 or \$6 million from the local community, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, that's bought and paid for. They continue to fundraise for needs that they'll have going down the road. I know they bought an ultrasound machine here not too long ago, Mr. Speaker.

I think of the No. 11 Highway, the twinning the No. 11 Highway between Prince Albert and Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, opening that community up to the South and to the markets that I know the agricultural producers need to the South, Mr. Speaker. Other industries, such as uranium industry, Mr. Speaker, the forestry industry, all utilizing that road as a gateway to the South out of Prince Albert. We often think of Prince Albert as a gateway to the North, but very much, Mr.

Speaker, they need access to the southern markets as well to export our resources out of our northern communities.

I think of the long-term care centre in Prince Albert. I was at the grand opening a couple years ago at Pineview Terrace, Mr. Speaker. I think of the planning dollars for the Victoria Hospital that were supplied, Mr. Speaker, as that is my hospital, living about 25 miles from the community of Prince Albert. And when my . . . I think I mentioned this a number of different speeches, but when my son breaks his ankle, that's the hospital that we go to to put a cast on.

Mr. Speaker, there was additions to the correctional centre in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. And all of the communities . . . As I mentioned, I represent about 15 RMs across the province. I represent 11 villages now, Mr. Speaker, as well as five towns. And all of those municipal governments, Mr. Speaker, are thankful for the increases in municipal revenue sharing that have occurred. It was long asked for. It was even promised from time to time. But, Mr. Speaker, it was this government that took action and provided that for our municipal governments across the province, whether they be a city, a village, a town, Mr. Speaker, or a rural municipality. And we are thanked for that each and every time I sit down with those individuals.

Mr. Speaker, with respect as I said to the file that I serve on with the Advanced Education, I have the distinct honour to serve and to work with some of our best and brightest across the province, Mr. Speaker, whether that be boards or deans or other individuals at our universities, at our Saskatchewan Polytechnic, at our regional colleges, some other institutions such as the Gabriel Dumont Institute, Mr. Speaker, the SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], and a number of others, Mr. Speaker. And it's a true honour to work with those individuals in a productive manner to ensure that we are able to train our best and brightest in our communities' future, our province's future so that we can ensure that we will have a strong economy and strong communities in a strong province well into the future.

Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud to say that since the Saskatchewan Party has been in charge of the people of Saskatchewan's investment, that we have supplied a full six and a half billion dollars of investment to our post-secondary education sector. Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, I had an opportunity . . . This represents a 61 per cent increase in funding to our post-secondary education sector.

It includes almost a half a billion dollars in infrastructure funding, Mr. Speaker. It includes things, investment in the Academic Health Sciences Building at the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, a very important part in ensuring that that college is successful into the future, that it's able to expand from 60 to 100, Mr. Speaker, in undergrad seats, as I said, or 60 to 120 in the residency seats, but also able to expand other colleges there, Mr. Speaker, as we've expanded our nursing training seats in the province of Saskatchewan by some 300. Mr. Speaker, it's all necessary to have the infrastructure to house those types of expansions.

As I said yesterday as well, this includes about a 350 per cent increase in student supports and includes the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, Mr. Speaker, \$500, a \$500 scholarship

to each and every person for four years that's attending a post-secondary institute. Mr. Speaker, it includes the introduction, a promise made, I might add, and a promise kept by this government, of the Saskatchewan grant for education savings.

Mr. Speaker, it also includes \$1 billion, over \$1 billion now invested in the graduate retention program. This, Mr. Speaker, is almost 115,000 people in the province of Saskatchewan are partaking in that graduate retention program. Mr. Speaker, almost 10 per cent, almost 10 per cent of our population in this province is now enrolled in that program, Mr. Speaker. That means that a number of people in this room right here, Mr. Speaker — we have about 60 people; there's quite likely six of us that are enrolled in that program. I'm not one of them; hopeful my son will be.

Mr. Speaker, again, as I said, this has been a true and distinct honour to work with these institutions across the province of Saskatchewan in furthering our efforts and working to ensure that our children and our students, as they attend our post-secondary institutions, are not only having access to that quality education that we all want but they're also, Mr. Speaker, receiving a quality education across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I think back. I have the opportunity . . . And we're getting close here again to graduation and convocations season, if you will, in the province of Saskatchewan. And we have the opportunity to see some of the convocations at our institutions such as the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, Sask Poly.

But I would say this, Mr. Speaker. Some of the most moving graduations that I get to attend, and I know a number of other individuals will attend them as well, are some of our regional college graduations, Mr. Speaker. And you see somebody my age or sometimes older, with two or three children . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Maybe they're grandchildren. But with two or three children that come off the stage — on a serious note, Mr. Speaker — and they're getting their grade 12 diploma.

And you have a chat with them and you ask, why are you getting your diploma now as opposed to earlier? And there's stories there, Mr. Speaker. And the fact of the matter is, is the determination that you see in those individuals' eyes, Mr. Speaker, when they receive that diploma. And you ask them where they're going, and they're going on to some further education or they have a job or a career lined up in the workforce, Mr. Speaker. It's truly rewarding, and I think it's very indicative and reminding, reminds me why we're doing this, Mr. Speaker, is to improve people's lives, to improve their outcomes, and to improve family lives. And that's how we break this cycle, Mr. Speaker. It's through education and it's through encouraging individuals to improve their career choices, their family opportunities, and their life in general. And it's something I look forward to in the next number of days.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I maybe would just chat a little bit about, with respect to the Speech from the Throne, on where we're going with the file that I have the honour to serve in, and that is the Advanced Education file. And it has to do with the graduate

retention program, Mr. Speaker, and the expansion of that, the expansion of that graduate retention program and allowing those individuals to use \$10,000 of their graduate retention benefits to be able to purchase their first home. Mr. Speaker, when you think of individuals coming out of whatever the program may be, one of our polytechnic programs, our regional colleges, our universities, Mr. Speaker, it is a real opportunity for them to have access to that kind of capital to put towards the purchase of their first home. And, Mr. Speaker, I think this truly completes some of the circle, if you will.

Mr. Speaker, we have individuals coming out of our education systems, our best and brightest, our children quite often, our friends that are coming out with the determination that I spoke of earlier and giving them the opportunities to set up shop in one of our great Saskatchewan communities, Mr. Speaker. Set up shop just not for the short term, but to find a career in that community, to own a home in that community for their family, Mr. Speaker, and to ensure that they're able to become part of that community and ensure the success of that community, whether it be Shellbrook, whether it be Strasbourg, whether it be Alida, or whether it be Weyburn for instance, Mr. Speaker.

This is just another rung in the ladder, if you will, if I could relate back to our Saskatchewan plan for growth, to ensure that our communities are the strongest and filled with the best and brightest that we can possibly have here in the province of Saskatchewan. And I think in doing that, Mr. Speaker, that ensures that if our communities are strong in this province, that in turn the province of Saskatchewan will remain strong.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is the goal of the Saskatchewan plan for growth. That's the goal of the members on this side of the House, and in fairness I think it's the goal of the majority of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, is to ensure that our communities are filled with our best and brightest, ensure that they're strong into the future so that we can ensure that our province will be strong and vibrant, a strong economy, strong communities so that we're able to partner with our government, whether it be on a integrated health centre, Mr. Speaker, like we did 13 of them not long ago, whether it be able to partner in a Moose Jaw Hospital, Mr. Speaker, whether it be able to partner with foundations to furnish facilities like the Saskatchewan Hospital, Mr. Speaker, the children's hospital. These are all important facilities, not just to the communities that they're in but to the province as a whole. So, Mr. Speaker, it's a true honour for me on behalf of the people of Rosthern-Shellbrook to serve in this Assembly and to bring their wishes to the government side, Mr. Speaker, and to all in this House.

And, Mr. Speaker, with those comments I would like to indicate I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker. I won't be supporting any of the amendments that have been made, but I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne. And I thank you very much for the time here this afternoon.

The Speaker: — It now being 5 p.m., this Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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