



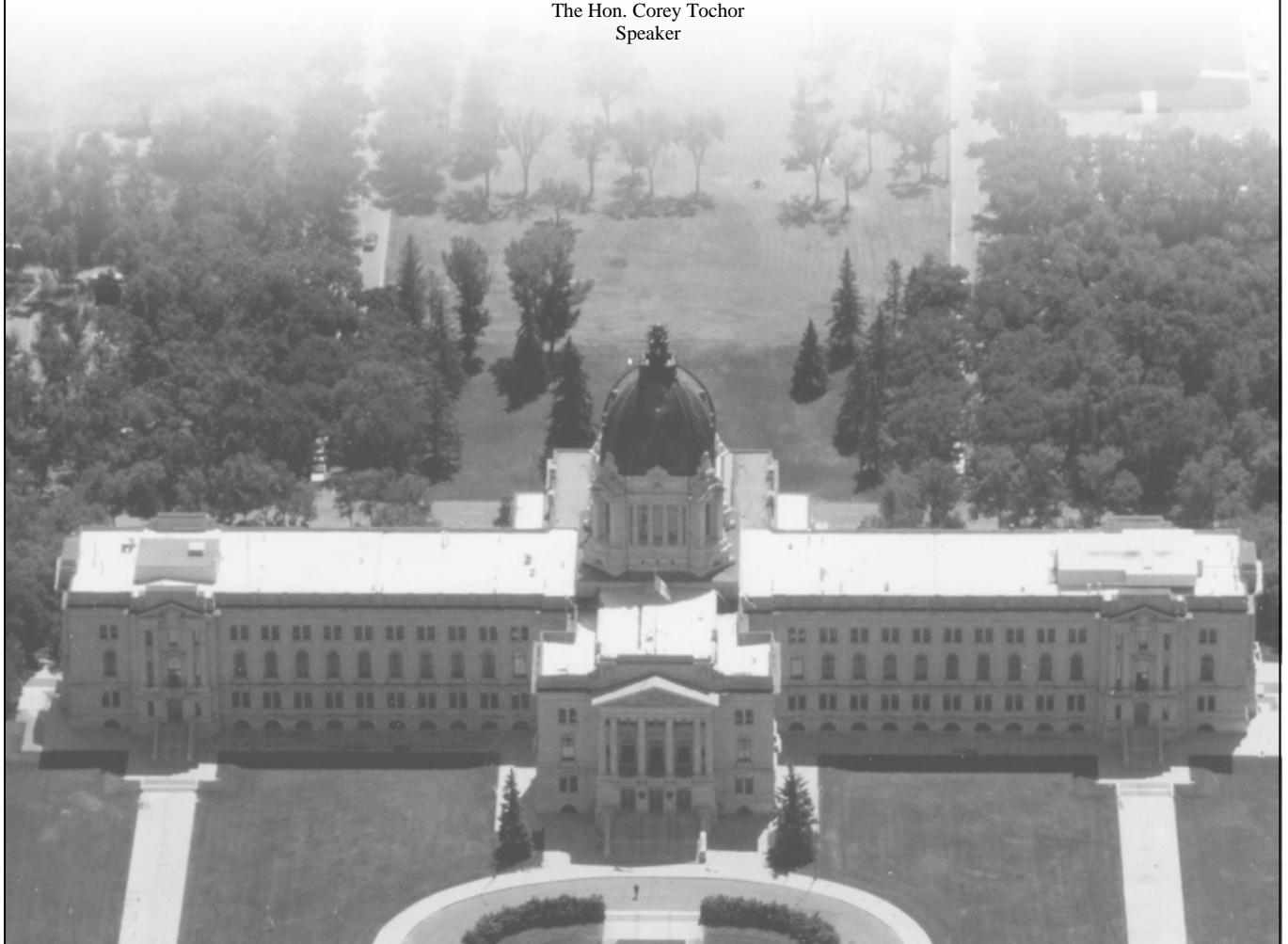
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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
2nd Session — 28th Legislature

Speaker — Hon. Corey Tochor
Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
Leader of the Opposition — Nicole Sarauer

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Marit , Hon. David — Wood River (SP)	Vacant — Kindersley

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Vacant — 1

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues. It is an honour to be able to introduce a very, very special friend of the province of Saskatchewan today who has joined us in your gallery. He's also in the company of some Saskatchewan leaders that will be no stranger to members of this House. But it's a pleasure for me to introduce Mr. Huseyin Arslan who's the executive chairman of AGT Food and Ingredients. He is joined today, Mr. Speaker, by Murad Al-Katib, the president and chief executive officer of AGT, also again well known to members of this House, as well as Murad's brother, Omer.

I had the chance to enjoy Omer's company last night at the dinner where we hosted the heads of missions. He is an honorary consul for Turkey, as well as very much involved in AGT. And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell members of the House who may not know this is that he was a pretty accomplished bass player in the rock band May Run, which some of us are old enough to remember. It was good to see a picture of the band he had with him on his phone. I had a hard time picking him out though, Mr. Speaker. Things have changed since then.

Later today there will be a very special ceremony at Government House. We will honour Huseyin with an award called the Saskatchewan Distinguished Service Award. This is a recognition, an award that recognizes non-residents of Saskatchewan who have made a powerful and outstanding contribution to our province. And his recognition, Huseyin's recognition, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest is long overdue. He has made a major impact in Saskatchewan. He is based in Turkey and has been involved in the global pulse and food business for the last three decades.

It was back in the late 1990s when Huseyin met a young Murad Al-Katib, who was at that point working for the Saskatchewan Trade Export Partnership. The two men struck up a friendship which developed into a business partnership. And so he is one of the founding shareholders of SaskCan Pulse Trading; that was the forerunner to AGT Food and Ingredients. And members of the Assembly of course are familiar with AGT's story. It's grown into a \$2 billion company. It has 2,000 employees worldwide, 250 employees right here in the province of Saskatchewan, 40 processing facilities on five continents.

Under Murad's leadership, AGT has been at the centre of a massive expansion in the pulse industry in our province. The company is a major buyer, as we all know, of Saskatchewan lentils and peas and beans and chickpeas, shipping to 120 countries, including Turkey where our exports, by the way, our exports to Turkey are up 2,600 per cent since 2007, during this decade of growth. By any measure, this is a world-class company, Mr. Speaker.

Murad was named World Entrepreneur of the Year just a few months ago, the latest in a number of very well-deserved accolades that we have marked in this Assembly together. But he'll be the first to tell you that AGT would not have risen to the heights that it has without Huseyin Arslan. He has gone about his work, Huseyin has, without fanfare. He is humble. He is hard working, scrupulously honest in his endeavours. And today we are grateful to have the opportunity to honour him on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan for his great contribution to us.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming Huseyin and our guests to the Legislative Assembly today.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the Premier in welcoming Murad Al-Katib, Huseyin Arslan, and Omer Al-Katib, who I actually had the opportunity to meet at Government House yesterday, to their Legislative Assembly and congratulate them for all that they've done.

Huseyin, congratulations on receiving the Saskatchewan Distinguished Service Award later today. That's an honour that's very well deserved.

And to all of you also, congratulations on being shortlisted for the federal innovation superclusters initiative. That's very well deserved as well, and I look forward to hearing about you eventually being awarded the final prize.

You've done a lot both individually but also as an organization in supporting and promoting business and development in Saskatchewan, so thank you for all that you do. And I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming all of you to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of this Assembly, it's my pleasure to welcome to this province, seated in the Speaker's gallery, is the Hon. Michael Veitch, member of the Legislative Council from New South Wales, Australia. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Veitch is a member of the Australian Labour Party. He's shadow minister for Primary Industries, shadow minister for Lands, and shadow minister for western New South Wales. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this honourable Assembly join me in welcoming Mr. Veitch to Saskatchewan's legislature.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the minister in welcoming Mr. Veitch to our Legislative Assembly. He's on a tour of our building and meeting with different people. And it's always a pleasure to have people from abroad come to Saskatchewan, and we gain a lot of knowledge and experience from our conversations. And I look forward . . . We'll be having lunch, I understand, and look forward to having that chance to talk further. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming Michael Veitch to our Assembly. Thank you.

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

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce Kimball Siebert seated in the Speaker's gallery and his children Julia and Nicholas, who come from the village of Borden. Kimball and his wife, Jodeine, have six children and are repopulating the small village of Borden. So welcome to your Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce a guest to you in your gallery. It's Don Fyrk. He's the reeve of Buckland. And Don is in his second term as the reeve of Buckland, but he's also a retired SaskTel employee. So he's done a lot of work for our province; he works hard for the residents and he does a lot of volunteering.

And Don is also married to Wendy who is also a retired SaskTel worker. I had the opportunity to work with Wendy when I worked at SaskTel. She's very passionate about rescuing animals, and she does a wonderful job with that in the Buckland area as well. And so I'd like to ask everybody to welcome Mr. Fyrk to his Assembly. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it is my pleasure to introduce a friend, a neighbour, and possibly a colleague, I understand. So now I know why you're here, Don. Don Fyrk, reeve of Buckland, welcome. You assisted me and helped me during the flooding of Highway No. 2 a few years ago, so I do admire your work. So I hope you stay up there, Don. So welcome to your Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand in my place today to present the petition around the permanent closure of Main Street access to Highway No. 1 in the town of Balgonie, Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows:

Respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan

take the necessary steps and actions to leave the west-in, west-out driving access for vehicles in and out of Balgonie, Saskatchewan at the intersection of Highway No. 1 and Main Street in Balgonie, Saskatchewan.

We also respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan put up a locked gate on the apron between the eastbound lanes and the westbound lanes of Highway No. 1 and Balgonie, Saskatchewan at the Main Street intersection. This gate would allow emergency services access to the eastbound lanes of Highway No. 1 at the Main Street in Balgonie, Saskatchewan intersection, but would not allow the public access to cross the east- and westbound lanes.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition, and many, many other pages as it attached itself to this petition, are primarily from Balgonie, and I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. I would 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 of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Melfort, Star City, Kinistino. I do so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. And the people signing this petition want to bring to your attention the following: Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals, even those outside the province, to make unlimited donations to our province's political parties. But you know, in Saskatchewan, the people here deserve to live in a fair province where all voices are equal and money can't influence politics. But we know that over the past 10 years, the Saskatchewan Party has received \$12.61 million in corporate donations. Of that, \$2.87 million came from companies outside Saskatchewan.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan call on the government, the Sask Party, to overhaul Saskatchewan's campaign finance laws to end out-of-province donations, to put a ban on donations from corporations and unions, and to put a donation limit on individual donations.

And, Mr. Speaker, people signing this petition come from Saskatoon, Regina, and Eastend. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to stand in my place today to present a petition to reopen the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre. The individuals that signed this petition here want to draw the attention of the fact that the closure of the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre left 15 people out of work, and financial impacts of their families and the local businesses.

But also the closure hurt the elders within the community that help the inmates during their odd jobs. And the closure of the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre hurt the families of the inmates . . . while learning new skills, while working with skilled employers to obtain employment upon release.

And also the closure took the inmates far away from their families, which makes visitation difficult or non-existent at all. And the closure also took away from the inmates to get treatment and obtain training tickets while there. And this is so important within our northern communities to have this facility. I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to immediately reopen the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre to better our community for future generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals that signed this particular petition are from the community of Buffalo Narrows. And I do so submit.

[10:15]

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to stop the cuts to our kids' classrooms. Those who signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: to the fact that the Sask Party has cut at least \$674 in government funding for every student, every student across Saskatchewan; to the fact that the Sask Party hiked education property taxes by \$67 million while still cutting \$54 million out of our classrooms and that, even though the Sask Party is making us all pay more, our kids are actually getting less; and that the Sask Party cuts mean that students will lose much needed supports in their classrooms, including funding for buses for kindergartners and programs to help children with special needs and autism.

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, the undersigned, call upon the government to reverse the senseless cuts to our kids' classrooms and stop making families, teachers, and everyone who works in our education system pay the price for the Sask Party's mismanagement, scandal, and waste.

Those who signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, reside in Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Wildfires in Saskatchewan

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to acknowledge all those affected by the recent wildfires in Saskatchewan. The fires recently, tragically claimed the life of James Hargrave, a 34-year-old volunteer firefighter.

James, who ranches on the Saskatchewan-Alberta border, selflessly risked to help his neighbours in their time of need. Seventy-two-year-old Eddie Riehl was also injured in this fire, is now suffering third-degree burns in Calgary. He is being treated. Our thoughts and prayers are with James and Eddie and their families at this difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, two of my own constituents were also injured in these fires. Ron and Evan Wedrick are the husband and son of my constituency assistant, Twila. They were trapped in by the blaze when the fire shifted, and both are being treated in Calgary for third-degree burns. Mr. Speaker, I spoke with Twila yesterday and mentioned I was making this statement. She asked that I thank everyone for their generosity and their kindness in her family's time of need. Even now, she is thinking of others.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that the true measure of people's strength is how they are raised to face adversity. I am extremely proud and grateful of these heroic actions from the firefighters, emergency crews, SaskPower crews, and the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], and the volunteers from Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Lives Lived and Lost

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, we lost a true Canadian icon last week. Gord Downie inspired many through his music, his poetry, and his advocacy for social justice and true reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

His work and quiet activism encouraged people to reflect, engage in the politics of hope, and to appreciate the pretty things: constellations slowly revealing themselves, sunlight colouring a room as it passed through a bottle of olive oil, and the preciousness of life.

Mr. Speaker, we don't need more reminders of just how precious life is. Last week, James Hargrave, a volunteer firefighter, lost his life while he bravely fought to save his community.

And, Mr. Speaker, while there are many others who have lost their lives since we last met who would merit the honour of mention here, in our own party this summer, we lost three dedicated members — men who helped to build our party, who helped to build our movement, and who dedicated so much of

themselves to building a stronger and fairer Saskatchewan.

Fred Kress, John Black, and Stephen Moore were taken from us, from their families, too soon and too young. These men are missed, but they have each left a legacy of change effected and people inspired. Thank you.

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

Remembering Gord Downie

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past week, Canada lost the great music icon, Gord Downie. Surrounded by his loved ones, Gord passed away after his battle with terminal brain cancer at the age of 53.

Mr. Speaker, Gord had a very passionate and inspiring love for this country, its people, and its potential. What he will be best remembered for is leading one of the greatest Canadian groups of all time, The Tragically Hip.

I had the opportunity to meet Gord on a number of occasions, including having The Hip play at a club I co-owned called The Venue on their first tour across Canada.

Not knowing who the band really was at the time, how influential they would become, we paid them the door, which I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, was not very much.

Though we knew this day would come, many Canadians are feeling a great sense of pain, a sense of loss, and a sense of hope, that one day we will live in a society that Gord dreamt for us.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of this Assembly, I'd like to extend our deepest condolences to Gord's wife and family through this difficult time. It was Gord's wish that we could all stand together as one, continue to build relationships of reconciliation in our country, and continue to love this nation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Support for Survivors During Violence Prevention Week

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's Violence Prevention Week, and Saskatchewan continues to hold the dubious distinction as the province with the highest rates of domestic violence in Canada. In fact Saskatchewan's rate is double the national average. And as all members here know, these rates are nothing short of tragic.

As a province we need to step up and do all that we can to prevent violence and to support survivors. I want to recognize the work of the Regina Community Partnership Against Violence, a partnership that includes the provincial association of transition homes and services, the Office of Gendered Violence-Prevention Strategies and the Lifelong Learning Centre at the University of Regina, as well as SOFIA [Support of Families in Affliction] House, Regina Transition House, and the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] of Regina.

Together they work to create inclusive, safe communities here in Regina and across the province.

I would also like to recognize STOPS to Violence [Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions to Violence] Sask, the Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan, and the other organizations across the province.

Mr. Speaker, we know the rates of violence in Saskatchewan are a heartbreaking reality. Steps have been pushed for and that this Assembly has taken are encouraging, but we know that people are still facing desperate situations and we must, we must continue this work. I ask that all members join me today in recognizing Violence Prevention Week and support the call to step up and do all that we can to prevent violence and to support survivors. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Usher of the Black Rod

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to speak to the Assembly about the Usher of the Black Rod. This tradition dates back to 14th century England when the Usher of the Black Rod guarded the doors to the chapel where the knights assembled.

In the fall of 2013, Saskatchewan incorporated the Usher of the Black Rod tradition into our parliamentary practice. Adding the rich tradition of the usher, our government has made it a priority to invite a military veteran to serve in this role. Jeffrey Dickson, a military veteran of over 24 years, has been the usher since the fall of 2015 and recently stepped down from the position. On behalf of all the members of this Assembly, I'd like to thank him for his service.

Mr. Speaker, our new usher is Lieutenant Colonel Gwen Bourque. Lieutenant Colonel Bourque is an accomplished veteran who joined the military in 1992. She is now the commanding officer of 38 Service Battalion. A mother of two daughters, she was deployed on a seven-month tour of Afghanistan in 2006, and in 2014 she was awarded the Lieutenant Governor's Military Service Pin.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members of this Assembly, I want to thank Lieutenant Colonel Bourque for her service and sacrifice during her military career and welcome her to the Assembly as the new Usher of the Black Rod. Thank you.

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

Grand Opening of New Gallery in Saskatoon

Mr. Olason: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend marked the official grand opening of the Remai Modern gallery in Saskatoon. The building stands four stories high with 11 galleries displaying up to 8,000 works of art. It will captivate and inspire the minds of all who walk through its doors. The gallery offers a unique experience for all, as it has so much to offer to Saskatchewan's diverse cultures and communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of the role the government played in

developing this project, contributing over \$17 million in funding. I would also like to thank the Government of Canada, the city of Saskatoon, and all the corporate and private donors who were involved in the opening of this gallery, especially the Frank and Ellen Remai Foundation. Ellen Remai contributed over \$100 million in donations to the museum. Mr. Speaker, the museum plays host to the world's largest collection of Picasso linocut prints worth \$20 million.

This truly was a collaborative effort for many to finally make this dream a reality. I look forward to the impact this gallery will make on the art community across this province. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the hard-working staff, donors, and contributors on the grand opening of the Remai Modern gallery. Thank you.

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

Saskatchewan Home to World's Largest Potash Mine

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in the House today and announce that the world's largest potash mine is now open, and it's located right here in Saskatchewan. On October 12th the PotashCorp completed a \$3 billion expansion on its Rocanville mine located just a short distance northwest of Rocanville. This expansion more than doubles the capacity of the mine from 3 million to six and a half million tonnes and doubles the workforce to more than 750 employees.

Mr. Speaker, to truly understand the size of this operation, I'd like to share a few facts with the Assembly. The underground footprint to the mining operation is approximately the size of Saskatoon. The depth of the Scissors Creek shaft is twice the size of the CN Tower. 130 kilometres of conveyor belts have been installed underground, which is enough to stretch almost from Regina to Moose Jaw and back. Over the span of one week, over 360 000 tonnes of ore were hoisted, which is over 50 000 tonnes a day. It is also estimated there are at least 69 years of potash reserves available at this mine.

This government is committed to maintaining a competitive business climate, and that is why the *Mining Journal's* world bank report ranked Saskatchewan as number one in the world for places to invest resource capital. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating PotashCorp, its employees and builders, on the expansion of PCS [Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc.] Rocanville mine. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Intent of Bill 40 and Ownership of Crown Corporations

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, it's the first day back. It's the one-year anniversary of the Sask Party introducing Bill 40. It's been one year since Saskatchewan people first started fighting this scheme to sell off our Crowns, and it's been five and a half months since the Premier told reporters he needed Bill 40 to scrap STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company]. But it's

only been two days since he claimed to have heard Saskatchewan people and agreed to reverse the bill.

Mr. Speaker, that bill, along with their budget, were at the centre of the Sask Party's cluster of fiascos that left Saskatchewan people paying the price and not knowing what their government would do next. Have they really heard Saskatchewan people? If yes, when will they announce they're bringing back STC and when will they reverse the rest of their heartless cuts and unfair tax hikes?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin with a congratulation to my hon. friend on her position as Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, she, I think, is the seventh Leader of the Opposition that I've had the honour of facing since 2007. And I'm hopeful that the NDP [New Democratic Party] have saved their best for last, Mr. Speaker, at least in terms of my time here.

Mr. Speaker, I should also want to congratulate the new member for Saskatoon Fairview, having won the by-election, as well as the member for Saskatoon Meewasin on his leadership campaign, and the decision of the member for Regina Rosemont to not run as well in the leadership campaign. I think there's going to be a lot of interesting dynamics going on politically in the Legislative Assembly on both sides of the House.

And to the Leader of the Opposition, I thank her for her question, Mr. Speaker. It's true that Bill 40 was the intent of the government to define what privatization was, because the NDP had left that part out of the Crown protection Act. Mr. Speaker, we chose the World Bank definition, which indicated that privatization meant the 51 per cent sale of a Crown or a partnership representing 51 per cent.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people of the province were pretty clear with MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and with me directly over this year that they didn't agree with that definition, that the definition that the people of Saskatchewan held to in terms of privatization was the sale of any portion of a Crown corporation or a partnership involving any portion of a Crown corporation. And so, Mr. Speaker, what we did yesterday was simply recognize the fact that it is the people of the province that own the Crown corporation, and it's their definition that should matter more than a World Bank definition or the government's from Bill 40. And so we've made the decision to repeal that portion of the bill, Mr. Speaker, in a reflection of exactly what we heard from Saskatchewan people.

[10:30]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I wish I could say that I was shocked that the Premier dodged the question about saving STC, but I'm not. And it's the people of Saskatchewan that owned STC as well.

The problem is, Mr. Speaker, with the Sask Party, their stories always seem to change. Either they're listening to

Saskatchewan people or they're not. Either the Premier was saying what he really thinks when he told reporters they needed Bill 40 to scrap STC or not. And, Mr. Speaker, with their growing scandals, the contradictions are even worse.

In November of 2016, the Premier assured everyone that he had the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] under control. "I was there through this whole process. I know what was intended and what wasn't." But by June of 2017, his office was saying he was "not involved in any of the negotiations regarding the GTH." Mr. Speaker, which is it? Was he there for the whole process or was he not involved at all?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First, let me just say with respect to STC, the government's decision stands. There won't be any change to the decision, Mr. Speaker. I would point out again for members of the House and those perhaps viewing question period this morning that the per passenger subsidy from taxpayers for STC was almost \$100 per individual, per passenger. The forecast subsidy for STC, Mr. Speaker, was going to be upwards of 85 to \$100 million over the next five years in order to keep it operating because people simply were not taking the bus.

I'm happy to report to members though that, in the wake of the wind-down of STC, we have seen companies apply for operating permits that will serve Regina, Fort Qu'Appelle — that's DiCal Transport — Balcarres, Melville, Yorkton; starting in November, Kamsack and Canora. Also Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Estevan, Yorkton, Meadow Lake, and Swift Current to be served by Rider Express, Forward. Alsaskbus Services will serve Saskatoon and Alsask to Calgary. The list goes on, Mr. Speaker. The private sector and others are providing these routes.

And in the meantime, we're going to be able to take the money that would have gone — the \$100 million that would have cost taxpayers — to subsidize STC and keep it operating, and do things rather instead: investing in highways, Mr. Speaker, in health care, in education. These should be the priorities of the government going forward, and they are our priorities going forward.

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

Role of the Global Transportation Hub in Land Acquisition

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That non-answer to a serious question about the GTH reminds me of the 110 times that the member from Meadow Lake popped up in QP [question period] and repeated the Premier's lines; sometimes he added a few of his own. But then he very briefly joined the race to replace the Premier for real. Then he threw the Premier, the former minister who was plagued by scandal, the cabinet, his whole caucus under the bus: "I defended the position of the government and what I'm saying . . . today is what that position is going to change to, if I'm premier."

Mr. Speaker, to the newest minister responsible for the GTH:

can he tell the people of Saskatchewan his own personal feelings about this scandal, or will he just "defend" the position of the government too?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment, GTH, SaskPower, and SaskWater.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is obviously an issue that we take very seriously on this side of the House. That's why with respect to the questions that have been raised around the Global Transportation Hub, the government did take the step of providing access to the Provincial Auditor of any and all information or individuals that her office wished to speak to. That's why, Mr. Speaker, as well with respect to the review that's been done by the RCMP, the government has co-operated fully in that, Mr. Speaker. And I believe from media reports that review is complete, and it's in the hands of prosecutions in the Justice department in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Global Transportation Hub, we certainly do take the findings of the Provincial Auditor seriously. That's why the Global Transportation Hub has implemented all of those recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, and I would offer to the member and to all members the opportunity that I took two weeks ago to actually go out to the Global Transportation Hub, take a tour, see what's actually happening out there, see the nearly \$500 million in private investment, see the over 800 jobs that have been created, the 1,800 construction jobs that have been created. This is still early days of this operation of a generational project, and we're going to do all we can to ensure that it is a success going forward.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I actually have been out at the GTH a couple times this summer, and I think the member opposite forgot to mention the tumbleweeds that were blowing across the highway on the open, wide open empty spaces that still exist in the GTH.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to try and be a little more direct here. During perhaps what was the most revealing and astonishing press conference that many of us have ever seen, the member from Meadow Lake who — now again after day after day defending the government — turned these daily eye rolls and scoffing and "it's been fully canvassed" into "If this happened when I was premier and a minister were responsible, they would have been fired." Period. End of story. He even indicated that the senior Sask Party operative who was behind the whole thing should be fired too.

So to either the new Minister Responsible for the GTH or the new Minister Responsible for the Economy: should that minister have been fired, and should that senior staff person also be held accountable?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the GTH.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comment about tumbleweeds blowing across, Mr. Speaker. That certainly wasn't the opinion of Tiffany Melvin, the president of the North American Strategy for Competitiveness, who was in Regina a year ago. She has worked with inland ports for nearly 20 years and emphatically stated her amazement of how thoughtful, progressive, and aligned the Global Transportation Hub is, and the progress that has been made in a very short amount of time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you know, certainly we're engaged in a vigorous leadership contest, and people that are running for the leadership are going to state their positions, Mr. Speaker. The same is true on the other side. I'm glad to see there's actually candidates that have declared a year . . . It took a year after Cam Broten left through the ejector seat from this House, but finally after a year they finally have some candidates, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to work all . . . do all that we can to ensure that we are not only being accountable for the decisions of the past, and we have worked through that process and are working through that process, but also to work hard to ensure working with the boards, the management, and the staff, that the Global Transportation Hub is a success into the future, a generational project for this province, Mr. Speaker. And I would encourage the members opposite to join us in that.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the minister calls this early days. The GTH has been in place for almost seven years now, and yet we see an operation across the way on Tower Road where we see a new transportation hub being developed by private individuals on the CN [Canadian National] railway that's growing faster and more exponentially than anything that's happening at the GTH. So you've got to wonder what's going on. The Sask Party is not answering our questions.

But earlier this summer we got another peek behind the curtain. An email exchange between one of the Premier's senior staff and the Premier was accidentally sent to a journalist. In that email — the Premier is using his partisan email account on a server housed at Sask Party offices, the same account that he promised to stop using — the two are trying to control and tamp out questions into the Sask Party GTH scandal. Mr. Speaker, is the minister aware of any other communication about the GTH where he or anyone else in the government or Executive Council used a non-government email account for government business, and when did he stop using his personal email accounts for government business?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the GTH.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's just important to note that of the 800 acres . . . sorry, pardon me, 1,800 acres comprised at the Global Transportation Hub, over 700 acres in seven years have already been sold — \$485 million in private sector investment that has created 860 full-time jobs, 1,800 construction jobs. And again, Tiffany Melvin, president of the North American Strategy for Competitiveness, has stated emphatically her amazement at

how thoughtful, progressive, and aligned the Global Transportation Hub is and the progress made in a short period of time.

Now we're all eager to see ongoing success as quickly as possible. I think that that is in the best interests of the Global Transportation Hub, the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan. This is a generational project that is going to create and continue to create jobs. It has already contributed, I believe, \$15 million in personal income taxes by people that are employed at the Global Transportation Hub. \$17 million in diesel fuel tax has been created, revenue, Mr. Speaker, for the Government of Saskatchewan. We want to work hard to ensure that this is a success going forward, and that's what we're all committed to doing.

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

Usage of Private Email Accounts

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They've been using private emails to avoid transparency right from the start. According to a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] story, in 2008 the now Finance minister who, with no sense of irony, used her private email account to admit she knew she was breaking government rules and said, and I quote, "Blah . . . Blah . . . Blah. Lots of fun. I really don't care what they think!"

Mr. Speaker, when did this minister last use her personal email account to conduct government business, government business? And when will she commit to only using her government email account for government business from now on?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is referencing an email with a constituent of mine who I knew before we ever formed government quite frankly. I know him and his wife. I know about his family. He knows about mine. We had been corresponding on issues prior to us ever forming government. We continue to correspond on my non-government email. There was a short period of time that we did employ this gentleman, and that's because when we did form government, I was minister of Social Services.

Shortly after, the Children's Advocate released a report called *A Breach of Trust*. *A Breach of Trust* revealed how badly the NDP had neglected the child welfare in this province. It was in a crisis. It cited 21 children in one foster home. It compared another foster home to a puppy mill.

Mr. Speaker, I was devastated. It was a crisis, and I was frustrated, absolutely frustrated at that time of the shape and the neglect that the NDP had for child welfare. There was children at risk, so I continued to . . . I didn't even give a second thought to email servers. My non-government email is subjected to the same legislation as the government email.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, these are serious questions about transparency, accountability, and following the rules. And

members opposite are laughing while we ask these questions.

[10:45]

So is the Premier willing to lead by example? Last May, he said he would stop using his personal email account on a partisan server housed at the Sask Party office for government business. But we learned this summer that he was still using it. So will the Premier drop the terrible, ridiculous excuses, commit to keeping his promise to “send all of my government-related emails on the government account,” and will he give the Privacy Commissioner access to his partisan email account for full review?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well the short answer, Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes, absolutely, Mr. Speaker. In fact I think I indicated in the scrum when this issue was first raised in the spring that there might be an occasion where I would still use, inadvertently use a non-government email. Mr. Speaker, there’ve been occasions when the government server has been down and I have to continue to conduct government business.

There are two important reasons why we would want to use a government email account, and there’s also these same reasons why we’d want to ensure that any non-government emails were in compliance. And that would be, number one, that they could be FOI’d [freedom of information]. Mr. Speaker, if the email came either from a non-government account or a government account, it should be FOI-able. Mr. Speaker, they know that I’ve been using this account because in fact they got it from an FOI. They read that into the record. And so, Mr. Speaker, it has met the mark in that respect.

Secondly, it would be important for us to use government emails or ensure that non-government emails are available for Provincial Archives. We have a duty as members of the Executive Council, when we leave politics, to make sure the documents that we have rest with the people of the province, because they don’t belong to us as individuals.

That member, she prefaced her question with wanting all of us to act in terms of what was accountable and transparent. She is the leader of a party who is, who claims the membership of eight former NDP cabinet ministers who have yet, from 2006, to turn over their personal . . . sorry, their government documents from their basement to the Provincial Archives. Those documents are not the purview and the possession of the NDP.

Well now they’re laughing at that. Now that deputy leader is laughing at that. You know why, Mr. Speaker? Because these rules and the importance of accountability, they never apply to the NDP. There are eight former NDP ministers, one of them a Justice minister who presided over the Murdoch Carriere scandal, by the way, who has not, who has not turned over his files, the government’s files, as a minister, to Provincial Archives.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the new leader of the NDP is interested in that transparency and that accountability, will she immediately direct these eight former NDP ministers to comply with the Provincial Archives?

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

Employment and Provincial Economy

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, while they seem to be very proud of their rhetoric, their record is costing Saskatchewan people jobs. Numbers released just this week, last week, show across the rest of the country there are fewer people relying on employment insurance than there were last year at the same time. Our neighbours to the west actually saw a staggering 25 per cent drop. But Saskatchewan is one of only two provinces where more people are turning to EI [employment insurance] to pay the bills.

So, Mr. Speaker, with so many people in Saskatchewan looking for work, why didn’t the Sask Party take the opportunity yesterday with the Speech from the Throne to introduce a comprehensive job creation plan?

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

Hon. Mr. Bonk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, our provincial economy has been hit quite hard by the drop in resource revenue over the past few years. It has affected a lot of people in this province who have lost their job, and we sympathize with anyone or we feel empathy with them, anyone who’s lost a job. It’s very important for them.

What we’ve done as the government is we tried to create an atmosphere in this province, a climate in this province where businesses can flourish. We’ve reduced regulations. We’ve lowered the tax rate. There’s 64,000 more people working in this province today than there ever was under the NDP. That shows what growth and what prosperity can do for a province.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the reality is the Sask Party’s heartless cuts and unfair tax hikes have resulted in more people looking for work. In fact there are about twice as many people unemployed today as there were when the Sask Party came into office, and there are more cuts coming.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party’s attack on health care and education has meant women are being hit the hardest. There are 28 per cent more women relying on EI than at this time last year. That’s the highest increase in the entire country. How can the Sask Party possibly justify these cuts?

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

Hon. Mr. Bonk: — Mr. Speaker, in September, we had an unemployment rate of 6.2 per cent in this province. That’s the national average. There’s 1,600 full-time employment positions created, 3,000 part-time jobs created in the past year — that’s an increase over the past year — 64,400 more people are working now in this province than there ever was at the best times the NDP ever had.

Mr. Speaker, we are doing our best to create a climate in this province where everyone can flourish — men, women, everyone. So, Mr. Speaker, I think our record stands for itself.

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

Support for Education

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I can welcome the new Minister for the Status of Women and Education with a couple of facts. Women represent more than 70 per cent of people working in educational services in Saskatchewan. The Sask Party's cuts to education forced boards to cut more than 200 positions across the province. These were 200 good-paying jobs and 200 real people who are no longer supporting our kids in the classroom.

At 70 per cent, it's not hard to see how so many Saskatchewan women have been forced to rely on EI. Does the minister actually think that eliminating these supports from our kids' classrooms will help them learn? And does she think that cutting these good-paying jobs will help strengthen our communities and our economy?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education and the Status of Women.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like first to acknowledge how nice it was to see the member for Lakeview at the grand opening, reopening, in her constituency of École Connaught School last Friday. And we know that she wasn't always supportive of this \$21 million investment by our government, that's to say the least, Mr. Speaker. But she tweeted last week: thank you for this beautiful space to teach, learn, and build community.

And I agree it is that, Mr. Speaker, a high-tech space, full of light, which blends old and new architectural components, complete with 17 new classrooms, an integrated amphitheatre, rooftop learning terrace. The member opposite will have heard the poem written by students which included the line, my school is not ordinary, it's extraordinary. Innovative design and technology across the school helps us grow. I was honoured to open it and pleased to see her there.

And to be sure, Mr. Speaker, there have been some challenges this past year; the member opposite has referenced them. But the 20 schools that have opened since we last convened here, including 18 joint-use schools which opened on time and on budget, those we can surely agree are significant achievements for everyone in this economy, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, how about we actually resource the classrooms in those new schools and all schools across the province? Those lines simply will not cut it with those who are living the reality of these cuts with their own children. Parents across this province are being forced to pay extra for child care, miss work, move their children to other schools, other child care centres, or in one case, parents actually bought a van for

their child care provider because it was cheaper than the other alternatives.

Mr. Speaker, they are doing all of this while paying more in education property taxes. That is, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party took in an additional \$67 million in educational property tax but at the same time cut \$54 million out of our children's classrooms. Why does the minister think that it's okay to make Saskatchewan parents literally pay more while their kids get less?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that Saskatoon director of education Barry MacDougall said earlier this fall, "The number of supports in schools in terms of teachers and EAs hasn't changed this year. In fact, it's gone up a little bit." Gone up, and that's in the province's biggest urban division, Mr. Speaker.

Again we acknowledge the amazing work that teachers and staff do in this province every day. And I recently highlighted, as part of Education Week, favourite teachers of mine, Mr. Speaker, who challenged perspectives, went beyond the call, made their subjects live. We've all had them and we thank them.

And we have accommodated a changing landscape, Mr. Speaker. Since '07, investments have been substantial. In our schools today there are 10 per cent more teachers, 30 per cent more psychologists, 38 per cent more language pathologists, and over 50 per cent more occupational therapists. We commend their amazing work, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on House Services

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report that the committee considered committee membership changes on September 6th, 2017 and pursuant to rule 136(6), filed with the Clerk the seventh report of the Standing Committee on House Services.

I move:

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

The Speaker: — The member has moved the motion:

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership of the Board of Internal Economy

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I would like to inform the Assembly that I received a letter from the Lieutenant Governor dated October 11th, 2017 outlining the membership of the Board of Internal Economy. I will now list in the names of the membership: Hon. Corey Tochor, Hon. Dustin Duncan, Hon. Paul Merriman, Hon. Greg Brkich, Jeremy Harrison, David Forbes, and Warren McCall.

I recognize the Deputy House Leader.

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask for leave to make a motion regarding sitting dates.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize Deputy House Leader.

MOTIONS

Sitting Days

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move:

That, notwithstanding rule 6(1) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, when this Assembly does adjourn on Thursday, November 9th, 2017, it shall stand adjourned until Tuesday, November 14th, 2017, at 1:30 p.m., and that in accordance with rule 3(2), the 25th and final day of the fall period of the revised parliamentary calendar shall be Thursday, December 7, 2017.

I so move.

The Speaker: — I'll take the motion as read. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to move a motion on committee membership.

The Speaker: — Leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Committee Membership

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of Vicki Mowat be substituted for the name of Nicole Rancourt on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Lakeview had moved the following motion:

That the name Vicki Mowat be substituted for the name Nicole Rancourt on the Standing Committee on House Services.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — I wish for leave to make a motion.

The Speaker: — Leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — The motion is:

That the name Jeremy Harrison be substituted for the name Paul Merriman on the Standing Committee on House Services.

The Speaker: — Moved by the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow:

That the name Jeremy Harrison be substituted for the name Paul Merriman on the Standing Committee on House Services.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Carr: — What a great honour it is to be able to respond to the Throne Speech. I can hardly believe that it was only a year and a half ago that I had the opportunity to stand here and give my first speech in this House. So much has transpired over that time frame that it seems much longer.

I would like to take some time to thank those who have helped

me and continue to help me as I take this journey of having the privilege of being the MLA for Estevan. First of all to my partner, Bart, who has fallen into our new routine. He was here yesterday and he enjoyed the day. He affectionately likes to refer to himself as my arm candy.

To my parents, Stan and Jolene Wicks, who have been there for me unconditionally. They're the foundation on which my work ethic has been built and I truly thank them for that.

To my children, Miranda, Mercedes, and Wyatt Morstad, who have grown into amazing young individuals. Thank you for supporting me and helping me reach my goals. I could not have done it without you.

[11:00]

I would like to take a little time and talk about my oldest daughter, Miranda. She is 26 and she is a grade 1 teacher in Saskatoon. Miranda has been dating a young man by the name of Jonathan Forbes. For those of you who may have not noticed the last name, I did say Forbes. He is the nephew of the MLA from Saskatoon Centre. Well Jonathan and Miranda have recently become engaged to be married, so I guess in some roundabout way I'll be a relative to the member from Saskatoon Centre. We'll be one big happy family.

To my committee that continues to work hard in my constituency and always preparing for the next election. I would like to make special mention of my president, Dustin Hockey. He's fairly new to the position and has brought a renewal to my committee that is welcome.

And to my constituents, who have the confidence in me to make me their MLA and to make me their voice here in this legislature. I will continue to listen to them and bring their voice forward.

And I would also like to thank all of my new colleagues that I sit in this House with. When I first arrived, I must admit it was a little bit more than intimidating, but this wonderful group of MLAs that I have the privilege of working with on a day-to-day basis has truly made this a welcoming place to work. And last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my Lord and Saviour. All I have is because of him.

The title of the Throne Speech is "Growing Stronger," and what an appropriate name that is. Our population is growing faster than it has since the earliest days of this province. In just the last 10 years, we have grown by more than 160,000 people. The two decades before this, the province has saw nothing but a steady decline in population. Saskatchewan is not only growing stronger, but it is growing larger, and we are a much better province for it.

One of the opportunities I have had in my short time here was to sit with the Human Services Committee on the organ donation consultations. I'm very excited to see that there is work beginning to happen in this area. Having donor doctors — I guess donor physicians — who will provide education and support to help champion organ donation across the province will help ensure that we get on the path to a successful program. And while listening to the people and the organizations who

came forward with the presentations on organ donation, I heard loud and clear that presumed consent would be a huge asset. So once again I'm glad to see that we will continue to explore this option.

Both of my daughters are schoolteachers, so to see the progress that is happening in the field of education is wonderful. Contrary to what you may hear from our opposition or on the most current Facebook post, progress is being made. This year alone our government opened up 21 new schools. This included 18 joint-use facilities built using the P3 [public-private partnership] model, and by using this model it reduced the construction costs by approximately \$100 million.

Over the past decade, this government has invested in an unprecedented \$17 billion into kindergarten to grade 12 education. And while the enrolment numbers have only increased slightly over the past 10 years, with this investment we have added 875 more teachers and created nearly 6,000 more child care spaces.

And let's not forget the graduate retention plan, which is the most aggressive student attraction and retention program in all of Canada. Since 2008 nearly 70,000 post-secondary graduates have chosen to begin their careers right here in Saskatchewan and have benefited from this program. These are students who, if it were not for this program, would most likely have chosen to take their education and start their careers in other provinces. As we have heard our Premier say on several occasions, gone are the days when we would buy our kids luggage for graduation. I know that's what I got for graduation. I chose to stay in this province and I'm truly happy I did. This program is definitely one of the reasons Saskatchewan is growing stronger. It has served the purpose it was meant to.

I think without a doubt we can all agree that our communities, whether they be a city, town, village, or rural municipality, they are the backbone of this province, truly what makes it tick. And that is why it is so important that we try to protect these communities the best we can, which brings me to my next topic of discussion.

As we are all aware, our federal government has announced its intention to legalize the non-medical use of marijuana by July of 2018. This is not only eight short months away. It's something that we have to think seriously about. Now this is going to happen whether we agree with it or we disagree with it. I believe this decision was made without sufficient consultation with our provinces, and now we will have to take the next steps.

So currently our government is in the process of doing consultation through an online tool. I'm not sure if any of you did, but I took the time to go on and fill out the survey. This was not your typical survey. It was very detailed and gave you lots of opportunity to express your point of view in sentence form as well as by ranking it by number if you chose.

We have received nearly 35,000 responses. I'm not going to go into all of the details, but I think it's important to note the four guiding principles that led this survey. And they were: preventing the growth of the underground market, restricting access to minors, ensuring road and workplace safety, as well as the protection of public health.

Once everything is tabulated, we will need to introduce legislation that will govern the sale and distribution of marijuana while at the same time protecting public health and safety as well as ensuring that we enhance the education. This will not be a small task, and we don't have much time to do it — as I mentioned, only eight months away.

I also had the opportunity to take part in a committee that was appointed to consult on measures that might strengthen public safety. This was formed because of the concern of increasing crime, primarily in our rural areas. It truly was an honour to sit on this committee. We had the opportunity to travel the province and listen to stakeholders from every walk of life. We also received numerous written submissions. For myself — I'm not sure about the rest of my colleagues that were travelling the province with me — this was truly an eye-opening experience. From these consultations, we heard loud and clear that visibility is a huge problem. I'm sure you are all aware that Saskatchewan has a large number of roads that need to be covered, which in part contributes to this visibility problem. We also heard that while there might be many different types of enforcement officers out there, they do not all have the powers they need for the proper enforcement.

So with some existing resources and expanding some powers, our government has created a new protection and response team consisting of 258 armed officers who have the authority to arrest and detain those suspected of committing crimes. This will definitely help with the issue of visibility, as well as giving them the tools they actually need to do their job, keeping in mind that there is always more work to be done. But this is definitely a step in the right direction.

One of the comments I heard from more than one group when we were on our tour of the province was, we are not going to arrest our way out of crime. There were so many discussions on root causes of crime, whether that be addiction, mental illness, housing, or any host of social issues that cause these problems. It was also refreshing to hear the different organizations that are out in our province every day, each of them having their own little niche, helping work with people who have some of the issues I have referred to above and hearing about some of their successes in all of these different fields. Having said that, there is still a lot more work to be done.

Saskatchewan is definitely growing stronger. When we look at our infrastructure numbers, this becomes quite clear. When our government took over in 2007, there was a huge deficit in this province. Over the last decade, our government has invested more than \$26 billion to renew and expand our infrastructure. Included in this number was 7.4 billion for our province's highway system, which equates to repairs and improvements of 12 000 kilometres as well as the completion of other significant projects.

Earlier in my speech, I talked about our communities being the backbone of our province. Well if you talk to the people of this province, a good portion of them also feel that our Crown corporations are the backbone as well. These corporations support economic growth and quality of life for our province. And, Mr. Speaker, just speaking specifically to the constituency of Estevan, I can attest that my community has a very large contingent of SaskPower employees who, of the two power

generating stations, are located there. And these employees are a good backbone to my community, as well as working hard for the province.

During the last session, our government passed Bill 40. This bill would have allowed for the sale of up to 49 per cent of our Crown corporations. While we the people of the province of Saskatchewan would still have retained majority ownership of these corporations, it did not seem to be sitting well with the majority of our population. Over the past few months we have been listening to the Saskatchewan people. What they are telling us is they like their Crown corporations. In fact I might even go as far as to say they love them, and that even the sale of a small stake is not something that they are on board with. Therefore this fall our government will repeal the provision of Bill 40 that allows for the sale of a partial-equity position of a Crown corporation. This is what our government does: we listen and we act accordingly.

And what would a speech of mine be if I did not talk about the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions? I am very proud of SaskPower's Boundary dam 3 project, not only because it's located in my constituency and is about 5 kilometres from the front door of my house. To date this project has cut carbon dioxide emissions by 1.6 million tonnes in our province. That may not seem like a whole lot to some people but if we translate that into real terms, what that means is we have taken the equivalent of 400,000 cars off the road.

This plant was the first commercial post-combustion carbon capture system and it is something that we should be very proud of in our province. We are a world leader in the advancement of carbon capture and storage technology. And this is not just something that we are saying about ourselves. You don't have to take my word for it. This has been identified by the United Nations and the International Energy Agency as a crucial technology if global emissions are to be lowered. And this technology was developed right here in our province.

I had the opportunity to attend a carbon capture symposium earlier this month, right here in Regina. There was representation from 14 different countries there. They were listening and talking about this groundbreaking technology. They are all very aware that this technology is needed to help significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions around the world.

SaskPower is also helping with reducing greenhouse gas emissions by expanding renewable power to as much as 50 per cent of its total generating capacity by 2030. This will be done in several different forms including solar and wind, as well as many other options.

This upcoming session will be the end of a very important chapter in this province's history. Our Premier and the MLA from Swift Current will be stepping down from politics in the near future. Our Premier will without question go down as the best Premier this province has ever seen. He has poured his heart and soul into making this province better than when he arrived, and I believe we can unequivocally agree that it is in fact what he has succeeded in doing.

As some of you may be aware, the Premier is a huge fan of

Waylon Jennings. And Waylon could not have said it better from his song "Working Without a Net," and I quote:

Up on the high wire, I hear the crowd begin to call
Some want to see you fly; some want to see you fall
Now and then I stumble, but I ain't fallen yet
Your love helps me forget I'm working without a net.

Really quite appropriate words. When the Premier started his career he was truly working without a net. He had to find his own sure footing and the path he wanted to follow. On his journey there were people who would have loved to see him fall. But he took the time to build a net around him that would help ensure his success. You might say there was even a divine providence that has helped bless our province and this Premier. So right now I would like to thank our Premier for the humility and courage he has shown in making Saskatchewan a better place to live, work, and play.

Which brings us to our future, and oh what a future it is going to be. While it is very sad time because we are losing once again without question the best Premier this province has ever seen, change is upon us, and we need to look towards the future. This is a very exciting time for not only our party but for this province. This is an opportunity for growth and renewal. This province has been growing stronger, and we want to see it continue.

[11:15]

And what will that future look like? We will soon have a new premier leading this province. We want to ensure that we continue down the path of prosperity and growth. Whoever becomes our new leader, it will be so important for us to rally behind that new leader and continue down a successful path as is the name of the Throne Speech, "Growing Stronger." And we can only do this by working cohesively as a team.

There are many more things I would love to talk about, but I think I will leave that for some of my colleagues. In closing I would like to say that I completely support this Throne Speech, and Lord, let thy kingdom come and thy will be done. Amen.

Now, to the business at hand. I would like to make a motion which will be seconded by the member from Kelvington-Wadena:

That the humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To Her Honour, the Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has pleased to address us at the opening of the present session.

Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member from Estevan has made the motion. I'll take the motion as read. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour for me to rise in the legislature today to second the motion made by my colleague from Estevan who spoke so eloquently on behalf of her constituents and our province.

Mr. Speaker, as the member for Kelvington-Wadena, I have the great privilege of serving typical extraordinary Saskatchewan people. They are hard working, innovative, diverse, and caring people who freely share their time and energy with others through their volunteerism, through their commitment to their communities, and their commitment to the province of Saskatchewan. We are all well served by our municipal leaders, numerous partner community-based organizations, and the outstanding commitment of dozens of local groups to do the community building through church groups, auxiliaries, service clubs, and all those who work the fall suppers, the bingos, and all the fundraising activities that are so important to rural life. Furthermore, in rural Saskatchewan we celebrate the little things and big things equally. Whether it's hockey, football, harvest, hunting, the change of seasons, or a business or personal anniversary, we know our neighbours and we celebrate with them.

Mr. Speaker, I'll take a moment to thank my wife, Giselle, who is here in your gallery, for walking this path with me. She has fully embraced this opportunity for us to serve the people of Kelvington-Wadena and the province.

I'd also like to thank our families back home for their support and for their frank and honest feedback on many issues. Our families have broad, diverse backgrounds in agriculture, health care, education, small and large business, law enforcement, finance, and more, and as such, are typical Saskatchewan extended families. Through them, I get the diversity of opinion that helps form my view of the issues of the day.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my constituency assistant, Chris, for the amazing work she does. While this has been my first full year as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, with the work we do in this place, it is the work that happens on behalf of our individual constituents that is most important. Chris has quickly exemplified the facilitator role that a CA [constituency assistant] undertakes, and it is greatly appreciated by myself and our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, we are all made better people by the interactions we have with our colleagues and staff in this place. Colleagues are often seen gathered around a desk or a dinner table, testing out ideas and examining issues and consequences. Committee work is well established as a place to challenge in a more formal way the movement of legislation and regulation, but much of the heavy lifting is amongst colleagues working through the kinks. I truly appreciate the wisdom and frankness that is offered freely amongst our team.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, governance is a journey. It is a road with many forks, many curves, and many hills and valleys. We are tasked with making legislative and regulatory decisions

each and every day that have consequences for families and businesses in the province. None of us in this Chamber takes that responsibility lightly. None of us has the proverbial crystal ball that provides that perfect view of the future. We make decisions of the day based on the best advice from stakeholders, communities, our public sector, business, and internal and external expertise.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the member from Regina Coronation Park, in his reply to the Speech from the Throne in 2012 quoted from Anthony Robbins as follows:

Don't be afraid of new ideas. Be afraid of old ideas. They keep you where you are and they stop you from growing and moving forward. Concentrate on where you want to go, not on what you fear.

This quote speaks volumes about the task before us.

As government, as public service, and as citizens of the province, we have been challenged in the past to be more each generation. Our challenges today are not measured by generations, but are more often measured by years and sometimes by months. As a province, we must be on our game to compete.

I will speak about our resources shortly, but I would be remiss if I didn't challenge our thinking in terms of rapidly evolving competition for innovation, technology, and value-added opportunities. We must reinvent our internal processes to ensure we can be responsive to the marketplace in competing for the highest quality outcomes as our public and private sectors evolve.

In the Speech from the Throne, we have provided an overview of the general direction of the government. We have identified opportunities for Saskatchewan people to continue to succeed. We have listened carefully to our constituents and have made the adjustments they have asked of us.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have stood firm on our commitment to challenge the federal government on several fronts. Through and with our municipal partners, we will need to face the challenges of ill-timed and, frankly, inconsiderate marijuana legislation that is politically expedient at the federal level but shifts an incredible regulatory burden onto the provinces.

Our challenge is the safety of our roads and workplaces, schoolyards and families. We don't know the long-term impact on health care, social services, law enforcement, the judicial system, and equally the financial impact on the province. We will, to a certain extent, be challenged to deal not only with the regulation of use and sale, but also grow operation regulations, and into the future with regulation of edible products and the likely evolution of inconceivable violations.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to focus our work on building a better Saskatchewan. Our farmers have all but completed a harvest that by most measures exceeded expectations in most areas of the province, despite the vagaries of the weather. Our economy continues to face challenges in potash and oil and gas, but is continuing to show very positive signs in many economic

indicators. We continue to be very positive that our budget plans are on track to achieve the balance to ensure we can provide the services the people of Saskatchewan expect.

Mr. Speaker, we fully accept that our spring budget challenged the province in ways unlike recent history. However we committed to using the tools available as a government to bring us back to balance in three years. Finding the balance between debt, increased revenue through taxes, and managing expenses is always subject to a variety of opinions. We made wide-ranging decisions based on the best advice of the day, and we continue to be committed to building out our infrastructure and services to meet the needs of our citizens.

As a province, we are extraordinarily fortunate to have the natural resources as our foundation in mining, oil and gas, and forestry. As a province, we have incredibly innovative agricultural producers that not only feed the world but do so in a way that is actually a positive story in the carbon footprint discussion. We have incredible provincial and regional parks. We have earned the respect of the nation and internationally through our leadership on trade and other policy initiatives. We have a society that works hard to care for those less fortunate. We have a well-educated and enthusiastic next generation pushing us to be all that we can be.

As we work collaboratively with our municipal partners, we must be ever cognizant of the need for all of us to be learning organizations, constantly looking to improve our relationships with our customers, the citizens of Saskatchewan. The dynamics of the workplace have changed as we move from the silent generation, through the baby boom generation, to generation X, generation Y, and millennials, and so on. Workplaces must adjust to the dramatic shifts, as our young people have far different expectations of job security or job flexibility than previous generations.

We must never lose sight of the fact that as governments we are the conduit between the taxpayer and the consumer, and that they are one and the same person. Our responsibility is providing value to the taxpayer and providing exceptional service to the recipient of health care or social services or of other ministries and Crowns.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we sincerely appreciate the incredible work that CBOs [community-based organization] do across the province, and we must foster their efforts through further encouraging collaborative working relationships between our ministries and agencies and their relationships across the province.

Providing continuity of service delivery will be a big part of the work undertaken in bringing together the 12 health regions into a single provincial body. This should be looked at throughout health care as an opportunity to build capacity and align resources, with the patient front and centre in every decision.

Mr. Speaker, when I was young, a trip to town was an adventure. As a teen, going to neighbouring communities was the Saturday night outing. As a young adult, I worked in northern Manitoba which was accessed only by rail or air.

Mr. Speaker, without question, the issues on everyone's minds

in the '60s and '70s are exactly the same as those today. Will I have access to a school for my children within a reasonable distance? Will I have access to some level of health care within a reasonable time frame? What are the conditions of the roads? How do we pay for rural and urban infrastructure? Mr. Speaker, it is unlikely the questions will ever change. The issue is how we respond to those questions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the NDP were in government, they chose to close 176 schools. When in government, the NDP chose to close 52 hospitals. They chose to cut nearly \$500 million from municipal revenue sharing. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP made a conscious decision to close 1,200 long-term care beds and didn't raise the seniors' income plan by a single penny in 16 years. How ironic that today they boast about being the defenders of rural Saskatchewan, seniors, educators, and health workers, when you consider their devastation of the very infrastructure that supported those most vulnerable.

[11:30]

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in an effort to be balanced and considerate to my friends opposite, I thought I would look at recent experience as indicators. Where best to look but in *Hansard*, the official record of the legislature? And this is what I found: in the spring and fall sessions of question period, out of 739 questions asked, they asked four of the Minister of Agriculture. They asked three of the Minister of Parks and recreation. They asked four of the Minister of Highways, and they asked four of the Rural and Remote Health Minister. I can only surmise that these issues aren't that important to members opposite. These are things that matter to my constituents.

Let's take a minute to compare our record. This year alone, we have unprecedented investment in education with the opening of 21 new schools this fall. Since we became government, we have constructed and renovated 65 schools as part of a \$17 billion investment in education. We have 875 more teachers and 173 more student support teachers in the system today than 10 years ago.

While we continue to invest in schools and teachers and support, we will focus also on outcomes, and the announcement of curriculum enhancement, particularly introducing computer coding, which will move us firmly into the realm of the forward-thinking leaders that our educators are day in and day out. In addition we will be looking at math scores across the province, as this is a foundation for the scientific world we live in as we engage future technologies.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have added an average of 600 child care spaces a year. Mr. Speaker, we have 750 more doctors and 3,400 more nurses practising in the province today than 10 years ago. We have doubled investment in new hospital projects, including the new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford and the children's hospital in Saskatoon. All of us in the province benefit from these investments. In my own constituency, I was pleased last year to share the stage in opening the new Kelvington integrated health care facility. Mr. Speaker, we opened 15 long-term care facilities and tripled the seniors' income benefit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the past few months I've had the

honour to participate in funding announcements in support of people with disabilities in my constituency. When we formed government, we committed to removing the wait-list for people with disabilities to have a home, a place they can call their own and be proud of in their role in the community. Mr. Speaker, we have invested \$4 billion in support of these folks who are now significant contributors to our communities and to our economy as they participate through community initiatives.

The Speech from the Throne refers to the \$100 million that has been invested in provincial parks since we formed government. In my constituency, we have seen ongoing support for regional parks, and Greenwater Lake Provincial Park has benefited from water treatment upgrades, new service centres, and significant expansion of camping facilities.

I'm also very pleased to share the announcement of the creation of a new park in the Porcupine Hills area. This has been under discussion for many years and has had substantial stakeholder engagement. We very much look forward to this new park creation in the east central part of our province.

We have also outlined continued unprecedented investment in highways. Of particular importance to all of us is the effective use of passing lanes, which make a significant contribution to the safety and efficient movement of goods on our major arteries.

As a province, we have much work to do in areas of crime reduction and prevention. The work done by our special committee on crime that gathered feedback from around the province is being recognized in early steps to more responsiveness capability by our law enforcement providers. We can build on this by encouraging our municipal leaders to play a role through shared initiatives with neighbouring municipalities, towns, and villages to enhance community safety and security.

Mr. Speaker, the very essence of our province is changing as we welcome new citizens from around the world. We have much to learn from the thousands of years of history and culture that is being shared with us by our new citizens.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said, both sides of the House are currently engaged in leadership races. Twenty years ago our party was formed through the vision of eight very brave and very determined individuals. From that grounding we had the good fortune to identify a leader of extraordinary will and appeal. We will have much opportunity over the coming months for appropriate accolades, but for the moment let's agree that we will be forever grateful for an opportunity to see a revitalized and strong Saskatchewan through the eyes of the member from Swift Current.

Under that founding group and the new leadership, they saw that the path Saskatchewan had been on for years was a path of mediocrity forever. Successive NDP governments had succeeded in driving the people of the province to a dependency mentality. The NDP thought that government should be the solution to everything, and they failed miserably. People left the province in droves. They closed schools and hospitals, and they left an infrastructure deficit that will be generational to repair.

What comes to mind in looking across the aisle in terms of policy is an image of buzzards circling philosophical roadkill — bereft of new ideas, afraid of challenging the status quo, and terrified that their federal brothers' bandwagon has no room for engines of economic reality in Canada.

The new national NDP leader, who is opening the NDP convention this weekend, has specifically said no to Energy East and Kinder Morgan. All four of the federal NDP leadership candidates clearly staked out positions against pipelines who would move our products to the global market. Mr. Speaker, on that side of the House the old horse and buggy economy is alive and well.

Mr. Speaker, as I close my comments today I am mindful that our government's vision of a bright future for Saskatchewan is confirmed, not only by our founding principles but by the commitment each of us has on this side of the House to a positive view of the current state of the province and a commitment to keep Saskatchewan strong. We have much to do, and I'm excited to be part of moving forward with our government and our leadership team. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As always it's an honour to be able to rise in the House and have an opportunity for comments. And certainly today in reply to the Speech from the Throne, I'm very grateful to be able to do so. And in fact I really appreciated the quote yesterday from Ron Petrie that the Lieutenant Governor used in the Speech from the Throne where he said, "Let it be known that I am grateful."

I too have so much to be thankful for, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm so lucky to have been born into many privileges that I'm still learning about and still trying to understand. I've had access to all levels of education. I've had no shortage of food, universal health care, but also health insurance. As a diabetic, that's very important to me. I have a pension. I have a house. I have healthy children, and for that I am grateful.

I'd like to take a minute now just to thank some of the people who enrich my life. To my new constituency assistant, Jaime Nicklas, who I know is watching right now. Thank you so much for your patience and particularly for the empathy that you show the people who come to our office. And I think when I think of Mary-Ann McLeod and her son, Jonathan, who had been to several places trying to get help with their housing arrangements. They were living in a garage, Mr. Deputy Speaker, infested with cockroaches and they couldn't get any help, but my CA, Jaime, went above and beyond to ensure that they were looked after and that they actually now have a home that they are happy to call home.

I'd also like to thank Robert Clipperton, my constituency president, who actually doubled our NDP memberships in the last year. So thanks, Robert, for your determination. To our intrepid caucus staff, thanks for all that you do to ensure that the loyal opposition does what it can to hold this government to account.

To my friends, thanks for standing by me. And to my kids, thanks for your willingness to take on your adult world with enthusiasm and passion. To my siblings and my siblings-in-law, thanks for looking after my aging parents with so much love. I wish I could be closer to home to help, but you guys are there and you take my worries away.

To my mom, your kindness and love even in the throes of dementia, it still comes through. And to my dad who is 91 years old . . . He still rides his exercise bike, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He's still passionate about politics. I want to say thanks for your inspiration.

And finally to my new seven-week-old grandson, thank you. This always happens, Mr. Speaker. Anyways I'll get a hold of myself. My new seven-week-old grandson, Théodore Cinq-Mars, merci pour m'inspirer de travailler fort pour votre génération.

[Translation: Thank you for inspiring me to work hard for your generation.]

His generation will inherit an uncertain world from us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this gratitude leads me to politics and why we're all here, what brings us, all of us, to this position. And I know that we all come here with a dream to bring what we are able to offer to make this province a better place.

And at this point in time I do want to commend our Premier, the member from Swift Current, for his amazing dedication to this province and his commitment to this province and the work he has done in his years here in this House. I want to thank him for that work and congratulate him for an amazing job.

Mr. Speaker, of course where we differ is how to get there. And for me, I want to fight for Saskatchewan where everyone has the opportunities I'm so grateful for: where everyone has food on the table, where everyone has a roof over their head, where all seniors are able to afford both their rent and their prescriptions, and where no young person is so full of hopelessness that they choose to take their own life.

I listened very carefully to the Throne Speech yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I heard a lot of talk about the past, a lot of patting themselves on the back for spending when oil was \$140 a barrel.

But, Mr. Speaker, the true measure of any government is not how they manage in the good times. The Sask Party came into government in 2007 with the cupboards full. Then they had several years of record revenues. But it is their performance in the last couple of years that they've revealed how they have failed Saskatchewan people. This has not gone unnoticed, Mr. Speaker. Standard & Poor's, for example, had given them two consecutive downgrades to their credit rating.

In the Throne Speech, what we got was a lot of the same, repetitive, old news from the time when the revenues were at heady rates, and then a lot of talk about growth, the moral imperative of growth, but, Mr. Speaker, not all forms of growth. They're not talking about all forms of growth, just a very select type of growth that doesn't reflect the reality that so many

people in Saskatchewan are facing, a select type of growth that cheapens the real meaning of moral imperative, which actually implies universal growth where everyone is getting ahead, not just a certain strata of our society that gets wealthier and wealthier while others fall farther and farther behind.

And I think it's important to talk about some of the growth in this province that this government doesn't want to talk about. And here is but a few examples. Growth in the number of people waiting for surgeries — in the last two years five times as many people are waiting longer than three months for their surgery, and there are seven times more people waiting longer than six months for their surgery.

How about the growth in public debt, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The Sask Party has doubled the province's debt in just five years. Growth in the number of people looking for work — more than 32,000 people are unemployed in Saskatchewan, and my city of Saskatoon has its highest unemployment rate in two decades.

Growth in the number of people relying on the food bank — 31,395 people accessed food banks in the province in 2016, up 17.5 per cent from the year before. And 45 per cent of those people accessing the food banks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are children, above the national average of 36 per cent and the highest in the country.

[11:45]

The growth of the number of kids, particularly indigenous kids, in care, the number of children in care continues to climb up by 454 children in just three years, was almost 5,000 children in 2016. And of course, Mr. Speaker, we know the terrible statistic that indigenous children remain overrepresented in the child welfare system among those sustaining critical injuries and those who have died.

There's a growth in the number of people on assistance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In June of 2017 about 35,750 people accessed one of the three main benefits offered by the province. And that number has continued to climb nearly every month for at least the past four years.

The growth in cases of HIV/AIDS [human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome] — Saskatchewan's HIV rate is the highest in Canada, Mr. Speaker. It's up 800 per cent in one health region alone. And we're the only jurisdiction that saw a growth in the number of cases in recent years, up 6 per cent between 2015 and 2016.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan child poverty rates are above the national average. This shouldn't be. Saskatchewan's child poverty rate of 24.6 per cent is six percentage points higher than the rest of the country. Sixty-nine per cent of indigenous children on-reserve are living in poverty. I want to repeat that statistic, Mr. Speaker. Sixty-nine per cent of the children living on First Nation reserves are living in poverty. How can that happen in a country or a province as prosperous as ours?

Highest family violence rates in the country. We have double the national average. And of course, Mr. Speaker, you have heard us talk on this side of the House about the growth and the debt of the GTH, growth in the cost of the over-built Regina

bypass.

Mr. Speaker, is this the kind of growth that we want in our province? Of course not. But the province . . . This government doesn't want to face the reality that so many people in this province are facing every day.

I guess you could say that this government has grown too. They have grown out-of-touch. So out-of-touch that they are void. They're empty of ideas, and to suggest that they represent the moral imperative in this province is almost laughable. But it is definitely hurtful and insulting to the people who suffer as a result of their mismanagement, their scandals, and their waste.

In the Throne Speech, we heard a lot of one-sided talk. They talk about introducing ride shares, but they've eliminated the ultimate ride share, the STC. They talk about raising the small business tax threshold, but don't even talk about hiking the PST [provincial sales tax] and forcing those small businesses to collect it for free. And their flip-flopping on the corporate tax rate will cause confusion and uncertainty for all businesses. They talk about an old election promise to provide tax deferrals for seniors who actually own their own home, but they don't talk about their increasing costs for seniors in care.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to touch briefly on one part of the Throne Speech that suggests that this Premier, whose time we know in this Chamber is short, is wanting to pre-empt the system of law in this province to leave his mark on the issue of religion in schools. Rather than respecting the due process of law, he is jumping the queue and hauling out the threat of the notwithstanding clause. He is doing this, notwithstanding, the fact that there is a legal proceeding under way, and that will take many years. And if it goes to the Supreme Court of Canada, which it likely will, it will take several more years.

In the meantime, this Assembly, because of what he's doing, will have to review and review the notwithstanding clause, which only has a shelf life of five years, Mr. Speaker. It's like him leaving the ball diamond in the middle of the first inning, taking the bat and the ball and the home plate along with him. Our legal system and our education system deserve better than that. And his urgency shows an inherent lack of respect for the legal system that is simply breathtaking.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to move on now to climate chaos. You only have to watch the news to recognize that climate chaos is having a serious impact on the world and that many world leaders are finally beginning to show the leadership that is needed to slow the growth of carbon dioxide emissions in our atmosphere, but not this government. Instead of working for Saskatchewan people by determining a made-in-Saskatchewan system, it rather stomps its feet and pouts when the federal government imposes a carbon pricing system on us.

In 2009 this government actually did that; they actually passed a law with a made-in-Saskatchewan solution focusing on innovation and challenging the highest emitters in this province to find real ways to reduce their emissions. But did they enact that law, Mr. Speaker? You were in power and the former minister is saying, chirping from her seat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but they didn't enact that law. The majority of this House passed that law and now she's worried about what happened on

this side. They did not enact that law, Mr. Speaker, and you have to wonder why. And you have to wonder why she was soon removed from that position after that bill.

So now we have a void in leadership and it's evolved to the point where the Premier's only solution is to tell his former Environment minister to walk out of meetings. Wow. How mature is that, Mr. Speaker? And now what do we see in the Speech from the Throne? Rather than a proactive approach, we get a Premier who threatens with a lawsuit that experts say won't succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to move on to illegal drainage. It's a serious issue in this province. I was out at Wadena last month and I saw blatant trenching and drained wetlands. This is after the Water Security Agency and the two most recent ministers in Environment, now sitting in the backbench, told us that they were going to shut down unauthorized drains going back 100 years. They were going to write letters and then they were going to enforce the law. What have they done? Nothing. They are listening to the cheerleaders and ignoring the facts, and they allow unauthorized drainage to rampantly continue without even trying enforcement. You just have to drive down the highway, Mr. Speaker, and you can see it. You have to ask yourself, what on earth is going on over there?

The steady sell-off of our Crowns continues unabated. On the chopping block this year was the sale of our Grain Car Corporation — which was making money by the way — and of course the so-called wind-down of the STC. How can you say that you didn't privatize our public transportation system when there are now private businesses offering public bus services in the province? You say you won't privatize and then you turn around and over and over again you privatize. How are people in this province able to have any confidence in what this government says?

The epitome of that is, of course, Bill 40. You had every single member over there vote in favour of that bill last spring. And that Premier and his Minister of Justice defended it over and over again, despite loud cries of opposition from this side of the House and across the province with protests and rallies and petitions all coming forward to condemn the attempt to open the door to privatization. And then the Premier decides yesterday, yesterday to repeal it. And you have to ask yourself, what on earth is going on over there?

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the budget, when you had every single member opposite vote in favour of that ill-conceived budget and you see retraction after retraction after retraction of budget measures, you have to ask yourself, what on earth is going on over there?

The GTH, when you have a cabinet minister defend the GTH's unconscionable overpayment for land that the Ministry of Highways was going to expropriate, and then in a brief bid for the coveted spot that the Premier currently occupies, calls for abandoning the whole project, you have to ask yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what on earth is going on over there?

And when you have a Throne Speech that overlooks half of our province in the North, that shows no regard for the desperate situation that so many young people are finding themselves in,

with tragic, tragic results, you have to ask yourself, what on earth is going on over there?

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that is bereft of a moral imperative. It is a tired and old government with tired and old leadership. And we deserve better and we demand better. So I reject the motion to approve the Throne Speech. I would like to move now the following amendment. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move:

That the motion be amended by adding the following:

And that this Assembly does not support the Sask Party's unambitious agenda that ignores the realities faced by Saskatchewan families and focuses on backtracking, bravado, and revisionist history, instead of creating jobs, strengthening the North and rural Saskatchewan, making life more affordable, or investing in our kids' classrooms, health care, and supports for seniors and our most vulnerable.

And I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved a motion:

That the motion be amended by adding the following:

That this Assembly does not support the Sask Party's unambiguous agenda that ignores the realities faced by Saskatchewan families and focuses on backtracking, bravado, and revisionist history, instead of creating jobs, strengthening the North and rural Saskatchewan, making life more affordable, or investing in kids' classrooms, health care, and support for seniors and our most vulnerable.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to second the amendment put forward by my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana, and to take the opportunity to address the House on behalf of the residents of Saskatoon Fairview in reply to the Throne Speech.

First I want to thank the constituents of Fairview. I certainly have other people to thank, but the people of Fairview sent me to this building because they were looking for change. The Sask Party wasn't working for them, and they wanted to send a message — a message that Saskatchewan deserves a government that doesn't forget who they work for; that doesn't slash funding from schools; that doesn't cut health care workers; that doesn't try to sell off our Crowns.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Fairview picked me and my caucus as the change they were looking for, and I thank them for their trust. Everyone that opened their door to talk to me, invited me into their home, and spoke to me about sometimes very personal issues, confiding in me and believing in our democratic system — I hope to represent you well in the legislature no matter your political stripe and that you will reach out if there's a way I can be representing you better.

Certainly I would like to take a minute to thank some of the people who are closest to me. Some of them got to witness my swearing-in on October 5th and, in standard family tradition, my mother started crying about two minutes in. My parents are very proud and have been support pillars throughout my life. Mr. Speaker, I grew up in a working family. My parents taught me about hard work. They taught me how to work hard and to not complain about it. I attribute any of the successes in my life growing up with this mantra guiding me.

I want to thank my partner, Grayson, for his enduring support and confidence in me no matter what. Anyone can be supportive on a good day, but it's how people behave on bad days that makes the real difference. I know that most people thank their spouses on occasions like this, but anyone who knows Grayson knows that we are a very strong team, and he has been there providing selfless support every step of the way.

I also want to thank my close friends who have been supportive in my journey thus far. Without these individuals I may not have had the courage to try or the resolve to keep trying. I'm thankful for the support I have received from these people and that they've never stopped believing in my ability to do this job.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to thank the many hundreds of people who helped get me here, perhaps thousands. Thank you for believing in me and I pledge to work hard on your behalf.

I would like to thank the Legislative Assembly Service staff and the caucus office staff for the support they have provided to me thus far. Figuring my way around this place and the directives we all follow has meant a lot of reading and a lot of asking questions. I have appreciated your patience and support as I've been finding my way around this past month or so and the high standard of professionalism I've observed.

Mr. Speaker, I've had some time to reflect on the Throne Speech. My response is shaped by my interactions with the constituents in Saskatoon Fairview and across the province. I want to share some of those stories in light of the proposed legislative agenda for this session.

We know that Saskatchewan has grown and that our demographics have shifted over time. We have observed the greying of Canada, where a higher percentage of our population is 65 or older. But when you look at Saskatchewan in particular, some interesting trends emerge. Although our population of 65 and older is still around average at 15.5 per cent, we also have a staggering number of young people at 19.6 per cent — the highest percentage of young people among all provinces in 2016.

There are more young people aged 14 and younger than there are seniors. In a CBC article, economist Eric Howe said that this younger population is largely because of the growing number of indigenous peoples in our province. The indigenous population is the fastest growing segment in the Canadian population and the median age of First Nations people in Saskatchewan is 20, the youngest in the country.

With a growing population of indigenous peoples, we have a responsibility to put meaningful action toward reconciliation. Mr. Speaker, action on this issue certainly isn't something we

have seen from the Sask Party. The Speech from the Throne didn't focus on it at all.

We also have a growing population of newcomers, particularly those from South and Southeast Asia. According to Stats Canada's 2016 census numbers, roughly two-thirds of Canada's population growth is due to international migration. Twice as many people enter Canada as leave.

[12:00]

This year, Statistics Canada came out with a forecast that by 2036, nearly one-quarter of Saskatchewan people could be newcomers. Saskatoon Fairview certainly reflects this diversity. It has to be one of the most diverse constituencies in this province. We have seniors living in long-term care, in their original homes, and in private apartments. We have working families and younger children, and we also have empty nesters. We have young students, and people who are making a minimum wage.

We have people of all ethnicities and backgrounds, including indigenous and newcomers. I have had the pleasure of meeting so many individuals from the Philippines, Vietnam, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh. Many of these individuals belong to strong cultural associations in Saskatoon.

Our demographic makeup in Saskatchewan is changing. This diversity makes us richer. If we are going to be future oriented, we should keep these changes in mind and look at ways of strengthening our workforce now, including ending the education gap for on-reserve children, looking at how we can acknowledge immigrant credentials, examining the changes that have been made to the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program, and investing in the future of this province. We owe it to our grandchildren and other people's grandchildren to be looking ahead.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wanted to respond to the Throne Speech by relating it to my experiences in Saskatoon Fairview. Many of the constituents that I have met over the past few years are struggling. In particular, at this moment they are frustrated with the budget put forward in the spring. I spoke with many people who could directly tie a family struggle that they were having to this year's budget cuts. Normally I find that people have trouble connecting their personal experience to a broader policy change, but this spring was very different. The people of Fairview were clearly connecting their struggles to the Sask Party budget, to their tax hikes, and to their budget cuts.

People are frustrated with the government's PST hikes and adding PST to restaurant meals, kids' clothes, and insurance. I spoke with mothers and fathers who could not believe the government was making up for the deficit shortfalls on the backs of their children or by taxing their Tim Hortons coffee. So many people asked me how this could happen after a decade of resource boom in this province. I spoke with grandmothers and grandfathers who were living alone on a fixed income, trying to figure out where these taxes were going to come from. I helped build this province, one man said to me, and this is the thanks I get. So many people argue that this government has mismanaged the public money.

People are frustrated with cuts to education. I heard from parents who were trying to figure out how they were going to get their kindergarten-aged kids to school because of cuts to the school bus routes. I heard from parents who were concerned about us putting schools on a P3 credit card and future debt we will have to deal with. I heard from teachers who were concerned with the lack of EA [educational assistant] assistance they were getting in the classrooms, and repeatedly that because of these budget cuts they were being asked to do more with less. After a decade of boom why wouldn't we have the best schools in this province? We should be viewing education as an investment not an area where we can trim the fat.

And people are frustrated with the lack of jobs. Mr. Speaker, this government has repeatedly released reports heralding their ability to create new jobs in this province, yet they remain quite silent when the employment rates are sent out. In fact the EI rates have been terrible in this province lately, and this is consistent with what I'm hearing from my constituents. I spoke to one woman on the phone since being elected who had a full life full of work experience. She'd applied for nearly 500 entry-level jobs. Her last bit of employment working casually for an organization had disappeared. She said to me, I have worked hard my entire life; I've never had to apply for social assistance, but I don't know what else to do. And she broke down into tears.

I spoke to a gentleman this summer who worked in the trades, a skilled labourer who hadn't had work in nearly six months. When he was leaving school he was encouraged to enter trades and become educated. He was told this would provide stability for his family. Now he's picking up odd jobs and struggling to keep possession of his modest living arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, these are defining moments in people's lives. This government has a responsibility to work for the citizens of this province.

People are frustrated with the state of health care in Saskatchewan. Tommy Douglas is a source of pride on doorsteps across this province, but what is happening in our health care system right now is not what he envisioned. I often speak to health care workers who are struggling to see the good in decisions that have been made over the past several years, patients who wait for hours and hours and hours in emergency rooms, and family members who only want what's best for their loved ones. We need to do better.

And, Mr. Speaker, my constituents were very concerned about this government's plan to sell off up to 49 per cent of our Crown corporations without consulting them, and they were clear that they won't trust the Sask Party with our Crown corporations.

I have heard so many concerns about the closure of STC. I heard from a mother whose son would often ride the bus to come see her. Now she isn't sure if or when her son is going to be able to come see her. I've heard from grandparents who use STC to visit their families. I've heard from patients who relied on STC to transport them to and from their medical appointments, business owners who relied on STC freight to transport parts in a timely manner. Mr. Speaker, STC was set up as a public transportation service. Dismantling it has had a

tremendous impact.

And the people of this province are equally concerned about the potential sale of SaskTel. Many of my constituents are employees of SaskTel. I have also heard from consumers who rely on SaskTel to keep our rates low, people who have lived in other provinces and seen what happens to utility bills under private ownership.

SaskTel brought high-speed Internet into every nook and cranny of our province, and now they're leading the charge by bringing fibre to some rural areas as a pilot project. SaskTel services this province, and people want to see it stick around. The people of this province do not agree that this government has a mandate to sell any part of this Crown corporation.

Mr. Speaker, since being assigned my critic duties, I have heard from many folks outside my constituency as well. As this is a place of deliberation, I look forward to spreading their messages and ensuring they have a voice in the direction of this province. I believe the opposition has an important role to play in holding this government to account and ensuring transparency, and I am committed to working with my colleagues to do this important work.

To close, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the constituents of Saskatoon Fairview for choosing me to represent them and to fight on their behalf. It is a humbling experience, and I will do my best. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to second this amendment.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to my 27th Speech from the Throne. It's a privilege to continue to represent the riding of Cannington in the very southeast corner of the province, a province that has been well served by this government and a province that has been growing since this government was formed in 2007. Now I note that the members opposite don't like to use that word "growing," but I'll address that after a bit.

I wanted to thank the constituents of Cannington for again asking me to represent them in this legislature and speak on their behalf. It's a privilege that I take very seriously and that I hope that I perform to their expectations. And having been elected seven times now, I think they continue to approve of my performance here.

I would also like to thank the Premier, the member for Swift Current, for his service to the province. Premier for 10 years and elected in 1999, he's had a very successful career as a Saskatchewan elected member and as Premier, and I know that the people of Cannington — regardless of their political stripe, although most of them are obviously Sask Party — continue to support the Premier in his efforts to make Saskatchewan a more prosperous and better place to live.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the new member for Saskatoon Eastview to becoming a member of this august body. I look forward to hearing her comments and see her performance here in the House. But having listened to her speech, I have to say I am somewhat disappointed in some of her commentary. She has obviously drank the philosophical

NDP Kool-Aid.

Now when you look . . . She was talking about the increases in property taxes, but she forgot to mention that Tommy Douglas had said that property taxes on farm property, agricultural property, was too high and had to change. Forty-five years later Lorne Calvert said the same thing and the status quo was not on. But it took the election of the Saskatchewan Party government to make that change, to reduce the property taxes on farm land, on commercial property, and on residential property. The member opposite seems to ignore that. Yes, there was a property tax increase in the budget, the first one in 10 years. So, Mr. Speaker, very selective choices of perspective on property taxes, Mr. Speaker.

The new member also talked about immigration credentials. I was elected in '91, served 16 years in opposition to the New Democratic Party. At that time they had the opportunity to make changes allowing for a greater acceptance of immigrant certification, and it didn't happen. It didn't happen for 16 years under the NDP. But what did we do? We expanded that certification through the New West Partnership across Western Canada to accept the credentials of all four of the Western provinces.

And the member for Athabasca is chirping away in his seat. And I remember when he stood in this House as a Liberal, condemning the NDP. And now he can't keep his lips together because he's always heckling, Mr. Speaker. Doesn't say anything important, but he's always heckling.

Mr. Speaker, we've increased the certifications on immigrant doctors. It used to be that they had to take training in Manitoba and maybe they would be accepted in Saskatchewan. Today they come to Saskatchewan. We've expanded from the six countries on the NDP list to many more jurisdictions. They now come to Saskatchewan, take SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] training for three months, and can now work. If they pass, they can now work across Saskatchewan.

You know, we've increased the number of doctors in this province by almost 800. But more importantly, we doubled the number of seats for doctor . . . medical training in Saskatchewan from what the NDP had — 60 to 120.

Nurses. Under the NDP, they had cut the training seats for nurses to 160 nurses a year because obviously under the NDP's growth plan, we were going to shrink. We didn't need all of these nurses, so why train them? Well, Mr. Speaker, this province under the Saskatchewan Party has grown. We now have seats for 450 nurses, I believe it is, across the province. That is growth.

[12:15]

And the member from Saskatoon Fairview needs to consider these facts as well as drinking the Kool-Aid. And the member who is sitting in front of you heckling, the member from Saskatoon Centre, has a lot to say. But when he was a minister, he accomplished nothing. He didn't do a thing, Mr. Speaker.

So I think the people of Fairview appreciate the fact that there

are about 800 more doctors here and 3,000 more nurses, Mr. Speaker. Because under the NDP previously, you had to wait 18 months to get surgery, 12 months to get an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging].

I'll give you an example. The member won't listen. He's too busy talking. But back in the 1990s, I raised dogs. Try and get in for an MRI would take you 9 to 12 months. I got my dog in for an MRI at University Hospital in three days using the same MRI that people used because the MRI worked at night for the animals whereas the staff couldn't work in the daytime. Now it just made no sense, Mr. Speaker, no sense.

So this province has grown significantly over the last 10 years: 160,000 more people — and I think it's actually more than that — but officially 160,000 more people. And I remember sitting over where you're sitting now, and the member, Doreen Hamilton from Regina, the east side of Regina somewhere, standing up and saying it's statistically impossible to grow the population in Saskatchewan. And I agreed with her. It was statistically impossible to grow the population of Saskatchewan under the NDP. Basically from 1944 to 2007, with a couple of breaks in there for the Liberals and the Conservatives, it was NDP. The population didn't change. We were under a million people in 1944, and we were still under a million people in 2007. The real growth happened in the 1910, 1920s. Nothing really after that until now. And I know some people on both sides of the House may think that I was there, but I wasn't.

One of the NDP cabinet members, years ago, said, grow, grow, grow; that's all you guys in the Sask Party talk about. Well that's true. We continue to talk about growth and growing the economy, growing the number of people in Saskatchewan, growing the prosperity of Saskatchewan. I think that's a very worthwhile goal. Before we formed government we said that our plan was to grow Saskatchewan by 100,000 people in 10 years, and that was to be impossible. Well in 10 years we've grown it by 160,000, a very commendable record.

You know, talking about doctors and the new doctors in Saskatchewan, the community where I was born, Redvers, now has three full-time doctors, more than they've had in many, many years. A local girl went and took her medical training and now has returned to work in Redvers. A young guy from Alida took his training, and now he works at Redvers as well, you know. And we have one immigrant doctor there from Southeast Asia. I'm not sure exactly which country he's from. So we have seen the growth in Saskatchewan and the benefits that it brings to all of our communities.

I didn't check the clock when I started so I'm not sure where I'm at here.

An Hon. Member: — Keep going. Keep going. We're enjoying it all.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Oh no. Don't have to worry. I've got lots to say. It's more that I'm more apt to get the hook to get out of here.

You know, we're looking at organ donor legislation to provide supports for people with severe medical conditions that can be helped out by the unfortunate demise of other members of

Saskatchewan. I had the privilege to chair the Human Services Committee when this recommendation was coming forward out of that committee and particularly with the cardio-circulatory death being recognized as an opportunity for harvesting of organs for organ transplants.

We also recommended that a program be put in place and then reviewed four years later to see whether or not it was providing the service that our expectations had for that program because you don't always get everything perfectly right the first time. You need to go back and reconsider and renew that program. So I'm looking forward to that kind of a review and develop the proper program for Saskatchewan because there certainly is a need to have a good organ donor program . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, yes. No, no. I've got 15 minutes yet.

You know, the members opposite are talking about increased taxation and cuts to schools, tumbleweeds blowing through the GTH. But you took a look at the 176 schools that the members opposite closed when they were in power. I'm not sure about the tumbleweeds in the schoolyards, but there certainly are no children in those schoolyards, you know, and that was a severe blow to many, many communities when their schools closed. The school in my own community of Alida was closed. The school that I went to high school at Storthoaks was closed. You know, that was all part of the benefit of living under an NDP government, that your school would be closed. You know, so I think the fact that we have built 18 new joint-use schools across the province is a commendation and a recognition of the growth that has taken place in Saskatchewan under the Saskatchewan Party government.

You know, I mentioned earlier about the property tax increases. Yes, once in 10 years there has been an increase. Every year prior under the NDP, there was property tax increases for education. Those property taxes have been significantly reduced for everybody across the system.

You know, we're looking now and it was mentioned — the member from Estevan mentioned this in her address — about the changes that the Liberal, federal Liberal government are bringing in on marijuana laws. You know, the feds made the decision, federal Liberals made the decision to implement non-criminal use of marijuana, and they did not provide any supports, any time for training, for law enforcement, for medical services to deal with any of the issues that might arise for this.

Can you go to school and stand out on the sidewalk? Because you can't smoke in school, but can you go to school and smoke out front of the school, your joint? Yes, you're not supposed to have it unless you're of legal age — 18 or 19, 21 perhaps depending on which province you're in — but you can legally possess it at age 16. So are we going to have high school kids going and standing on the sidewalks and having a few tokes before they go back to chemistry class and do their chemistry experiments? I don't know because the feds have never allowed time to work these things through. They just simply, you know, made the promise in 2015 and they're implementing it next summer, and you've got to live with it. You figure it out after that point.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a recipe for disaster. I think there

needs to be more time taken to develop the proper protocols to provide for this kind of a change in the environment of Saskatchewan.

You know, the one thing the feds did come forward with, though, was that they want a 10 per cent tax that'll go to them. But everybody else is supposed to keep their taxes very low so that we can compete against the black market, so as long as they get their 10 per cent it seems they're, you know, prepared to be happy about that. I'm not sure that that's the proper attitude that the federal government should have towards any of the provinces.

You know, over the last decade in this province, we've had 600 people killed because of impairments, impaired driving, and 4,000 people have been injured. You know, I was part of the last safe driving review that was done in this province in 1993-94. That's a long time, Mr. Speaker, and it might well be worthwhile with these changes to marijuana legislation to take another look at that and how we are going to deal with this as a province.

I know when we did this study and we selected .04 as the cut-off, that decision was made because at .05 there was a dramatic increase in the number of accidents related to impairment. Up to .04, the line was . . . it increased, but it was a gradual increase. At .05 it spiked dramatically.

What are the numbers for marijuana? Nobody knows. The research has not been done. And yet it's going to be implemented next summer. So I really think we need to take a very serious look at what needs to happen in these particular cases, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the members opposite . . . and being in opposition, you can do this. You can complain all you want because you don't have to accept any responsibilities. You don't have to expect or accept any responsibilities for the decisions that are made.

You know, if I look over the last 10 years of the Saskatchewan Party government, one of the things that is probably most notable across rural Saskatchewan in particular but certainly right around the urban areas as well . . . The NDP are always complaining about the Regina bypass, but across Saskatchewan in general we have spent in upgrading our highway infrastructure and our road network record amounts of money. Eight billion, I'm told.

Why did we have to do this? Because for 16 long years under the NDP, there was virtually no road construction and very little maintenance. I remember the 1992 budget where it was decreased, maintenance, to \$110 million a year and construction was \$50 million. We're spending over a billion dollars a year now upgrading those roads that the NDP allowed to deteriorate and become virtually impassable. Trucks were getting stuck on the highway going past my place because it was impassable.

Now we have spent a lot of money and done a lot of work in upgrading highways across this province, and we're not done. And I want to remind the Minister of Highways that we're not done yet and that I've got three highways in my constituency — we're not done yet — that need a little work. He should listen.

Highway 361, Highway 318, and Highway 47, and a little short stretch of Highway No. 8 south of Redvers, about 3 or 4 kilometres worth through a bunch of bog that needs to be ripped out and the base needs to be rebuilt in it. It's never been done since that highway was built in about 1952. It was resurfaced but the base has never been redone, and it just destroys the surface because there's no supports underneath of it.

[12:30]

You know, the members opposite were talking a lot about SaskTel. And we've spent a lot of money on upgrading SaskTel, but there's a huge difficulty there that most people don't recognize. And that is that when we buy bandwidth to increase the services of smartphones and iPads and Surface Pros and all of the other connectivity, digital connectivity, that we have and want, we have to compete on the national stage to buy that bandwidth. So we have to compete for a service in Saskatchewan, but we have to pay as if we were supplying that service in Ontario or Quebec or British Columbia or across the entire nation.

It makes it extremely difficult for SaskTel to be able to afford to buy that kind of bandwidth. We get outbid most times. So what happens is that we have fewer and fewer capabilities in our system to supply the service that our citizens want. Well the people of Saskatchewan have spoken and said no, they want SaskTel to remain the same. That also means that they may well be asked to accept a lower service than what is available across the country, because we simply can't buy the bandwidth. So, Mr. Speaker, it's great to keep our Crowns, but we need to be able to compete across Canada as well.

You know, one of the things that I have the privilege of being on is the Chairman of the energy sub-committee of the Midwest Canada committee of MLC [Midwestern Legislative Conference]. And there we deal with inter-jurisdictional issues dealing with energy, production, and transportation. What kind of shape is the electrical grid in? What kind of shape is the pipeline grid in? How is generation? How can we integrate renewable energy into a grid? And we look at what's happening in other jurisdictions.

You know, there is a push from groups in Saskatchewan to increase our use of wind and solar. That's very good. But how do you include that into your electrical grid system? How do you lump that in with the generation that we currently have without causing problems? Because if you do it wrong, you can blow a lot of the system up. You're not going to blow up the generators but you're going to blow up the switching, the transformers.

So what they've done in the U.S. [United States] is they have formed large blocks of states. And the one across from us is called MISO [Midcontinent Independent System Operator], and there they integrate over about 10 or 12 states the electrical generation — coal, nuclear, hydro, wind, and solar. And they sell electricity or they buy electricity in five-minute blocks. It's remarkable how you can manage that, but that's what they do. And they can . . . Somebody will contact them and say, my wind generator has come online; I can sell you X amount of power at a certain price. And somebody else says, yes, I'll take that. And so it goes from, let's say, from Illinois to Wyoming.

And that transfer is made. I'm not sure the electrons go from Wyoming to Illinois, but there's a shuffling along the line.

You know, Minnesota has pushed very hard for renewables. I think they're up around 20 to 25 per cent of their generation. And you've got to stop and think, in comparison to Saskatchewan, that's about a 6- to 8-million-person population there. So they've got a greater capacity to absorb renewables.

But what do they do when the wind isn't blowing across South and North Dakota or in Minnesota? Their backup is Manitoba Hydro. They're building a billion-dollar line out of Manitoba down into Minnesota to supply hydroelectricity to back up Minnesota's wind production. And what do we have for access out of Saskatchewan or into Saskatchewan? We've got a small — I think it's 100 kVA [kilovolt ampere] — connection into Alberta, 150 into North Dakota, about 100 or so into Manitoba. We're looking at developing a bigger connection into Manitoba.

But we are such a small electrical jurisdiction that we have peaked basically on our ability to generate more renewable energy because it will have a very negative impact on our generation if we allowed unrestricted access to our grid for wind. So we need to be a part of a greater conglomerate of generation and access to that. So we need better lines going in and out of this province so that we can utilize some of the capabilities that are available.

An Hon. Member: — Page 2.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, page 2. No, I have other colleagues who wish to have something to say today. So again I would like to welcome the member for Fairview to the Legislative Assembly. I would ask that she look skeptically at the commentary and philosophies of both sides of the House — not just one side but both sides because none of us have all of the answers . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I know; it's amazing, but it's also true. So I would invite you to keep an open mind on what goes on in here and participate fully and enjoy your time here.

I will not be supporting the amendment . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I know; it's a disappointment. But there are a small number of people on that side that are disappointed, a large number on this side that will be happy that I am supporting the main motion. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Cox: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this certainly isn't the position you want in the speaking order, following my learned colleague. However, as Paul Harvey used to say, and now for the rest of the story.

It's indeed my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to once again be able to rise and lend my voice to this very well-thought-out Throne Speech, this speech that's going to help us inform the direction of this second session of the twenty-eighth legislature of the province of Saskatchewan.

At this time I'd just like to offer some thanks, as many of my colleagues have done, certainly firstly to my two constituent assistants, Lillian Robinson and Amanda Humenny. They do a

great job up in The Battlefords for me. We have what I consider a very busy office up there. They handle all of our constituent concerns with great compassion, great efficiency, and in every case, get back to the constituents with their concerns.

Of course I'd like to also thank my family, Mr. Speaker. I mean they are . . . The most important thing in all of our lives are our families and the support that they give us. They look after things back home for me, for all of us, indeed, when we're in this House, and we thank them for their support.

And finally of course, great thanks to the constituents of The Battlefords. I believe back in my inaugural speech many years ago, I referenced an adage that I had heard many years before that in my previous profession, and that was that service is the rent that you pay for the space you occupy. And I committed at that time that as long as I occupy the space in this chair, I will continue to serve The Battlefords' constituents and be their voice in this House. And I will continue to do that.

So before I begin with my comments on the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to share a little bit of what's been happening in my constituency up in The Battlefords.

It's been a very busy summer with sporting events, parades, cultural events, all those sorts of things. Western provincial finals in fastball we hosted up there. And of course right now The Battlefords are abuzz with preparations for the 2018 Saskatchewan Winter Games which are going to be hosted in Battleford next February of 2018.

And I had the privilege just a few weeks ago to speak on behalf of SaskEnergy. They've been a sponsor of the Saskatchewan games for many, many years and once again will be sponsoring the volunteers. We are going to need about 1,200 volunteers to pull off these Winter Games, and I know The Battlefords have always come forward, whenever they were called on, with volunteers for a function like that.

Recently I just had the opportunity to attend the opening of our very first Habitat for Humanity home in The Battlefords. And everyone who was there certainly enjoyed, you know, the wide smiles that were on the two families that now finally have a home to call their own. And this was a duplex built for the first time with Habitat for Humanity in our city.

Last week I had an opportunity to address the class of 2030, if you can imagine. The class of 2030 is this year's kindergarten class actually, for a technicality. And this is a program begun by Living Sky School Division, and I think it's a very worthwhile program. We had a great attendance at that function with parents, extended families, a great representation from the local business community, community leaders. And the gist of this whole program is that they're going to follow this class right through their education process from kindergarten right through to grade 12, the purpose being to try to increase the graduation rates and the kids continue to stay in school and receive their secondary education. So I think this is a great initiative they've begun and certainly a credit to the Living Sky School Division.

I was also able this summer to attend the announcement, on behalf of our Minister of Highways and Infrastructure, the announcement of \$275,000 for our runway improvements at our

local Cameron McIntosh airport. This is part of the community airport program that's been in the province here for some time, and we've committed \$6.3 million to over 37 locally owned airports around our province. And you know, our airport in North Battleford is very important not only for The Battlefords but certainly for all of the Northwest — with the oil exploration that's going on, some mining activity, agriculture — to move products and people in and out of our city. So it was a great announcement.

And just last month, Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Rural and Remote Health was on hand for the unveiling of our new CT [computerized tomography] scanner at Battlefords Union Hospital for which our government provided \$600,000 in funding, which was matched by a very robust fundraising campaign run locally of another \$600,000. And of course anyone who has absolute need for a CT scanner, and I guess I'm considered one of those people, this new CT scanner works at a lot greater speed than the previous one and with a lot less radiation emitted. So anyone using a CT scanner is very happy to have this in our city. And of course we're all watching with anticipation as our new Sask Hospital in North Battleford progresses. But I'll talk a little bit more about that later, Mr. Speaker.

Over this past decade, our province has enjoyed growth experienced by very few other jurisdictions in our country. There are now, as mentioned previously, 160,000 more people living and calling Saskatchewan home than there were 10 years ago. We've had the second-best job creation record in the nation and the second-highest growth of average weekly earnings. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that this is indeed a testament to the hard work and ingenuity of our Saskatchewan people.

I think that we're all probably going to be in agreement when we say that our recent budget contains serious restraint measures that, though tough to accept, they are working to get us back to a balanced budget, something that many other jurisdictions have been either unwilling or unable to achieve. Our operating debt, Mr. Speaker, is now \$1 billion lower than it was in 2007. Moody's has now confirmed our credit rating at AAA as a result of our strong fiscal management and our plan to get to a balance in three years.

[12:45]

Mr. Speaker, we're not striving to grow our economy for the growth sake alone. It provides us with the ability to do the things that we need to do in areas such as health care, in education, in care for our vulnerable. And in my constituency alone in the Battlefords since November of 2007, \$10.6 million has been invested to develop 209 rental and homeowner units for low-income families. And we've also worked hard to help out our seniors, as evidenced by our seniors' income plan, which we have tripled in 10 years. In the previous 16 years of the former government, it was never touched once. We've increased it from \$90 a month to \$270 a month.

Since we've had the honour of forming this government, we have hired 750 more doctors and 3,400 more nurses of every designation. Mr. Speaker, we're not closing long-term care homes like the former government did. In fact we've opened 13

new long care homes in the last 10 years.

As well, we're building schools. We're building low-income housing. And yes, we're building hospitals, like our own Sask Hospital North Battleford. Mr. Speaker, I had the distinct pleasure of attending the celebration marking the 60 per cent completion of this new beautiful facility and bringing greetings on behalf of our government. And what a beautiful facility it is. In talking to patients, some of the patients there that day and certainly the staff, family members of the patients, they can't wait to move into this beautiful building with such a great view of our North Saskatchewan River Valley. The spacious rooms now, modern bathroom, this facility has been long, long, long overlooked and a lot needed, and we're finally getting it built.

In other areas of health care, Mr. Speaker, we are also making great strides forward. Mr. Speaker, our government's innovative two-for-one MRIs have resulted in 1,800 scans being completed at no added expense to our taxpayers.

Autism spectrum disorder continues to be a serious concern to many citizens with family members who are affected. And that is why we have committed to provide individualized funding of \$4,000 per child per year on top of the \$8 million we already provide for ASD [autism spectrum disorder] services.

Mr. Speaker, more good news. Our population, our school population is no longer declining. In fact it is increasing. And that is why we have opened 21 new schools this year with 11,000 students being able to attend school in a brand new, better learning environment. To go along with the 21 schools, we have hired 875 more teachers and created 6,000 more new child care spaces.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, since I was fortunate enough to be elected to this position, I have made a point of attending, along with my colleagues from Cut Knife-Turtleford and from Rosthern-Shellbrook, annual school board meetings with both of the school divisions in my constituencies. And one of the things that we heard at these meetings was a request for new curriculum renewal. We have listened to those requests, so we have now in our Throne Speech said that we are now going to pause our curriculum ... We have ended the pause to curriculum renewal and it's now been lifted.

Mr. Speaker, we have developed the most aggressive grad retention program in Canada. And since 2008, 70,000 students have taken advantage of this program and they've been receiving \$345 million in tax credit. And, Mr. Speaker, that means that there's now 70,000 post-secondary grads that have chosen to stay right here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is in sharp contrast to the thousands and thousands of young people who left our province under the members opposite.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only post-secondary grads benefit from our programs, but grade 12 grads can access our Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship. And in fact since 2012, over 38,000 have received over \$33 million to help defray the cost of a post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, last fall our Premier created a committee to try to find some solutions to reduce crime in our province. I was proud to be asked to be a member of that committee along with

my colleagues from Cut Knife-Turtleford, from Cypress Hills, Estevan, Canora-Pelly, Regina Coronation Park, and Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we spent a very busy winter travelling to 10 different locations here in our province to hear the concerns and suggestions from individuals, groups, police forces, municipal governments, First Nations, and many more. We sent out over 300 invitations and notices to these meetings, met with some 58 presenters, and received numerous written submissions.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was very pleased with the response we received from the Ministry of Justice and the announcement of 258 armed police officers and of our government's commitment of \$5.9 million towards these initiatives. We know that there's more to do in crime reduction, and we are going to continue to work to help reduce this problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I talked earlier about growth and what improvements it has allowed us to undertake. So let's just touch a little on our infrastructure expenses and improvements in which we have invested \$26 billion since 2007.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a former job that I had I was president of a national association. And one of the jobs of that national association was to travel to the other provinces and speak at the annual general meetings of the provincial associations, and on many occasions I travelled to Alberta. You'd sit around at a round table as you always do at a lot of these things. And once the flatland jokes and the no-time-change jokes were dispensed of, one of the main topics that came around that table was, when are you going to get your highways fixed in Saskatchewan? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm happy to say that of that \$26 billion, \$7.4 billion has been invested to improve, to build, or rebuild 12 000 kilometres in highways in this province.

With our growing population comes increased demand for essential services like power. And SaskPower has experienced a 25 per cent increase in demands since 2007. And not only SaskPower, but SaskTel as well has invested \$2.6 billion since 2008. SaskPower's response has been investing \$8 billion to meet that demand and to replace an aging infrastructure that was there. And SaskTel is continuing to invest with \$300 million to expand and enhance its network. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to see that my community in The Battlefords is on the list for faster Internet service, as are several other communities in this province.

Some of the growth is due to our increased activity in exports in this province because we are a very export-focused province, as we've heard earlier: exports to such designations as China, with a 530 per cent increase to \$3 billion worth of exports going to China. India, we've seen an increase of 272 per cent to \$1.5 billion; Pakistan, 293 per cent increase to \$548 million.

And of those imports, Mr. Deputy Speaker, agriculture plays a huge part in our exports, accounting for half of our total at \$14.4 billion. This involves over 300 companies that employ 5,000 people here in the province. And our government will continue to support our ag sector by strongly opposing the carbon tax which would be crippling to our province and by

continuing to expand access to world markets, investing in research, and supporting value-added food processing.

We also need to be reminded of agriculture's contribution to carbon sequestration to help reduce our net emissions in this province. In 2015 alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our farmers sequestered nearly 12 million tonnes of carbon into our soil.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have so much to be thankful for here in Saskatchewan. And one thing is our beautiful park system. And before I close here, as I know that several of my colleagues have more comments to add, I would just like to comment on the addition of one more provincial park to our park system. This is the second park, Mr. Speaker, that we have created in the last five years. And with attendance at our parks increasing at a very rapid rate every year to over 12 million visits, I know that this park is going to be very busy as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as this is my last opportunity that I will have to address a Throne Speech under our Premier, I would just like to say that what a genuine honour it has been to serve with this Premier, and I certainly want to take this opportunity to thank him for his guidance, his wisdom, his hard work, his humility, his sense of humour, and indeed for his vision. The citizens of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think are in such a better place today than they were 10 years ago, and to him we all owe a great debt of gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many things that we could touch on in this Speech from the Throne. It was been called a very ambitious Speech from the Throne. It outlines in summary what we are working to attain in this session of our legislature. Our colleagues are dedicated to work towards the end, to achieve the ends outlined in this Throne Speech, and I certainly will be proud to be part of that team.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I'm very pleased with the initiatives proposed in this Throne Speech, and I look forward to our government moving forward with the implementation of the initiatives in it. So in conclusion I would just like to say I will not be in favour of the amendment to this motion, and I'll be voting in favour of the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my honour to stand up and join the Throne Speech debate. And as I often do when I stand up, each and every time I want to make sure I take the time to properly thank my family. All of us here, without our support systems back in our homes, we don't get to do this job. So I want to make sure I thank my wife, Marjorie. Without her unending support, I wouldn't be here doing this today. It's her fault I'm here today. She's the one that actually got me involved in politics a long time ago, even before we moved to Moose Jaw.

It was actually back in Estevan when I first got really, really interested in politics. We always went and did our civil duty and made sure we got out and voted. It was one of the things you learned in cadets, that you had to make sure your vote

counts. So you got out. You learned about what the issues were and make sure you voted for the right party, which was always the party on the right, so we've always gone that way with my family. And again without her support, I just want to make sure she knows how much she means.

Then there's my kids. They're all special in their own ways: Geoffrey, Dylan, and Ryan. And Ryan's actually really involved, my youngest son. He's helped me out on . . . They've all helped me out on my campaigns, but Ryan actually sits on my board, so I want to thank him, and his wife for letting him spend that time with me.

And then there's our board back home that helps me out. We've got, we've got . . . Oh I'm going to forget names, so I'm not going to name my board. There's a lot of people back home on my board that help me out.

On top of that, we've all got our constituency assistants back in our hometown. So Trina . . . She won't be back from lunch yet probably but she's a good worker so she might be there early. She's the one that holds down my office. And many of the folks know her from the time she worked in the minister's office up on the third floor and I was able to steal her away to come back and to take care . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You remember that. Yes, you should . . . get her back in Moose Jaw and take care of my constituency office.

She has done such a fantastic job of keeping me on task, making sure I'm getting back, making the phone calls to the constituents, even those phone calls you don't want to make when you have to tell those folks that no, because of the regulations, the rules of the legislation, no, we can't do this.

But the ones that are the most fun are . . . She lines up — and we did this this summer — in my riding we have six, seven, eight, nine seniors' towers in my riding in Moose Jaw. So we make a point of going out every summer and every year before Christmas and visiting all these folks. So we get out there and I spent . . . Each one you spend a couple of hours in. They love it because Maple Leaf Bakery opened up again on South Hill, just around the corner from my office, and make sure we take fresh baking from . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — It is now past the normal hour of adjournment of 1 o'clock, so this House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wall	2595
Sarauer	2595
Stewart	2595
Forbes	2596
Buckingham	2596
Rancourt	2596
Wilson	2596

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Belanger	2596
Phillips	2596
Forbes	2596
Rancourt	2597
Beck	2597

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Wildfires in Saskatchewan	
Steele	2597
Lives Lived and Lost	
Sarauer	2597
Remembering Gord Downie	
Docherty	2598
Support for Survivors During Violence Prevention Week	
Beck	2598
Usher of the Black Rod	
Lawrence	2598
Grand Opening of New Gallery in Saskatoon	
Olauson	2598
Saskatchewan Home to World's Largest Potash Mine	
Kaeding	2599

QUESTION PERIOD

Intent of Bill 40 and Ownership of Crown Corporations	
Sarauer	2599
Wall	2599
Role of the Global Transportation Hub in Land Acquisition	
Sproule	2600
Duncan	2600
Usage of Private Email Accounts	
Forbes	2601
Harpauer	2601
Sarauer	2601
Wall	2602
Employment and Provincial Economy	
Mowat	2602
Bonk	2602
Support for Education	
Beck	2603
Eyre	2603

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on House Services	
Forbes	2603

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership of the Board of Internal Economy	
The Speaker	2604

MOTIONS

Sitting Days	
Harrison	2604
Committee Membership	
Beck	2604
Lawrence	2604

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Carr	2604
Nerlien	2607
Sproule	2610
Mowat	2612
D'Autremont	2614
Cox	2617
Lawrence	2620

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Minister Responsible for Innovation
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