



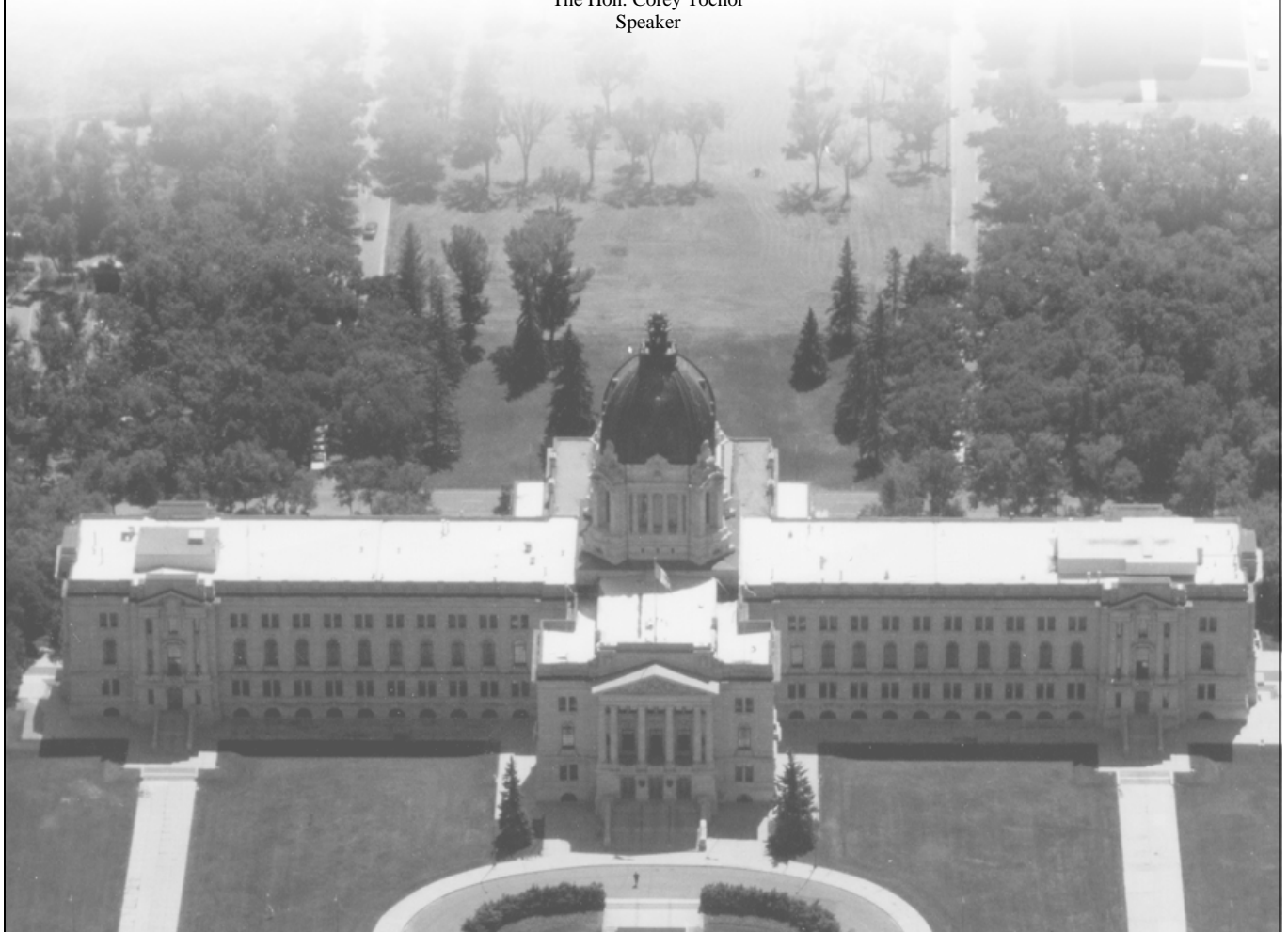
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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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| Beck , Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP) | McMorris , Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP) |
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| Makowsky , Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP) | |
| Marit , Hon. David — Wood River (SP) | Vacant — Kindersley |

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.
Principal Clerk — Iris Lang
Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyak

Sergeant-at-Arms — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Bonk: — I ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Bonk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of the Legislative Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce a special guest in the House today, Dr. Eric Grimson. Born in Estevan, Dr. Grimson is a professor of computer science and engineering, as well as the chancellor for academic achievement at the Massachusetts Institute for Technology, or MIT, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

He currently holds the Bernard Gordon Chair of Medical Engineering at MIT and is a joint lecturer on radiology at the Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Massachusetts. He is a leader in the field of computer vision, using computers to understand human movement. His research group pioneered state of the art systems for many areas in this field, including image-guided surgery, activity and behaviour recognition, and object and person recognition.

This morning I met with Mr. Grimson to discuss some of his innovative work with new technologies and their economic impact, including the use of artificial intelligence and robotic sensors in agriculture and mining. He will also be meeting with other federal and provincial groups to share his knowledge in projects they are working on. We are glad that he can take time to share his insight in these different areas.

Dr. Grimson attended high school in Regina and is an alumnus of the University of Regina where he received his Bachelor of Science with high honours in mathematics and physics in 1975. He also received the institute's Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011. He obtained his Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] in mathematics from MIT in 1980 and served as the chancellor of that institute between 2011 and 2014. A Fellow of The American Association For Artificial Intelligence, he has received a number of awards in recognition of his work. I invite Dr. Grimson now to stand up, while I ask everyone here to join me in welcoming him to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join with the minister in welcoming Dr. Grimson to his Legislative Assembly. You know, as long as he's gone away from home and as many accomplishments as you make, this

will always be your home. And we're proud of you, proud of the work you're doing, and we welcome you here and acknowledge all these accomplishments that you've racked up in fine style.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to welcome Dr. Grimson to his Legislative Assembly. And of course, Mr. Speaker, in fine or in typical Saskatchewan style, I'm dying to know if he's related to Stu Grimson, but we'll find that out. Yes? I note that he is. So all the more the accomplishments, Mr. Speaker. Anyway, on behalf of the official opposition, welcome, Dr. Grimson, to your Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to reopen the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre.

We, the undersigned residents of the northern village of Buffalo Narrows, Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the closure of Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre left 15 persons out of work and their families and businesses feeling the financial crunch. Many seniors and elders use the inmates to do odd jobs in their community to help out. It also gave inmates and their families a chance to visit, which now they will have no opportunities for many of them to travel such a far distance to visit their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, 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.

It is signed by many good people of Buffalo Narrows. I so present.

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise 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'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government 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 Porcupine Plain, Chelan, and Prince Albert. I do so present.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to provide a petition to stop the Sask Party plan to sell off Saskatchewan housing units.

The individuals that signed this petition would like me to draw the attention . . . these points to you: that the Saskatchewan Party plans to sell off affordable housing units in over 30 Saskatchewan communities; that the Saskatchewan Party have broken their promise to seniors and instead of making life more affordable, they've cut supports, hiked the rents in long-term care, and are desperately selling off public seniors' homes; and that those desperate sell-offs come at the same time that the Saskatchewan Party is eliminating a provincial support for seniors living with disabilities, many of whom would require supportive housing like the units the Saskatchewan Party are selling off.

I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to immediately stop their plan to sell off housing units in rural Saskatchewan, and ensure that Saskatchewan seniors across the province have access to affordable and supportive housing.

The individuals signing this particular petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the community of Prince Albert. I do so present.

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 have 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 across the province; that the Saskatchewan Party hiked education property taxes by \$67 million but cut an additional \$54 million out of the classroom, and even though the Sask Party is making us all pay more, our kids are actually getting less; and that these cuts mean that students will lose much needed supports in the classroom, including funding for buses for kindergartners as well as programs to help children with special needs.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, call upon the government to reverse the senseless cuts to our kids' classroom and to stop making families, teachers, and everyone who works to support our education pay the price for the Saskatchewan Party's mismanagement, scandal, and waste.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed the petition today reside in Saskatoon and Archerwill. I do so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of concerned residents that have been shut out, or have had their emergency access shut out in

Balgonie by the Sask Party's mismanaged bypass, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that 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 into and out of Balgonie, Saskatchewan at the intersection of Highway 1 and Main Street, 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 Main Street intersection. This gate would allow emergency services access to the eastbound lanes of Highway 1 at Main Street, Balgonie, Saskatchewan intersection, but would not allow the public access to cross east- and westbound lanes.

These petitions are signed by concerned residents from Balgonie, McLean, Yorkton, Kronau, and Vibank. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Many Saskatchewan families are affected by breast cancer. I'm sure that every member of this Assembly has a friend, family member, or a constituent who has been touched by this terrible disease.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan this month, several events were held throughout the province for Breast Reconstruction Awareness Day on October 19th. BRA [Breast Reconstruction Awareness] Day events provide women with the opportunity to learn about breast reconstruction options from plastic surgeons, hear survivors' stories, and get answers to their reconstruction questions.

BRA Day began about four years ago when physiotherapist Tracy Gardikiotis saw a need for survivors to have this type of support and education. She started putting women in contact with one another so they could build networks. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan there is limited access to information about reconstruction options for survivors. These options must be improved so that these brave cancer survivors can make as full a recovery as possible and make informed choices that best serve them.

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

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

Agriculture Month

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. October has been proclaimed as Agriculture Month in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this year's theme is Our Food Has a Story. The theme tells the story of our food, why we produce it, and how it moves from farm to table. It will also tell the story of the thousands of dedicated individuals in our province who work hard to deliver healthy, affordable, safe, and sustainable products.

Mr. Speaker, advocates have been selected as the faces of Agriculture Month, and they have been sharing their connection to food and what agriculture means in their lives. The advocates represent many communities in our province and include a blogger, a rancher, and a registered dietitian. Individually they are able to share their own personal story; however, collectively they all have a shared passion for agriculture.

Throughout October, Agriculture Month was being celebrated province wide with government, commodity groups, agribusiness, and producers. The month-long event focuses on four weekly subthemes: health and nutrition, affordability, food safety, and sustainability. These stories and themes can all be found on ourfoodhasastory.ca.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's agriculture sector has a lot to be proud of. Our farmers, ranchers, scientists, and agribusinesses work passionately to provide healthy and affordable food to consumers all around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in showing our appreciation of our agriculture industry and encourage everyone to share their food story. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Women's History Month

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize Women's History Month. In Canada, Women's History Month is celebrated in October to coincide with the anniversary of the Persons Case, a landmark in the history of the women's movement in Canada.

Five Canadian women, known as the Famous Five, were behind the monumental ruling that overturned the Supreme Court of Canada decision that in the BNA [British North America] Act, the term "persons" did not include women, paving the way for women to participate equally in all aspects of life in Canada. Eighty-eight years later, women in Canada have come a long way, but there's more work to be done as women continue to face sexism, structural barriers, and work disproportionately in precarious, low-paying jobs. Women continue to be affected by sexism, discrimination, and continue to be targets of violence.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, we know that government has a responsibility to make lives better for women in our province. It's unfortunate today that on Women's History Month we see that the Status of Women's office in our government has, until recently, operated

without any staff in that office. They have filled one position responsible for the Status of Women in a province of over 1 million.

Mr. Speaker, we know that women's issues are everyone's issues. We need to do more. We need our government to reflect the communities they serve. Striving to reach gender parity has to be a priority and would truly make our government more representative and responsible to the people we serve.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Lakeland's 2017 Citizens of the Year

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to acknowledge and thank two deserving and friendly volunteers from the district of Lakeland, north of Prince Albert, in my constituency. Wayne Bartel and Wayne Hyde were the recipients of the 2017 Lakeland Citizens of the Year Award. The event was held on September 30th.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is known all across this country for its strong volunteer base; in fact our province has the highest rate of volunteerism in Canada. Volunteering is a virtue that has its own reward. It strengthens a community, offers an opportunity to socialize, and enables experienced people to share their knowledge and expertise with future generations.

The award winners, Wayne Bartel and Wayne Hyde, have spent a long time volunteering at the Anderson Community Centre at Christopher Lake over the years. They have become known to the community as Waynes' world. They both have dedicated their time and expertise to enrich their community and are leading examples for all future volunteers in our parks. Community centres rely on the commitment of their volunteers, as they serve as ambassadors and representatives to the residents of the area and those visiting for the first time.

I would like to congratulate both Wayne Bartel and Wayne Hyde on receiving Lakeland's Citizen of the Year award and thank them for their long-term commitment and passion for volunteering. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Constituent Turns 104

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to stand in this Assembly today to acknowledge a constituent of mine, Pearl Skorobohach, who turned 104 years old this August.

Born a year prior to the start of the First World War, she was raised on her family's homestead 7 miles south of Goodeve. She came from a family of four children and 13 stepchildren. She married her husband, William, in 1933, and together they ran a successful grain and cattle farm. Pearl contributed in every aspect, from raising chickens and pigs to milking cows and hauling grain. They lived on the farm until 1991. Pearl and William were blessed with five children, which in turn led to 14 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren, and 6 great-great-grandchildren. William passed away in 2005, Mr.

Speaker, but Pearl continues to be active both physically and socially, including walking a quarter of a mile every day.

Mr. Speaker, through feast and famine, peace and war, political upheaval, technological revolution, 72 years of marriage, and 68 years of farming, Pearl has led an incredible life. She attributes her longevity to hard work, a good sense of humour, and maintaining close relationships with family and friends — truly a humble, Saskatchewan answer. Pearl has served and continues to serve as a great ambassador for this province.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members join me in wishing Pearl a happy belated birthday. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Constituent Awarded Medal for Water Rescue

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past month, Raquel Schreiner, a constituent of mine, was awarded the bronze medal by the Royal Canadian Humane Association for her act of bravery. Mr. Speaker, last October a couple was kayaking at Sandy Beach without life jackets. The woman had fallen out of her kayak and her boyfriend was unable to help her out, eventually tipping his kayak as well and leaving them both stranded in the water.

Mr. Speaker, Raquel was near the scene of the emergency and immediately took action to help the couple. She gathered extra life jackets along with her own kayak and headed out towards them. Her neighbours Rita and Ronald McCaw followed behind with a canoe for extra support. Once reaching the couple, she noticed that the woman was unresponsive. Mr. Speaker, Raquel feared the worst but was able to pull the couple out of the water, keeping them calm and relaxed all the way to the shore. The couple was transported to hospital for recovery.

The bronze medal is awarded to our everyday heroes who would risk their lives to save another, and Raquel is very deserving of such recognition. Raquel is feeling a sense of hope and trust in her community, as she knows if anything were to happen again, her neighbours would be there, as they're always looking out for each other. The McCaws also received an honorary testimonial certificate for their roles in the rescue.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members, join me in congratulating Raquel Schreiner on her award and thanking her for her selfless act of bravery. Thank you.

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

New Computerized Tomography Scanner at Battlefords Union Hospital

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On September 29th I had the privilege of accompanying the Minister of Rural and Remote Health to the official unveiling of our new CT [computerized tomography] scanner at the Battlefords Union Hospital. This was a great day for all those involved in diagnostic imaging at our hospital, and certainly even more exciting for those patients who are in need of a CT scan.

This new 160-slice scanner replaces the old 16-slice scanner,

allowing for more information to be captured, and at a faster speed. And it also allows for more complex scans and will have less maintenance downtime. Equally important, Mr. Speaker, because this scanner can complete the procedure faster, it performs with much less radiation exposure than the previous machine.

The purchase of this new scanner was made possible by \$600,000 of funding from our government and a matching amount of \$600,000 raised by local businesses and individuals. The local fundraising efforts were greatly assisted by the Jim Pattison Broadcast Group that hosted a radiothon which brought in a good portion of that funding.

The first patient to be examined with the new CT scanner was on September 18th, following six weeks of work to renovate the existing space and install the new equipment.

Mr. Speaker, since 2007-2008, CT scan capacity in Saskatchewan's health system has increased by 48 per cent to more than 110,000 patients in 2016-17. During that same period, overall health system spending on medical imaging has increased by 70 per cent to \$143 million.

Mr. Speaker, this new CT scanner in The Battlefords is just one more example of what we can accomplish by working together with government and local communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Global Transportation Hub

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, no matter how much the Premier and the rest of them try to sweep it under the carpet, the Sask Party's GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal continues to grow. Let's be clear — our sitting Premier was interviewed by the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. In most provinces and in most parties, that news would be shocking. But the Sask Party is trying to act like it's business as usual.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the Premier a simple question last week but he refused to answer, so let me try another angle. When he spoke with the RCMP, did he stand by his statement that he was there "through this whole process," or did he repeat his office's claim that he was "not involved in any of the negotiations . . ."? Mr. Speaker, what did he tell the RCMP about his involvement with their GTH scandal?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I don't agree with the hon. member's characterization of the GTH issues. Mr. Speaker, I will remind the House that it was this government that referred the matter to the Provincial Auditor, an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly. And more than that, Mr. Speaker, we were asked if the Provincial Auditor could access all cabinet documents related to any decisions made with respect to the GTH issue and we certainly made that possible. It's not always the case, Mr. Speaker, that cabinet documents are made available to an independent review of a matter done by an

independent officer of the Legislative Building. It's an approach that we took though in the interests of transparency, and now the matter is part of an RCMP review, Mr. Speaker, and we await the results of that work.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier can try to spin his way out of these questions, but the Saskatchewan people deserve real answers. Do you know what? You don't have to take my word for it. Just ask the member for Meadow Lake. During his cameo appearance in their leadership race, he even threw the Premier under the bus. He said he would have fired the minister plagued by scandal, and he would have fired the senior Sask Party operative as well.

Let me remind you: far from firing the minister, the Premier let Bill Boyd ride off into the sunset. He said he'd be missed and that he was in the DNA of the Sask Party. And the Sask Party operative at the centre of the scandal, well he still has a high-paying job just down the hall.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier still stand by the former minister, and does he agree about that senior operative as well?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The questions that have been asked by members opposite with respect to the GTH are certainly reasonable questions to be asked in this place. The bottom line is that this matter has been investigated by the Provincial Auditor. The Provincial Auditor report was something that members opposite called for. It's something that we asked the Provincial Auditor to do. Her and her team did an exhaustive report on the GTH, made recommendations about mistakes the government made. None of them would meet the test of scandal — a word that members opposite throw around — but certainly they were serious, serious recommendations.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we have responded to those recommendations. The GTH is now ensuring that the recommendations have been implemented and we're also implementing them across the government as well, Mr. Speaker. And we know that the matter has been the subject of review by RCMP. I welcome that and I look forward to the results of that work.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, why can't anyone over there bring themselves to take this issue more seriously? Last week instead of answering a serious question about how he really feels about the GTH scandal, the minister started boasting about land sales.

Well, Mr. Speaker, 300 of those 700 acres were given to the CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway] for free, and when Bill Boyd was the minister of the GTH and SaskPower, they swooped in at a key time and bought 145 of those acres. Now that he's gone, apparently they don't want it anymore and are considering selling. And the SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and

Gaming Authority] even bought 15 acres, Mr. Speaker. Or maybe we should go back to the 204 acres at the centre of the scandal that he's trying to avoid.

Mr. Speaker, I'll just ask the minister the same question I asked last week and last month: will he tell the people of Saskatchewan how he really feels about the GTH and the scandal, or is he just sticking to government lines?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment, GTH, and SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly believe the government has taken concerns that have been raised around the Global Transportation Hub very seriously. That's why the government took the steps of affording information to the Provincial Auditor and co-operating fully with the Provincial Auditor. And that's why we take seriously, obviously, the fact that the RCMP have reviewed the matter in question.

But I can also say that we certainly — and I certainly — view this as a generational opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan, to the province of Saskatchewan. The Global Transportation Hub, I believe, has considerable merit in terms of advancing the interests of the province. We are an export-based province; we are a province that is largely dependent on, obviously, transporting goods outside of this province. And so, Mr. Speaker, what I know that the board and the management and all the staff of Global Transportation Hub are focused on are ensuring that it is a success going forward.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's lines don't match up with the facts. Even with them using our Crowns to bail out the GTH, the GTH is losing millions. In fact, the GTH line of credit grew from less than \$3 million to \$7 million in just one year. And they haven't made a single payment in three years on the \$24 million loan that they have with the Royal Bank. That loan has cost Saskatchewan people over \$1 million in interest, and that's not even counting the cost of the infrastructure and the legal costs for all the settlements over the land dealings.

So if the minister refuses to directly answer about the Sask Party's GTH scandal, can he at least accept responsibility for the millions of dollars the Sask Party's mismanagement has cost Saskatchewan people?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite should know, as I said last week, nearly \$500 million in private investment has been invested at the Global Transportation Hub. This has created nearly 1,000 full-time jobs, and on top of that, 1,800 jobs in construction.

Nearly 5,000 trucks move in and out of the Global Transportation Hub every week, and this has generated — leaving the land sales aside for a moment — this has generated

\$17 million in diesel tax fuel and \$15.2 million in provincial personal income tax for an organization that has been around, Mr. Speaker, for five years, six years. This is at the infancy of the Global Transportation Hub. Certainly this is an organization that is going to continue to sell land and attract additional tenants to the Global Transportation Hub over the coming 10 and 20 and 30 years.

[14:00]

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

Water Management Project in Quill Lakes Area

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, since I'm not getting any answers from the minister on the GTH, let me see if I can get some answers on a different file. Last month a project to divert water from the Quill Lakes got a green light. They're rushing ahead, saying no environmental impact study is necessary. Mr. Speaker, this project is a 25-kilometre channel that diverts salinated water into Last Mountain Lake. People are very concerned about the environmental impacts, about wildlife, about fish, and about their properties.

Mr. Speaker, the Water Security Agency themselves reported that the diverted water has a much higher salinity level than in the lake. So how did the Environment minister determine that this project would not cause the emissions of any pollutants and therefore not trigger the Act?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, there was so much wrong with the preamble of that question, I don't even know where to begin. First and foremost, the government has not approved a plan for construction and operation of a diversion channel. What has merely been done is the government has determined, the ministry has determined that it is not a development under the Act and therefore does not require an environmental assessment.

For a project to have approval, which there is not a project in front of the government, we would have to be satisfied with the following: hydrological analysis, hydraulic modelling, water quality analysis, water quality monitoring program, land control, and public consultation. That all needs to continue, and that needs to be provided to the proponents before approval is ever given. There has not been approval given to any project with respect to the member's question.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the minister should tell that to the fish who will be drinking those higher salinated waters. I'm asking what experts were consulted, not to repeat the lines. But I'm going to move on, Mr. Speaker.

The Act could also be triggered . . . and this is right in the Environment letter. The Act could be triggered if, and an assessment would be required, if there was "widespread public concern because of potential environmental changes." Mr.

Speaker, a 25-kilometre channel into Last Mountain Lake? People in communities around the lake and across the province are concerned. Why is the minister saying that their concerns don't count, that they don't count at all?

The urgency of this project was actually allayed a little this year, so why is the minister rushing forward, unwilling to give the Saskatchewan people a full hearing and ensure that an environmental assessment takes place to make sure that the project is safe?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, approval has not been given to a project. In order for the government to approve a project, hydrological analysis would have to be not only complete but also agreed to by the government. Hydraulic modelling would have to be agreed to by the government. Water quality analysis would have to be agreed to by the government. Water quality monitoring program would have to be agreed to by the government. Land control and consultations would have to be agreed to, all which still has to take place and produce to the government, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite should know that many projects go forward without a full-blown environmental assessment. Many projects go forward without reaching that standard and having to achieve this. Mr. Speaker, I have over 60 pages of projects that went forward under the former government from 1997 to 2007 that didn't require an environmental assessment, but they still required the proponents to provide to the satisfaction of the government, regardless of the agency, regardless of the ministry, the questions that are asked in that process.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue we take very seriously, and no project would be approved until all of those questions are satisfied.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Intent of Bill 40 and Ownership of Crown Corporations

Mr. McCall: — You know, typical, Mr. Speaker, in terms of not taking responsibility for their own actions. They've always got to point, be pointing somewhere else, Mr. Speaker, but never looking in the mirror taking responsibility. And it figures, Mr. Speaker.

On another front, during the election, this government promised that there would be no sell-off of our Crown corporations. But they scrapped STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] and are auctioning off the assets. And then they had dozens of secret meetings they claimed were chance encounters on the sale of SaskTel and SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance].

So when the Premier took to Facebook to declare that they were finally listening and would repeal Bill 40 — you'll forgive us, Mr. Speaker — we were a little skeptical. Two days later, he admitted that they were only repealing parts of it, and I quote, "We think definitionally that a wind-down should be available to this government or future governments." Mr. Speaker, either

they're repealing Bill 40 or they're not. Which is it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful for the question from the member opposite. This announcement and the Speech from the Throne has been well received by people across the province.

Mr. Speaker, the efforts of Bill 40 were to define privatization because the previous government failed to do so in the Crown protection Act. And so, Mr. Speaker, we used the World Bank definition of privatization which would have meant that partnerships or partial sale up to 49 per cent would have been allowed by the government. We heard very clearly from Saskatchewan people that they didn't agree with that definition. Their definition, the people of the province's definition of privatization was the sale of any stake, of any amount of a Crown, or the partnering of any amount of a Crown. And so, Mr. Speaker, our MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] reported that back to ministers, to myself. I heard it directly from Saskatchewan people. Bill 40 will be changed to reflect that fact, Mr. Speaker.

I know the NDP [New Democratic Party] have said they're going to reinstate and start the bus company over again. Mr. Speaker, it was a difficult decision but \$100 per-passenger subsidy, we don't think that's the appropriate use of public funds going forward. So we disagree with them on that front, Mr. Speaker. But as for the Crown corporations, no stake in the Crown corporations are subject to sale or partnership going forward.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, definitionally it's not complicated. Either they're repealing Bill 40 — as the Premier said they would on Facebook the night before the Throne Speech — or they're not. But apparently, they're not. And it's a big deal, Mr. Speaker, because last May that Premier contended that they needed Bill 40 to scrap STC. So what will they wind down next, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan people are sick and tired of this government playing games with their Crowns over a decade now, Mr. Speaker. And they're sick of this government trying to shove secret deals through the back door that they know they wouldn't be able to get through the front.

So, Mr. Speaker, what was the point of the Premier's video if not a commitment to the Saskatchewan people to repeal Bill 40, as he had said? Will they commit to changing the law to get rid of all of Bill 40, or are they going to keep playing the games?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the member who has asked the question is the House Leader for the NDP, and an able House Leader and one who is no stranger to this place. And I know that he reads legislation carefully. He will also note within Bill 40, which was a miscellaneous statutes Act . . . That's the kind of bill that comes forward that covers off any number of elements of the government. I think in that particular

bill — I'm looking over at the former attorney general — I think we also moved to make the change with respect to Queen's Counsel and King's Counsel. There was a number of miscellaneous things that happened.

Mr. Speaker, I just fundamentally and categorically reject the member's opposite contention that after all that we've been through on this side of the House on the Crown corporation issue, and after the change that we've made indicating clearly that no portion of any Crown corporation is up for sale, that any government, either this one or some future government, would ever move ahead with any changes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that members opposite have said that they would move to reinstate the bus company for the province. We know that. They have indicated that. There were several resolutions passed at their convention and you know, Mr. Speaker, I would just point out that we've looked carefully at that issue. We fundamentally believe that subsidizing per passenger, \$100 per passenger, is not in the interest of taxpayers. The tens of millions of dollars of taxpayer subsidy to subsidize the bus company is not in the interests of public service or the taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, and so we will not go down that road.

However, when it comes to the Crown corporations listed in the NDP's Act that members on this side of the House voted for, there will be no sale of any portion of those Crown corporations, neither a partnership involving any share of those Crown corporations.

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

Support for Municipalities

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party is attacking our Crowns and they're attacking Saskatchewan people too. Some people saw their property taxes increase by 250 per cent. From Estevan to La Ronge, people are paying more and getting less. Commercial businesses are worried about keeping their staff on the payroll and even their doors open, and families are finding it harder to make ends meet.

Before the minister starts hiding behind SAMA [Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency], let's be clear. The Sask Party knew the assessment issues before the budget. They could have done something to help. Instead they did nothing.

So will the minister stop pointing fingers, take responsibility for the Sask Party tax hikes, and take steps to help the communities that were the hardest hit?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the member opposite knows that every four years there's reassessment. And of course under this last 10 years of growth, assessment has gone up. I think that's something to be proud of in many instances. It wasn't that long ago, it wasn't that long ago when you went to sell your house, you were worried about how much you were going to lose, not what you're going to make.

So, Mr. Speaker, EPT [education property tax] was established. And this year EPT will be collected by the government and reported straight to the GRF [General Revenue Fund]. And, Mr. Speaker, this will be to respond to the request from the school divisions, and we're supporting it strongly. Thank you.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, no matter how they spin it, the fact is the Sask Party raised taxes, including educational property taxes. It's an assessment year, and they knew exactly what the new assessments were when they went down and wrote down the budget. And they made sure they could get another \$67 million.

But instead of putting that back into education, they took \$67 million for the General Revenue Fund to pay for their mismanagement, scandal, and waste. On top of that, they cut millions from funding for municipalities across the province. How can the minister justify the cuts to education and municipalities while still hiking the taxes?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think I would agree with the member when she says that municipalities were cut on revenue sharing. I guess she wouldn't remember the days from the '97 to 2007 where the NDP gave nothing. You never knew until halfway through your budget if you were going to get anything at all.

Mr. Speaker, EPT, like I said earlier, is going to be collected now by the municipalities and transferred straight to the government and go into the GRF, and that will support anything that the school divisions need. Mr. Speaker, I think I would also say that . . . I think I have to say this, is that since we took over the change in the EPT, there has been a billion dollars in savings to property owners. So, Mr. Speaker, I'll leave it at that.

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

Support for Education

Ms. Beck: — Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. They're forcing Saskatchewan people to pay more and they're ensuring that our children get less. Forty-five hundred more students were in Saskatchewan schools this year over last year, and that should be great news. But on top of cutting other resources, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's cuts also resulted in there being 181 fewer teachers in this province. I'll say that one more time, Mr. Speaker. That's 4,500 more students but 181 fewer teachers in our classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, I ask: how can that minister possibly defend these deep cuts to our kids' classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is basing some of these numbers on the STF

[Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] numbers that came out over the weekend. But the staffing profile for this year is still preliminary, and we're not aware of where those numbers are coming from. At least one division, Mr. Speaker, at least one . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

[14:15]

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At least one division has yet to report, and it appears we have roughly 2,500 more students this year. That's absolutely true. It appears that educator numbers, however, that are being bandied about include administration numbers, which is a problem. We're going to wait for those final numbers to come in, Mr. Speaker.

Last week I referenced Saskatoon Public Schools, the province's largest urban division and a quote by its director that teachers and EA [educational assistant] numbers had in fact "gone up a little bit." And last week we learned that Saskatoon Public is investing \$1.2 million in furniture, which is great. But it suggests that front-line hardships cannot be overly extreme.

Mr. Speaker, bottom line, with growth comes higher enrolments. In contrast, closing 176 schools as the members opposite did, Mr. Speaker, that creates staffing challenges in the opposite direction. Eight hundred and seventy-five more teachers, Mr. Speaker, 173 more student support teachers since '07, more specialized staff overall than have ever been in this province, Mr. Speaker — that's growth.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, front-line hardships cannot be overly extreme. I suggest that minister get her nose out of those notes and get her body into the classrooms and see what's going on. Those lines won't do anything to change the reality that teachers across this province are facing.

That government cut millions, millions from education. They think this is funny, but it is not funny. As a result there are 181 fewer teachers to teach our kids. And now the teachers that are left are being left to fill the gap. And remember, there are 4,500 additional students. Mr. Speaker, why is that minister forcing our kids' teachers to do so much more with so much less?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's quite clear that the member opposite is challenging our commitment to education, and I fundamentally challenge the premise, Mr. Speaker. For one, total funding to education in this province has increased from \$944 million in '07 to 2.2 billion 10 years later, an increase of 114 per cent.

When the opposition was in power — let's say it one more time, Mr. Speaker — they closed 176 schools. That takes effort. That takes effort. School buses literally got stuck in . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Mr. Speaker, school buses literally got stuck in potholes on highways that had become a national disgrace. There was no emergent fund to address emergency capital demands. There was no preventative maintenance renewal fund.

In contrast, we've renovated; we've repaired; we've built. Our 18 new joint-use schools are the latest in a chain of investments for students. And we listen to them, Mr. Speaker. We listen to parents and community members and teachers about what they wanted to see, what the school of the future looked like to them. And you know what it was, Mr. Speaker? Chief Whitecap School. Or the māmawēyatitān centre right here in Regina which has been called one of its kind, the first of its kind in the country. École Connaught, whose own students, Mr. Speaker, called it a dream. Take a walk through those schools and then come and talk to us about commitment.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Carr, seconded by Mr. Nerlien, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Ms. Sproule.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good that I get to stand up and finish my reply today. And today's a special day on top of that. One of the people I didn't get to thank was my mother, and it's her birthday today. So happy birthday, Mom. I'm sure she'll be happy I let everybody know.

My last point I was talking about was the new bakery opening up on South Hill. And that's actually a bakery that is opened up through some folks through our Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program. They moved into the province, came and took over the bakery that had closed months prior, and have opened it up. And the folks that I visit and take baking to really appreciate that.

So with my thanks then, I just want to hit a few high points on the Speech from the Throne.

So one of the things that was near and dear to my heart, that a lot of us on both sides of the House put in a lot of time and work on, was to improve the rates of organ donation throughout the province. And we are doing this through donor physicians. It's something we heard loud and clear, both sides of the House, that donor physicians would be needed to actually improve this. And we're not done with that file yet, Mr. Speaker. We're continuing taking a look at how we can do a better job, how we can educate the people of Saskatchewan to make sure that we

all step up when we're able to with organ donations. We're moving away from just allowing organs from brain death, so to say, to also allowing organs from cardiac patients, Mr. Speaker.

One of the other things that I know the member from Moose Jaw North and myself, we met with our Catholic school board earlier this fall, right before session started. And one of the things they made a point of thanking us for was for standing behind them, standing with them to protect parents' rights for choice, to protect students' rights for choice, of where they get to decide to go to school, albeit whether it's a Catholic school or a public school, both funded through the government.

And I don't think that the members opposite have told the Catholic school boards — I could be wrong — but have told the Catholic school boards that they're behind them with this. So what we're going to do to protect their rights for the time being is invoke the notwithstanding clause. Sounds like I hit a nerve over there. So they're kind of getting loud, so maybe they are paying attention a little bit.

Another thing we've heard across parents when it comes to education is going back to taking a look at our math outcomes and going back to a common sense approach when it comes to teaching the math curriculum. So we're going to take a good, close look at that and work with folks from across the province on that.

And I know it was brought up from the Opposition House Leader on the repeal of Bill 40, I, like many of my other colleagues, have heard loud and clear that people don't agree with any portion of the Crowns being sold off. So we're repealing Bill 40 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. Right, we did vote in favour of it. Contrary to popular belief, as opposed to the opposition, we actually listen to what the people of Saskatchewan say. So if we'd made a decision that is onerous . . . I can speak directly to Moose Jaw. When the hospital was first designed, it was designed without the oxygen chamber . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The hyperbaric chamber. Thank you, the hyperbaric chamber.

And the people of Moose Jaw, along with the firefighters, and with some really good supporters and friends of mine met with us over and over and over again to change the government's mind on that. To change . . . We listened to the experts. The experts said, no, no, no, it's not really necessary. However we listened to the people of Moose Jaw, the people of Moose Jaw Wakamow. They were loud and clear of their support of the hyperbaric chamber.

We actually had a businessman donate his time, his equipment to build the foundation for that building. That's how important it was to the people of Moose Jaw. And we listened to them, contrary to what the opposition did when they were in power. There's a reason there's so few of them over there; they forgot how to listen to the people of Saskatchewan.

We also want to focus on business tax reductions for small businesses. Although it's small business, they are, if not the largest, one of the largest employers of people across the province. So what we're doing is we're raising that cap from 500,000 to 600,000. And we're going to do that to make sure that they're able to hire more people, staff more front-line

services here in the province, and they can keep more of their own money to put back into their business.

We need to protect them from, you know, maybe some people down east that have a different mindset when it comes to business people. We want to make sure that our business people know that they have our full support.

Last but not least, we're going to help our seniors. So one of the bills we're introducing is a seniors' education property tax deferral program that will give our seniors with household incomes under \$70,000 the option to defer the portion of property tax on their home, the education property tax on their home. So that allows our seniors to keep more of their money in their own pocket.

I know that contrary to some governments . . . Like when the opposition was in power, they always wanted that money out of your pocket, you know, through higher PST [provincial sales tax] and the highest PST across Canada. Although we had to increase the rate of PST in our province and expand it because we had a \$1.2 billion hole in the budget from resource revenue shortfall, it is still much lower than it was under the NDP when they were in power.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in support of the Throne Speech and against the opposition's motion.

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

Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really proud to support the ambitious plans outlined in the Speech from the Throne. After a decade of being in power in this province, through some very good economic times and also some challenging ones, it is clear that we are still a party with good ideas and continued enthusiasm for this province and its promise in the federation.

You know, it was remarked last week by the interim Leader of the Opposition on the Speech from the Throne that it was really an attempt to, and I quote, "protect the Premier's legacy," and that it, I quote, "doesn't help people," Mr. Speaker.

Well for one thing, if yesterday's Speech from the Throne was designed to protect the Premier's legacy, I applaud it. But what does it say? Well it says that the Premier has always been, Mr. Speaker, a passionate advocate about helping improve the lives of people with disabilities in this province. We created the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program in 2009, and across all of our ministries we have spent more than \$3.7 billion to help people with disabilities.

You know, Mr. Speaker, one of my first jobs in my former role as the minister was to visit a family in Warman, Saskatchewan to announce the introduction of a self-directed funding model so people with disabilities could choose the people and supports they want in their life, something the rest of us take for granted. I'm never going to forget how that mother cried at the kitchen table talking about how empowering it was for her son to make these decisions for himself and how that has fundamentally changed his behaviour for the better. It struck me then just how much decisions like this matter for everyday people.

Individualized funding for pre-school children under the age of six was something that we campaigned on, and when we were tasked with a \$3 billion shortfall, we had to put that on hold, Mr. Speaker. But last week, ladies and gentlemen, that commitment was reaffirmed. It was not forgotten. As a result of that, young children with autism across this province and across the spectrum will be able to access the appropriate supports for their unique needs at a time when their development for those supports are the most critical in helping them establish a fulfilling life.

We also committed to the seniors' education property tax deferral, Mr. Speaker, which gives seniors with household incomes under \$70,000 the option to defer the education portion of the property taxes on their home. This helps provide financial security for low- to moderate-income seniors, giving them the opportunity to stay in their homes longer. Contrary to the comments made by the interim Leader of the Opposition, these efforts, Mr. Speaker, do help people. It definitely helps those who are vulnerable. And yes, that is part of the Premier's legacy, and I think we would all agree that is a good thing.

[14:30]

I would be remiss not to also mention that the Ministry of Social Services had a record budget at a time when we have been challenged with a serious revenue shortfall and increased utilization in that ministry. That protected things like respite for families whose kids have serious medical needs.

Jacque Tisher from Hope's Home has shared with me that if they get a child when they are under the age of 10 with high medical needs, that family has an 80 per cent chance of staying together, Mr. Speaker. When that family can only get respite after that age or later in life, 80 per cent of those families are already broken apart by the strain of caring for a child with complex medical needs. That helps people, Mr. Speaker. In very important ways, that helps people.

We also heard about "increased taxes for families" in the interim leader's scrum, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under this government and under the leadership of our Premier, we've removed 114,000 low-income people off the tax rolls. Even in this last budget, a very difficult budget, we've tried to protect low-income families. We have included a low-income tax credit to try to protect them.

In addition to that, we have a competitive corporate tax rate and we have the highest small-business tax threshold in the country, Mr. Speaker. This means that all of our small-business owners, those entrepreneurs who are creating jobs and spurring innovation and building vibrant communities in this province cannot just survive, Mr. Speaker, but they can thrive here.

And if we head out to rural Saskatchewan farms or even to any Greek restaurant here in Regina, those are families, Mr. Speaker. That is something that clearly neither our federal government in Ottawa or the opposition party members on the other side of this Assembly seem to understand.

Another thing I heard in that scrum, Mr. Speaker, was a reference to the east bypass, and I quote, "scandal." Let's talk about that for a minute. You know, I live in the east end of

Regina. That area has seen tremendous growth over the last several years, in The Creeks, The Greens on Gardiner, and then in the bedroom communities of Pilot Butte, Balgonie, White City, and Emerald Park. Victoria Avenue and Arcola Avenue are two of the busiest roads in Regina. About 21,000 vehicles use those roads every single day. The increased vehicle traffic combined with the increased heavy truck traffic has resulted in a very dangerous situation for motorists' and pedestrians' safety in those areas.

Residents of Balgonie and Pilot Butte know well the danger of trying to access those main access points. That area saw a reported 100 collisions per year, Mr. Speaker. We need to get trucks off that road. The east bypass will help us do that, which improves the lives of people who live in those areas. But it will also facilitate the efficiency, Mr. Speaker, of transporting goods for truckers and the economies who rely on them for those goods. This is the largest transportation infrastructure project in the province's history.

Okay. Mr. Speaker, it is a \$1.2 billion project that will include 12 new overpasses, 40 kilometres of four-lane highway, 20 kilometres of resurfaced four-lane highway, and 55 new kilometres of service roads, Mr. Speaker. There will also be the twinning of about a 5-kilometre stretch on Highway No. 6. The entire project, Mr. Speaker, is going to be done by 2019. The three overpasses on Highway No. 1 East alone will dramatically improve safety and efficiency. And most importantly, doing this using a P3 [public-private partnership] model will save \$380 million compared to building it through traditional methods.

The projected economic impact of this project is 8,200 construction jobs, Mr. Speaker — 8,200 construction jobs. That helps families, Mr. Speaker. That kind of economic growth helps us provide a quality of life not just for those families, Mr. Speaker, but for all families. Again, if that is the legacy of Premier Brad Wall, I'm good with it.

On the issue of the Theodore decision, Mr. Speaker, we heard last Thursday that we should just let the court process work itself out. Mr. Speaker, I disagree. I disagree because if we just sit on the sidelines and let the court process work itself out, we are only bystanders on this issue. That means we would be bystanders on the fate of Mother Teresa Middle School, which provides an incredible opportunity for vulnerable kids and families, Mr. Speaker. It means we would be bystanders on the Huda School, and on the Regina Christian School, Harvest City Academy, and every separate high school and elementary school in this province, Mr. Speaker.

The Regina Christian School, LeBoldus High School, Luther College, and Champion College are all in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. We will not be bystanders when it comes to protecting choice for schools, Mr. Speaker. We will speak up and we will advocate for all of these because that is what the people that we represent asked us to do, and they will get it.

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier's legacy is standing up against the carbon tax, against the federal tax changes which affect family farms and small businesses — 34,300 of which are owned by women, by the way — and against the Theodore decision which would deprive us of choice for schools, then I am good with it because those things help people, Mr. Speaker. We don't wait,

Mr. Speaker. We don't hesitate. We speak up.

And yet it has been said by the members opposite that we are out of touch. Out of touch? At the NDP convention this weekend, Mr. Speaker, the NDP voted against Uber and Lyft. Yes, you heard that right. They voted against Uber and Lyft. I guess it's because Saskatchewan cities should stay behind. We don't believe that. We want Saskatchewan cities to have all of the amenities that people enjoy when they travel elsewhere, Mr. Speaker, because we believe we can. And therein lies the difference between us.

They also have a leadership candidate that is campaigning on a \$15 minimum wage at a time when our unemployment rate is already challenged by a stuttering resource economy and utilization pressures in our human services are also up. These two facts have been mentioned by the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, but this candidate doesn't seem to get the connection. And let's never mind the fact that the federal government is already threatening those small businesses, who are the largest employers in this province, at the same time.

This is so tone deaf I don't even know where to start. By contrast, Mr. Speaker, we have kept the corporate tax rate where it is to be competitive and increased the threshold for small businesses. That is called paying attention, Mr. Speaker. We also committed in this Speech from the Throne to scrap Bill 40. Saskatchewan shareholders in our Crowns want those Crowns to stay where they are, so that's what we're going to do. However the status quo is not enough for that same NDP leadership candidate. No, he wants to create another Crown corporation. I guess that's because he believes that government should compete with business.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we've heard about our moral compass. And on this I will only say this, that I suggest that the NDP needs to look internally at its own moral compass. I submit that the messages that are being sent to you that are so tone deaf, stuck in the past, and too busy navel-gazing at their own self-righteousness to stand up for the things that actually matter.

Mr. Speaker, I support the Speech from the Throne without amendment and I definitely support the fact that it speaks to the legacy of this Premier and his leadership of our party. It helps people. Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is going to keep moving forward. Thank you.

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

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for providing the opportunity to speak to the 2017 Speech from the Throne while representing the good people of the constituency of Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Speaker, it is another great day in Saskatchewan with another convincing win by the Riders on Friday, the extraordinary harvest we've all got in the bin for 2017, and the multitude of resources that we have here being developed in this province, and the exceptional people around us. We can only grow stronger.

I too must acknowledge the many people who have supported

me in what I believe to be really one of the best jobs a person could have. Certainly my wife, Carla, deserves special recognition. As a municipal employee — she's a town administrator for Churchbridge — she certainly deserves recognition for what she and other community councillors and administrators do.

I know as I have heard so aptly described, a municipal official's role can be likened to a fire hydrant at a dog convention. It's for her and other municipal servants that we are motivated to improve our communities and ensure their sustainability.

Thanks to my mom, Phyllis Kaeding, who proudly gathers her fellow senior apartment residents together around the big screen whenever her son gets his 10 minutes of fame on the legislature channel. It's for her and all seniors that I want to work, that we want to work, to ensure that they can retire and serve the rest of their time in dignity and respect. Whether it's the seniors' education property tax deferral program or other senior benefits programs that have been improved over the last number of years, we will continue to do more for our seniors.

I'd like to recognize my oldest son, Michael, who is a mechanical engineer at Brandt Ag, and my daughter-in-law Laine, who many of us know here at the legislature, who are two of the approximately 70,000 graduates who have taken advantage of the graduate retention program since it was introduced in 2007 — the 70,000 graduates we have kept and retained in this province.

Michael and Laine have also provided a precious granddaughter whose name is Brynn, who is my motivation for being here and ensuring that we have an environment and an economy that she can be proud of and can sustain her into her future life here. As Halloween is fast approaching, I've been trying to introduce her to carbon taxation through a working analogy of a candy tax. But like many of our supporters, she's not a big fan of taxation, whether it comes to chocolate or carbon.

And kudos to our youngest son, Matthew, an aerospace engineer working in Toronto, who often complains he's really the lone conservative out in the wilderness of others in the GTA [Greater Toronto Area] . . . for him that we are a government that is creating a positive environment for business that, who knows, may even one day support an aerospace industry in this province that he can come home to.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank our Melville-Saltcoats constituency executive made up of men and women, millennials to boomers, urban and rural, business people, the civil servants, who work tirelessly to ensure that our party is represented fairly through the constituency. We haven't always made it really that easy to defend some of our decisions, especially when it affects them personally, but they ask questions and they provide thoughtful and productive discussions whenever we get together. For that I want to express my respect and admiration of you and what you do every day. Every day I get to represent you is a good day.

To constituents of Melville-Saltcoats, I want to acknowledge and thank you for your support. It's the day-to-day conversations and discussions we have that provide encouragement and support to what I enjoy doing each and

every day, and that is to represent you. There is nothing more rewarding than a constituent sending you a note or a card thanking you for all the help that we have given them to help solve a problem. Mr. Speaker, when that happens, it's a very good day.

In the one and a half years that I've been at this job, I have worked with many remarkably, incredibly wise and ambitious people who have committed themselves to public service in this building. I don't know how many times I've written an email, sent a note, or left a message with caucus staff, chiefs of staff, or ministerial assistants at any hour, day or night, throughout the weekend or on a holiday — really only because if I don't write it down right away, I'm never going to remember what I was going to ask them for to begin with — but really, the minute I do that, I receive an acknowledgement. Mr. Speaker, every day that we get to work with extraordinary people in this building, that is another good day.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to provide my final acknowledgement and recognize my CA [constituency assistant], Rick McIntyre who has represented me and this government at functions and with our constituents. He has been providing this service since we started, while being preoccupied with personal family matters.

His wife, Shannon, a friend of mine since grade school, has been on the urgent kidney donor list during this entire time, but I'm very pleased to report she had a successful transplant and is in recovery mode since early October. But I'd like to publicly recognize the excellent care and attention that she experienced all the way through the process, from diagnosis through surgery and into recovery. Rick and Shannon also wanted me to acknowledge the amazing post-surgery experience that they had at St. Paul's Hospital at the sixth floor kidney transplant recovery ward. Mr. Speaker, when you hear of success stories and positive experiences like that with our health system, it's a great day in Saskatchewan.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, that is one of the reasons why I'm very supportive of this government in the last Throne Speech. This government's willingness to implement a new organ donor program shows our willingness to tackle some of the very difficult decisions in front of us. Public service announcement — by registering your consent to be an organ donor, you can save a life and you can be the hero that someone needs. End of service announcement.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada indicated recently of the 4,585 Canadians on the transplant list, more than 75 per cent were waiting for a kidney. Unfortunately, the demand far exceeds supply. Although 90 per cent of Canadians indicated that they would be willing to be a donor, the actual registry recognizes the number's a lot less than that, and Saskatchewan unfortunately is on the lower end of that donation spectrum in the country. One registered organ donor could help up to eight people, so instead of listening to me, start texting your family, letting them know your intentions to be an organ donor.

Committing to individualized funding for children under age six diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder is a game changer. Shannon Hill, president of the Parent Advocates for Autism

Treatment in Saskatchewan, said when the initial announcement was made, that it was a landmark day for autism treatment in Saskatchewan: "... families will be able to choose the treatment and care that will most help their child. This is proof the government listens," Ms. Hill was quoted as saying.

Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the opposition has attempted to portray, the government is indeed supporting education in this province. The first week of September this year was a good week in Saskatchewan. The first week of September saw over 21 new schools, home to 11,000 students, open their doors for the first time. Eighteen of these were joint-use schools built under the P3 model that had reduced construction costs of over \$100 million. During the last decade, we have renovated or improved or built over 65 other schools. Langenburg, a town in my constituency, opened a brand new school last September. Esterhazy and Melville schools have had significant upgrades not experienced since they were constructed in the '60s, '70s, and '80s.

Mr. Speaker, there has been an unprecedented \$17 billion investment in kindergarten to grade 12 education in this province over the last decade, which has helped pay for 875 more teachers and the creation of nearly 6,000 new child care spaces. Government operational funding of our children's education over this time has increased over 32 per cent in the last 10 years, while the total school populations have increased maybe 10 per cent during this time. More can be done, and more will be done for education in this province. But let's not buy into the opposition cries that we haven't done anything for our kids here in Saskatchewan.

In addition, we are supporting our separate school system in invoking the notwithstanding clause to ensure the rights of parents and students to choose schools and environments that work best for them.

Mr. Speaker, part of our Growing Forward plan was to invest heavily in Saskatchewan's infrastructure. Part of that investment was into our extensive highway network. In Saskatchewan, we have over 26 000 kilometres of highways, with over 5000 of those being a thin membrane type. Over the last 10 years almost 50 per cent of those roads have seen significant upgrades and improvements, in addition to the significant investments we've made in adding passing lanes and the Regina bypass.

The bypass alone is a \$1.8 billion project, including 12 overpasses, 40 kilometres of new four-lane highway, 20 kilometres of resurfacing four lanes, two bridges, 900 000 tonnes of crushed gravel, and to date, over 3.1 million man-hours without a lost-time accident. That's involving employees that come from every corner of this province, including our constituency.

The \$400 million that the NDP budgeted for their 2004 bypass plan would provide no relief from the hazardous intersections at Balgonie, White City, and Pilot Butte, as well as not significantly reducing the number of semis — approximately 5,000 a day — that were going to enter the city on a daily basis, or accounting for over the 4,600 semis that enter or leave the GTH in any week. There would be no connection to the divided highways of No. 11, and it would still require truck traffic

coming in and out of the northwest industrial park through the city. The NDP were not planning for the future or thinking for future growth, again proving that they're not believing in the potential of this province.

Small business in Saskatchewan is big business, Mr. Speaker. Over 99 per cent of businesses here are small businesses. With the tax threshold changes announced in the Throne Speech, we will now have the highest small business tax threshold in all of Canada. More disposable income in the hands of our small business owners will allow them to reinvest in their business and to grow and to expand.

During Small Business Week last week, I was honoured to welcome some of the many small businesses in the constituency of Melville-Saltcoats. They included Terissa Prince at Nailed It in Churchbridge, or Jonas and Candace St. Marie at Red Beard's Bar and Grill in Bredenbury, Jennifer and Oryan Duff of Whippletree Coffee in Esterhazy, and Vahagn and Gohar's Independent Grocer in Melville.

These people come from both within and from without, outside of Saskatchewan, and they have shown us that it is a good time to invest in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, once again we must thank our good Lord for the blessings he has provided agriculture this year in our province. It has been a good year in Saskatchewan. Yields experienced by most really confounded the experts.

However, I firmly believe, with the investments that this government and the ag sector have made in our Crop Development Centre at the University of Saskatchewan, we have realized improvements in nutrient and water efficiency as well as improved the ability of our forages and crops to withstand most environmental issues. We have experienced this in our cereal and pulse varieties, varieties that have been grown across Western Canada and marketed throughout the world. In fact, in 2016 Saskatchewan shipped more than \$14.4 billion worth of agricultural products.

However, if we continue to struggle in establishing oil pipelines in this country, rail capacity out of the Prairies will continue to be taken up by oil. We will need to reduce the amount of raw product that we ship out when we continue to support our value-added food industry.

There are more than 300 food companies operating in the province, generating more than \$4 billion in revenues, employing over 5,000 people. Grain Millers in Yorkton and Northern Quinoa in Melville are just two examples of local processors found in Melville-Saltcoats. The agriculture value-added new-growth incentive will enhance these operations and create new opportunities throughout this province in both rural and urban locations.

We will continue to encourage and quantify our agriculture producers' livestock and crops' ability to store carbon and contribute to our made-in-Saskatchewan carbon plan which will be announced shortly. It comes as no secret that we will continue to ensure our ag, resource, and manufacturing sector are not handcuffed with the federal job-killing carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, the retirement of our commander-in-chief, Premier Wall, was a surprise to us all, and I feel extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve under his guidance and direction. Modern history is going to show him as a political game changer across the country. Premier Wall has changed the attitude of this province in a short time to be one of optimism, opportunity seeking, self-assured and pride in what we are and what we can be. Although his banjo-picking abilities may have riled up the Bomber faithful, his good-natured and fair-minded approach to governance will ensure he will be remembered as one of the best premiers of all time across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a great day to be from Saskatchewan. I'll be supporting the 2017 Speech from the Throne and will not be supporting the amendment put forward by the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and enter into the Throne Speech of 2017. It's indeed an important opportunity for us all to reflect on what's important to this province, where we've been, and where we're going.

But before I get going too far in my remarks, I want to make sure I acknowledge some things that have been happening in my constituency. And I would like to just take a moment and acknowledge the opening of the newest addition of downtown Saskatoon, the Remai Modern art gallery, on October 21st. And what an honour it was to be at the opening and many great speeches talking what this landmark in our province really means to the people not only of downtown Saskatoon but all of Saskatchewan and all of Canada. The coup of getting the Picasso prints is a fantastic opportunity to bring people here to Saskatchewan and Saskatoon to look at the art of the world but also the art of Saskatchewan. And I think that's very important.

I want to take a moment and do this one quote. Chief Bobby Cameron was speaking at the occasion, and he was speaking about the inclusive nature of art. And he said, "Art knows no colour when it comes to race." And I just think that's phenomenal. It's a really nice way of thinking about art and how inclusive it is. And it is not an exclusive process, but it actually brings us all together. So art knows no colour, and I will remember that.

Of course like many of us, we want to thank many, many people. And I do want to thank my family — Dawn and my kids and now four granddaughters. I'm so pleased to say that over the summer we had a couple of additions to Felix and Frances. Now we have Georgia, little Georgia and little Isabelle. So that really makes our family so special.

I do want to take a moment and just recognize the member from Estevan. The speeches the other day, the member from Estevan was so kind to talk a little bit about some other things that are happening in our family, which is kind of odd. In fact she was the one who told me about this. So I have to have this verified later on that in fact her daughter is marrying my nephew, Jonathan Forbes. And I've not heard that from our side of the family, but I trust this is all accurate. I've had the opportunity to

meet Miranda and she is a fine young woman. She's a teacher in Saskatoon, and I would be pleased to be related to her for sure. So I guess, as the member said, we're all one big happy family, at least for now we are. I'm sure we will be. But it was really nice to meet Miranda, and I think this was great and I appreciate the member making that public announcement the other day. So thank you very much for that.

But I have to say this, Mr. Speaker. I was reading my last Throne Speech in 2016 when we all gathered together, and at that time I said welcome to the three new caucus members we had on our side, and that was great. You know, we had the member from Lakeview. That was a previous riding of ours. But we also gained two other, Prince Albert Northcote and Regina Douglas Park, two new ones that we got. And here we are at the next Throne Speech and I'm welcoming two more new members, and isn't that great? That is really good. That's the member from Meevasin and the member from Fairview who weren't with us last time. So it seems to be a kind of nice trend that we have going on, that every Throne Speech we take a couple or more from their side and bring them over here. That is pretty, pretty neat.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it was a real pleasure to be out knocking on doors during that campaign. The weather was great. But people had a lot of concerns, a lot of concerns. They were concerned about the scandals, the GTH, the bypass. Even in Saskatoon they're hearing, what is happening about that bypass down in Regina? What's the deal with that? They're very concerned about the education cuts. And as much as the government on their side, using their math, which I find very interesting they'd bring this up in the Throne Speech that they think we need more attention in Saskatchewan to math skills . . . I wonder what the scores over there would be when it comes to math. I think that's a good question.

[15:00]

But here you have people talking about the PST. These are real things people are seeing when they go down to the store or when they go down to city hall to pay their property taxes. And these guys are saying, you should be proud of it, proud of it. It's a new day. Somehow when you pay more you should be happier. I don't know where that . . . I mean that's an interesting way of approaching math.

But this is a thing that I found very interesting. And I was saying, some of the members that we usually see out on the doorstep weren't out there. We did see a couple of members on the very last day. We saw them trying to pull their vote, and obviously they weren't very successful. But they had a real problem. They had a real problem because their narrative . . . And some of them over there are even been on school boards so they know this to be a fact, but they say all we did, we closed schools. The NDP never opened a school at all in Saskatchewan, never opened a single school. All we did was close them. In fact we bused everybody out, bused everybody out.

But you know, in Fairview that narrative doesn't work so well because we had opened two new high schools in 2007. We opened Bethlehem and Tommy Douglas. Now we know members over there — some of them were actually on the

school boards — would have been at the opening. So how can they be going around knocking on doors and saying the NDP just closed schools? They only have to look out the door and see Tommy Douglas and Bethlehem and say that's not working. I know they opened schools; I know they opened schools.

In fact if you go back to the '70s, Bishop Roborecki was opened by Tommy Douglas in 1974. So here you have something . . . It doesn't work with their doomsday narrative. It doesn't, and it just doesn't add up. These guys couldn't go out to that riding because you know what, we had a couple of new schools. Because you know what, we had people living in this province and you know what, they had families. And you know what, they had kids going to school and they needed new schools, and we built those schools. It didn't quite fit with your story, did it?

And I see some of the members over there, and this is what I like . . . The king of Kool-Aid, the king of Kool-Aid is not in the building. And so here we had a lecture here last week when the member from Fairview got up, and the king of Kool-Aid got up and gave his line about how we had drank from the Kool-Aid. Well I love these guys over here when they celebrate Billy Boyd, the very DNA of that party, the very DNA of that party, and that's to quote the Premier. That's to quote the Premier. It's not even the Kool-Aid. It's the DNA of the party. And people are asking about, where was Billy Boyd out on the doorstep in Fairview? Where was he in the August and September days of that by-election? Nowhere to be seen. But he was the very DNA of that party, so it just didn't fit their narrative at all.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think about the speech and I think about, is this a legacy speech? Because I too, like that member, was very surprised to see that the Premier had resigned over the summer. I thought, you know, everybody has to acknowledge that these are tough times for the province and we would see the test of how well this Premier and his plans would stand, would stand these tests. And instead we see the Premier resigning. Instead he's throwing the challenge to the other five, and we've seen some of the comments the other five have said. And as we've talked about the member from Meadow Lake in his cameo appearance in the leadership race, it didn't last long, but he had enough time to talk about how, the way the GTH scandal that was . . . He would do that very differently, very differently. And how quick his tune had changed now that he's out of cabinet. We see the others up there very quiet about what they think about these scandals that are plaguing the Sask Party.

Now the Premier is a real booster of the province — we won't deny that — and every chance he gets, he does that. But here's an opportunity for him to stay and see if his program can withstand the tests of the challenges of our economy. And he's not hanging around. He's heading out the door. And in some ways, this Throne Speech, instead of being a legacy Throne Speech, it's really a kitchen sink of all throne speeches. There's a lot of concerns I have with this. There's not really an overriding message in this Throne Speech.

You know, I've got to say, a couple of things that we heard over the summer, particularly . . . And we're hearing all the changes in Bill 40. Here was one that talked about the Crowns and how important the Crowns were to the people of Saskatchewan and how, on just two days before . . . It's almost like Christmas Eve

or Halloween. Two days before, we hear the Premier saying it's going to be repealed, Bill 40, that they heard from the people two days before. We always hear from these guys but, you know, I have to say, since my time in opposition, their record of consultation with the people is really something else.

And when I heard the Minister Responsible for Crown Investments Corporation talk about how they have . . . All of a sudden we're talking to real people. So as opposed, there are fake people out there? There's two kinds of people — real people and fake people — in Saskatchewan? Is that what the minister is really saying? And now they're chirping and saying, of course, it's like real news and fake news, isn't it? I think they must . . . The alt-right is coming here to Saskatchewan — real people and fake people. Mr. Speaker, that is so insulting that those people who actually ride the bus, who actually support people who ride the bus, are somehow lesser than those who might not, I think that's insulting and shows a real lack of understanding.

And here again is the issue. I want to talk a little bit about math when it comes to STC. And the Premier and other ministers will stand up and quote their numbers. We don't know really where those numbers come from. I'd like to see them show their work. You know, I'm an old math teacher, and that's often what we say is show your work.

But the one thing we'd do, I think most of us, if we're going out to buy something, if we're going to go look for a car, a new washing machine, a dryer, we think about value for money. We just don't look for the cheapest thing around. Now maybe they do over there. I don't necessarily believe that, because you look at the bypass and it looked like they went for the most expensive thing in town.

And then the question really is, are they getting value for money? And that's a real audit process. That is a real process, and yet they refused to do that when it came to STC. And it was a simple request. What is going to be the impact? What is the value for money when it comes to this kind of action? And they refused to do that.

And so when they raised concerns about math in our schools in Saskatchewan, you know, we can always do better. And I'm glad that they're focusing on education but . . . and we'll get to some other questions.

Here we have an issue. This new bypass on the highway, there are questions about whether it can fit modern farm equipment. Now what is that all about? What is that all about? Or large semi-trailers, can they actually do the turns there? This is a real question.

The PST, the PST, this is very interesting. I think this is . . . And then we even had, you know, the former House Leader and his funny math last spring when we had the questions where he was talking about the cuts and all of that.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have some real questions. And I do want to talk a bit about the issue around Uber and taxi drivers, and we see the Minister Responsible for SGI is going to raise that issue. This is one that I really want to see what they bring forward. We have some real deep concerns. I know the member from

Fairview has talked about it but, you know, last Christmas we had a situation here in Regina. And I'm not sure if you're aware of this, Mr. Speaker, but I'll just read part of the headline from CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation]. That was December 23rd last year. "Regina taxi driver out of ICU a month after brutal attack." And this where Iqbal Singh Sharma was stabbed multiple times and taken to hospital with life-threatening injuries to his brain and neck after a cab ride gone bad.

And so here we have the government, in their answer to drunk driving, to use Uber and other forms. Now are they going to make sure that these people are protected? Here you have actually very vulnerable situations where people are drinking, and they're saying this is where we actually want them to work, where people are drinking. Are they going to have their protection either through SGI or WCB [Workers' Compensation Board], either-or, but can they get personal insurance themselves? We understand that they can't. They can get personal insurance where they have liability for the passengers, but not for themselves if they're injured in their workplace.

And so this is what happened to Mr. Sharma. He was out of any kind of compensation for his personal injury because of this . . . this type of injury was deemed to be a criminal injury not related to a car accident type of thing. If he'd crashed the car he might have got some insurance that way, but he didn't crash the car. He was attacked, and therefore there was no insurance available. So these are the kind of issues that I hope they're considering.

I hope that they think about all drivers that are doing . . . whether they be taxi drivers or Uber, that they all have a level of protection and that it's a level playing field. That they follow regulations to make sure, they make sure that they're safe. And we often say this — and I don't want to just say this on April 28th every year — that we hope people come home from work safe. It's an issue that happens every, every day. And every day, whether you're a driver in a taxi or an Uber, if you're coming out there and doing work, let's make sure they have their protection whether it's through SGI or WCB, all right? There's got to be a level playing field.

And I hear many of them saying, we will, we will. Then that is going to be good news because, I tell you, the past year it has not been easy working with SGI, and WCB has not been very co-operative. So if that's what they're saying, that's very good news for that. I appreciate that and that is a concern, one of the concerns, but . . . [inaudible] . . . somebody who's very concerned about occupational health and safety, very concerned about that.

The other issue I have that I want to just talk briefly about — of course it wasn't mentioned in the Throne Speech — was around domestic violence and the work that we've got to do in Saskatchewan. Because unfortunately we are the worst province when it comes to that, and we need to do better. And we need to look at all sorts of approaches and tools that we can make sure people are safe at home. And we know predominately this is a women's issue, but we know . . . and my colleague from Douglas Park raised the issue around making sure that if we can make workplaces safe and making sure that there's a way to

take a leave when you're fleeing domestic violence, that's very, very important.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know my time is going very quickly. I want to talk health care. And I know my colleague will talk a lot about health care, but I just want to say — and I support her fully when it comes to the issue around mental health — mental health is a huge issue, a huge issue in this province, and it's one that we cannot ignore. And we need to put resources to that, and particularly when we come to suicide prevention. And that is so critical to the people in the North, but it's critical to us all, right across the province, you know. And we hear . . . And it hurts us all when we hear of particularly the young people who've decided that they have no hope in their life and the only option they have is suicide. I just think that's . . . that is . . . We just need to do so much more work. And the other area is around addictions and the opiates that we're facing, a crisis right across North America and I think it is here in Saskatchewan, and I think that we need to do much more around addictions work.

I was shocked to see or hear not a mention about truth and reconciliation. I think this is something that we need to keep in the forefront, and understand that this is really unfortunately part of the fabric of who we are in Saskatchewan. And as many people say, we are all children of the treaty. And clearly, truth and reconciliation, we need to keep that as part of our perspective, always thinking about that.

I was disappointed to see, and this could have been a real legacy piece around the Sixties Scoop, that it was not mentioned at all. And I know we keep hearing it that we put it off to the side because FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] is not ready to meet, but clearly with the announcement from the federal government around their willingness to come to the table, particularly with First Nations folks that . . . But the absence of recognizing the Métis is huge, and I think this is a part where the government could really show some leadership, and I really do think we need to do more about that.

Of course I do want to . . . and I just want to echo what my member, the Education critic, my member from Lakeview talked about. We talked about, and the member from Northcote talked about the increase in property taxes, and yet we see that those . . . There were cuts in funding to education. And that's just unbelievable, unbelievable kind of math that they're throwing out there. But this one . . . and where the minister today could not give a satisfactory answer. Yes, 18 new schools, or 21 new schools, 4,500 more students, but 181 teachers lost from last year to this year.

[15:15]

Now they can throw out all the records and numbers from the past 10 years. But this is something . . . The math just doesn't add up here. How can you have that many more students and that few more . . . few less teachers. And, you know, where the minister . . . And she loves the term, "a little bit." I don't know how that pans out in the math scores, but that's not a little bit of a problem. That's a huge problem. That means there's kids who are without teachers or teacher associates. Something doesn't add up there, and we need to do more about that. And we will wait to see what the numbers are that the minister is talking about, but if I've got to believe somebody I think the STF is a

credible voice. They are the people in the classroom. If these are the real numbers, this is a real problem for this province.

Mr. Speaker, as the critic for ethics, I was hoping — and this was the Premier's last chance to do it right; this was his last chance — and that was to get big money out of politics. But he has chosen to leave big money in politics, and we see that with the leadership candidates. They're all silent on that. In fact I understand one of them may have gone out of province to fund raise. Here we have an opportunity to do the right thing. We see BC [British Columbia] is doing the right thing now. We see Alberta has done the right thing, and we are the last, worst west when it comes to big money in politics. And this is something we need to get right. And it was so disappointing for the Premier when they had an opportunity to actually get it right and he's chosen not to. He's going to leave the fundraising rules in place, and this is unfortunate.

Mr. Speaker, I want to end on this last note, and this is one that is very important for us all. And I appreciate the good work that agricultural people are doing on the export front, but I'm not sure if this government is aware of this, but as we all know — and this has actually been happening for several years — but of course in Myanmar we see a situation where over 500,000 refugees have fled the country. And that's really a human rights issue that we can't ignore, can't ignore.

So the question is, what has this got to do with Saskatchewan? And I look at people who are involved in trade, export and all of that. Well interestingly, when I looked up to see where's Myanmar in terms of Saskatchewan trade, it's actually a very important partner when it comes to peas. Myanmar is the sixth-best customer of Saskatchewan peas. Am I right on that? I am right on that. I've checked the records. It might be even better. But since the regulations have loosened in 2012 by the federal government, Myanmar has become a really strong partner with Saskatchewan.

So I hope, and I call on this government to step up and instruct their officials to make sure when trading with Myanmar that they do ask for human rights, the following of human rights, that they do step up and ask the Government of Canada to make sure Myanmar respects Rohingya people. And I know people over there say, well we can't get involved with that. We can. We can. We can do the right thing, and when we have trade, we trade ethically. And this is an opportunity to do the right thing and say, hey listen, Myanmar, we know that there are issues in your country that are not right. You're treating a huge segment of your population . . . They call it even ethnic cleansing. We are willing to trade with you, but you've got to be on the right side of democracy. So I implore the government to take a look at that. Who are they trading with, and are they following the human rights code passed by the United Nations and doing the right thing?

I know sometimes we aren't all aware of who we're trading with. We have people out there doing good work for us, and that's good. But when these kind of issues come to the forefront, like Myanmar, do the right thing and make sure you send a message that they follow the human rights code, human rights.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that clearly the

government is not up to the challenge that we see in facing the people here in Saskatchewan. All people, not just what some would call the real or fake people, but everyone. They're paying much, much more. There is a crisis out there in terms of affordability. We see a crisis in health and we see a crisis in education that we can't sweep under the rug. And ethically we have so much more work to do here.

So therefore I do support the amendment put forward by my colleague from Nutana most strongly, and I will be supporting that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I stand up and support the Throne Speech and reflect on the last 10 years of the government of the province.

But before I do that, I'd like to send out a few thank yous back to my Canora-Pelly constituency. First of all I'd like to thank my wife, Lorri, for all her support and dedication over the last two and a half years. Not only did she help me putting up signs and going door to door on the campaign, but now she is side by side with me at different events, and my voice of reason. She has also been for many years in the . . . She's a nurse practitioner and a nurse RN [registered nurse] for 27 years, so she gives me a lot of insight into the health that's going on in our great province and how our changes have affected our province in a positive way. I cannot thank her enough.

To my kids, Jasmine and Shane Ostapowich who live in Regina, provided me with my only grandson and my little treasure, Lewis. He's two and a half years old and just a bundle of joy. He enjoys wrestling with Grandpa, playing ball, and playing hockey, and he enjoys driving the golf cart out at the lake. Jasmine works for Walker engineering projects here in Regina, and Shane is working too as well with SGI in Regina.

My other daughter Jade also works and lives in Regina. She is a guard who works at the Regina Correctional Centre. And she has a degree in social work and is hopefully going to put it to work some day in other areas, but she is really enjoying this. She's a great athlete, played hockey for the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] and is still playing hockey today in the rec men's league.

Mr. Speaker, I also have a son, Carson, who lives and works in Melville. He took his turf management in Olds, Alberta but came back home to work and manage the Melville golf course for over the last five years. This year he's added to his resumé. He's the icemaker at the Melville Curling Club, and I'm sure I'll end up taking him curling with my dad some day. Mr. Speaker, those three of my kids took advantage of the school retention program and came back to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank my CA, Carol Sleeva, and my new student, Abby Gulka, who worked for me this summer, for their dedication and office help and taking care of my constituents. I'd also like to thank my executive and my constituents for all their support over the last couple of years.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech continues to show our dedication to the continued growth in our province over the last

decade. Our province has grown by 160,000 people, while under the previous two decades under the NDP, we've declined. We had recorded the second-best job creation record, and we had second-highest growth in weekly average income. Our government debt is \$400 million lower than forecasted at budget time. Saskatchewan debt is down, \$1 billion lower than it was in 2007, and our economy is expected to grow by 2.1 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, education continues to grow in our province. We are continuing to meet the challenges with 21 new schools this year; 18 of those are joint-use facilities with the P3 model that has reduced our cost by \$100 million. Over the last decade, our government has built 40 new schools and renovated 25 more schools. There has been an unprecedented \$17 billion investment in K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12], and over the last decade we've hired over 875 more teaching jobs and opened 6,000 new child care spaces. Seventy of those new spaces are right in Canora. Mr. Speaker, under the NDP, they closed 176 schools and laid off 400 teachers.

Mr. Speaker, during this session we will introduce legislation to protect the right to school choice by invoking the notwithstanding clause to allow our kids and families the choice to attend their choice of schools, and work with the school teachers and their divisions to work on the province's first education sector plan to continue higher graduation rates. There will also be work done to improve math scores and new international models will also be explored. Mr. Speaker, we will also be working with other provinces and Quebec to enhance our French language. We will also begin developing computer curriculum to help students prepare for careers in science, math, engineering, and technology.

Mr. Speaker, education operating and funding has increased by 40 per cent over the last 10 years to over \$8.3 billion. We've created the graduation retention program in Saskatchewan, one of the most aggressive programs in Canada. Nearly 70,000 students have taken advantage of this program and have chosen to begin their careers and live in Saskatchewan. Government has also provided the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship offer, offering grade 12 students up to \$500 a year to help with tuition costs up to a maximum of \$2,000.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 10 years the number one nation, the First Nation and the Métis students enrolled in post-secondary institutions has grown by over 34 per cent. Last year First Nations and Métis students have graduated from Sask Polytechnic is up 20 per cent over the previous year.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 10 years our government has done some great things in health care, and we will continue to do more. We have recruited 750 doctors and over 3,400 nurses of every designation. There has been 13 new long-term care facilities opened for our seniors. And under the NDP, they closed 1,200 beds. New hospitals have and are being built like the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon, the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. And under the NDP, what did they do? They closed 52 hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 10 years our government has made vast improvement in delivering health care. We've gone from the longest surgical wait times under the NDP to among the

shortest in Canada. The two-for-one approach the government has implemented has helped patients to get care sooner. Since March of 2016, over 900 people have purchased MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging], which have allowed 1,800 scans provided to others at no expense to the taxpayer. Mr. Speaker, accountable care units were opened in Pasqua in Regina and St. Paul's in Saskatoon this year to provide prompt, effective care to our patients. We will continue creating more of these units in the future and enhance our care.

Mr. Speaker, we will be implementing a recommendation of an advisory board, a panel and be moving from 12 health regions to one health region, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, and we'll be opening it in December. This will over time reduce administration and improve our health care system. We will also be implementing a new organ donation program. This will be led by donor physicians and provide education and support to champion organ donations across this province.

Mr. Speaker, our government will fulfil its commitment to the ASD, the autism spectrum disorder for children under six-years old and add funding of \$4,000 per year. This is an additional \$2.8 million investment on top of the \$8 million that we already provide to our province.

Mr. Speaker, the last years I've been involved in developing and improving health back home in Canora We had doctor shortages and bypasses and closures on a regular basis. Then about three years ago we implemented the CEC, the collaborative emergency centre. It is a centre where we have 24-hour emergency care for our doctors, but our doctors are not on call from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., allowing them a quality of life. Since this method has been implemented, we've retained four doctors and a nurse practitioner, and we've had no closures and no bypass.

Mr. Speaker, it was five years ago the government introduced STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] air ambulance to Saskatchewan. Since then we have transported over 3,000 emergency patients, saving numerous lives over this time. This kind of hits home to me and is special to me as my son, Carson, was in a truck rollover by Canora and was one of the patients that was airlifted and is doing well today. And that was in 2012. And just to think that the NDP would not even consider bringing STARS into our province, showing that they have little or no care for rural Saskatchewan

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, with growth in our province comes problems with increased crimes and other problems protecting our families and communities. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has had the highest rate of impaired drivers in Canada. In the past year we have introduced a number of changes to prevent this. We have increased zero tolerance from 19 years old to 21 years of age. We've also introduced a three-day vehicle seizure for drivers over 21 with a blood alcohol of .04 to .08. We are also making Saskatchewan interlock laws some of the toughest in Canada. This fall we'll be introducing legislation to SGI to offer insurance to drivers to create ride-sharing options in smaller communities like mine and a safe ride home.

Mr. Speaker, we'll also deal with the federal government

intention to legalize marijuana by 2018. Our government will review four objectives: preventing the growth of the underground market, restricting access to minors, ensuring road and workplace safety, and protecting the public health.

Mr. Speaker, crime over the past years has become an increasing problem. I was fortunate enough to be part of the crime reduction committee, where we went to all parts of the province and met with a wide variety of leaders and groups to discuss the issues around our province. After visiting eight areas around our province and discussing all of the issues and possible solutions, the committee has come up with several recommendations.

And just lately the government has passed, now created a new protection and response team. The PRT [protection and response team] is composed of 120 police officers — some RCMP and municipal police service — 40 commercial vehicle enforcement officers, and 98 conservation officers. There is a \$6 million commitment to support this program, and it will be implemented within the next year or so. Mr. Speaker, I have to say this committee was a lot of hard work, but we did have some fun and we created a cattle-rustling expert. The MLA from Regina Coronation Park, he's quite the expert now as a cattle rustler.

Mr. Speaker, for the last decade we have invested more than \$26 billion to build and expand our infrastructure that was totally neglected by the NDP over their 16 years in power. Over the last decade our government has invested 7.4 billion on repairing and improving over 12 000 kilometres of highways. There has been other projects such as Saskatoon Circle Drive South bridge, St. Louis bridge, twinning of Highway 11, passing lanes on highways 7 and 10. And there is more to come yet.

Mr. Speaker, work also continues on the largest infrastructure development in the history of Saskatchewan, the Regina bypass, and phase one was announced and opened today. Also overpasses in Martensville, Warman, and passing lanes on Highway 5 to Humboldt and many other projects are being done. It all takes time but we are getting there. All of these projects will provide a better, safer way of travelling around the province.

Myself personally, I have been driving in from Canora and, over the past few years since they put in passing lanes in Fort Qu'Appelle, it's been great. I don't know if all of you guys that go to football games or whatever, it's been great. And from my understanding, there's been zero fatalities since this has been put in, and that is some price that nobody can put on a life, to protect our province and our roads.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with the prosperity and the competitiveness in our province. There has been more than 100,000 jobs created by exports over the last 10 years of growth that has emerged. Five hundred and thirty per cent increase in China to \$3 billion last year. India is up 272 per cent to \$1.5 billion. Pakistan, up 293 per cent to 593 million, and up 132 per cent to Indonesia for 543 million. Our government will continue to build and expand our markets through the trade missions to these and other countries. Saskatchewan also stands to benefit from our Canadian free trade agreement that has started on

July 1st.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to grow capital investment of over \$14.5 billion in Saskatchewan this year, which is 43 per cent higher than it ever was under the NDP. We have reduced the income tax for our citizens. And because of BC moving their corporate tax rate up, we will return to 12 per cent, staying as one of the lowest in Canada. We will raise our threshold from 500,000 to 600,000 for small businesses, being one of the best in the country. All of this to give our people in Saskatchewan a reason to stay in our great province.

Mr. Speaker, our exports continue to grow and a large part of it is because of the agriculture in our province. We will continue to support our farmers, ranchers, and agribusiness. Last year Saskatchewan shipped out over \$14.4 billion of agriculture products. We will continue to invest in research and development through the Ag Development Fund, Global Institute for Food Security, and Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence right here in the U of S. Through the support of our province, government's value-added process industry, there are now over 300 companies generating over \$4 billion in revenues and also creating over 5,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, our government is prepared to stand up for our farmers and industry and fight for the carbon tax and federal small-business tax changes that would hit our provinces hard.

We know that climate change is a reality, and we have more to do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. SaskPower is expanding renewable power by 50 per cent by 2030. Mr. Speaker, we have invested over \$1.3 billion in the first post-combustion carbon capture system. SaskPower BD3 [Boundary dam 3] project has cut Saskatchewan's carbon dioxide emissions by 1.6 million tonnes, this equivalent to taking 400,000 cars off our roads today.

In 2015 farmers sequestered nearly 12 million tonnes of carbon into our soil due to zero-till seeding technology developed right here in Saskatchewan. Also, pulse crops like lentils and peas is helping reduce our emissions.

Our uranium we mine is used to generate emission-free electricity around the world. These companies and others provide jobs for thousands of families in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we are doing our job on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in our province, and we'll continue to do more. But we'll have to fight the imposing of carbon tax with the federal government, and we are willing to take the legal action if necessary and not let our farmers and industry be affected by this federal decision, for we are one of the best provinces in the world at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, in my area, we have seen growth in industry, farming, and population. And I'd like to tell you a couple of stories from around our area. First of all, this year there is a peat moss plant being opened up by Sunterra, and it's being built about 5 miles east of Norquay. It is about a \$15 million investment into our area, and it'll create about 30 to 40 jobs and a payroll of about \$2 million. It'll be opening next May, and I look forward to that.

Second, I see increases in Sturgis school, Norquay schools. I've been to renovations, consolidations, renovations in Kamsack Parkland College, new playgrounds in Canora, Sturgis, and others. And gone are the days where the NDP closed all these schools and laid off all these teachers.

I'd just like to tell a little story about Preeceville. When we first got elected, we had them on the streets. We had problems with our doctor shortages and closures. And we worked hard over this last year and made a few changes, and we've got the doctors up to three doctors, one nurse practitioner. We've had to change the method, and we have three doctors doing primary care calls and emergency from 8 in the morning till 8 in the evening. And from what I'm seeing, the model is really good.

And when I look at over the past year, and I look across the road and most of the opposition NDP over there have been into Preeceville, making them promises and everything else. But they fail to say about the Fyke report that they talked about when they closed 52 hospitals, and part of this Fyke report shows that they were going to close the Preeceville hospital. Yet when they go over there and they have coffee and doughnuts with all the Preeceville people and promise them that, they do not bring up this Fyke report. So maybe you guys could probably take over the Fyke report and read it over yourself a little bit, if you can find Preeceville again. I'm not sure if you could.

Last of all I'd like to talk about is, you know, I have one of the little kids that I coached hockey, and he's near and dear to me. And he's an 11-year-old boy named Porter Wolkowski, and his dad and his family are big cattle farmers and stuff. Anyways he's with 4-H, and he was bound and determined for the last two years, and this year he finally sold a cow. And he donated the money, he wanted to donate the money to the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. And when I see stuff like that, it just shows me, you know, that we are teaching our kids the right things. We've got the right values, and we've got a great future in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the great pleasure to work with the Premier and the MLA from Swift Current. I want to thank him for his dedication and hard work that he's put into building this party, the province, and the future of Saskatchewan. I always say to everybody out there, he's the Wayne Gretzky of politics, and these people only come around once every 50 years. So for that I would like to thank our Premier, Wayne Gretzky, for his 50 years of service, and I want to wish him the best in the future.

In closing, I'd like to say I will not be supporting the amendment and I will be supporting the motion from the Throne Speech. Thank you.

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

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a privilege to rise in my place and reply to the Speech from the Throne. As is customary in this Assembly, I would like to take a few moments to express gratitude to those individuals who continue to assist my work as the MLA for Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

I thank my husband, Jim, for standing firmly beside me and supporting me. He has spent a good deal of time in Regina setting up our townhouse so I have a comfortable place to call my own when we are in session. When he is not with me in Regina, he is running his small business, Precision Controls, looking after the home front and our two chihuahuas, Duke and Radar.

Our oldest daughter, Amy, and husband, Karl, have added a third child to their family, and Lukas turned one in September. His sisters, Gianna and Isabella, are enjoying having a little brother, and we were thrilled to welcome our first grandson. Amy is a chartered professional accountant with the Canada Revenue Agency and is back at work following a one-year maternity leave. Amy and Karl's life got even busier this past year as they purchased Market Mall Auto Service in Saskatoon. Karl is the lead mechanic at his shop. They have joined the ranks of the small-business owners of this province, who are the backbone of our economy. I will talk more about that later in my remarks.

[15:45]

Our middle daughter, Monique, and her husband, Aaron, welcomed little Sebastian to their family last November, our second grandson. Monique is a lawyer and will return to the workforce after her maternity leave ends this year.

Our youngest daughter, Janelle, completed a Master of Public Administration in 2015 and has recently moved to Edmonton for a two-year internship program with the Government of Alberta. She is adjusting well and enjoying the challenges of her new position.

James Hawkes, my constituency assistant, has passed his one-year anniversary in the office that I share with the member from Saskatoon University. James handles the day-to-day operations of the office, and his knowledge and experience he gained as a summer student right here at the Saskatchewan legislature serves my constituents well.

I thank my current constituency association members for their support as they start to plan for the next provincial election. I thank John Puderak for serving in the president position, and we welcome Robin Mowat as our new president. I thank our daughter, Janelle, for serving as secretary before moving to Edmonton, and we welcome Gwen Joa as her replacement.

While the majority of my constituency association members have little or no political experience, they make up for that in common sense and commitment to their MLA and to this Saskatchewan Party government.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency of Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood is comprised of the neighbourhoods of Wildwood, Brevoort Park and Holliston, with a small slice of the former Churchill neighbourhood. The neighbourhood of Adelaide-Churchill used to be two separate communities, with Churchill in the north, Adelaide Park in the south, and Ruth Street is the dividing line. When the city of Saskatoon redrew its neighbourhood boundaries in the 1990s, the north and south sections were combined into one. Many have asked me how my constituency got its name, and I believe this to be the

explanation.

I am honoured that the residents of this riding chose me to represent them in this Assembly, to bring their opinions and concerns forward on their behalf, to help resolve their problems, and to defend their interests. It is a responsibility that I take very seriously.

I like to say that I am the epicentre of the seniors in the province, as I have the highest concentration of seniors within the area around Market Mall, as well as a number of retirement residences in my constituency. I was informed at a speaking engagement on this past Saturday night that this age group prefers to be called matures or veterans. Whatever the name, I couldn't be more pleased to represent this age demographic in this House and be their voice. I enjoy visits to my many seniors' homes and meeting with constituents like Pearl Skorobohach, who I talked about today, who's 104 years young and still going strong at Ilarion Residence, or visiting with Howard and Dorene Thomas at the Bentley on the day their family was hosting a party for their 65th wedding anniversary.

One of my favourite quotes, Mr. Speaker, is by Fred Rogers. You remember him as the host of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*:

At the center of the universe is a loving heart that continues to beat and that wants the best for every person. Anything we can do to help foster the intellect and spirit and emotional growth of our fellow human beings, that is our job. Those of us who have this particular vision must continue against all odds. Life is for service.

I appreciate that I am able to serve the constituents of Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood, as I am one who shares this particular vision, like Mister Rogers, and I believe that life is for service.

The Speech from the Throne opened the second session of the twenty-eighth legislature for the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, according to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan website, the Throne Speech outlines government goals, directions, and initiatives. The Throne Speech shapes the government's legislative agenda that will guide our work this session — the over-arching themes, the broad brush strokes, the vision. This government's vision is to be the best place in Canada to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, and to build a life. Let's see how this Throne Speech advances that vision.

I want to start with my seniors. This government created the personal care home benefit in 2012 to support seniors residing in personal care homes. This government has tripled the seniors' income plan benefit from \$90 per month to \$270 per month since 2008. Now this government will introduce the seniors' education property tax deferral program that will give seniors with household incomes under \$70,000 the option to defer the education portion of their property taxes on their home.

According to the keynote speaker at the banquet I attended on Saturday night — it was a busy weekend — the primary characteristics of seniors or matures is that they are dependable, punctual, hard working, and possess much wisdom. They are

the pioneers who built our province through tenacity, grit, and effort. The vast majority of seniors prefer to remain in their own homes and live independently for as long as possible or what is called age in place. So I applaud this initiative. These seniors' programs are steps that fit with this government's vision as the best place in Canada to live.

All three of our daughters completed post-secondary education at the University of Saskatchewan. They are part of the nearly 70,000 students who have taken advantage of the graduate retention program and chose to begin their careers right here at home. It remains the most aggressive student retention program in the country and fosters our vision statement as the best place to get an education.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that our oldest daughter and her husband purchased Market Mall Auto Service in September of 2017, just over one year ago. They will benefit from this government raising the small business income threshold from 500,000 to 600,000 effective January 1st of 2018, which will be the highest threshold in Canada. This is the amount of income that small businesses pay tax at the significantly lower small business tax rate of 2 per cent.

Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that the more than 148,500 small businesses in Saskatchewan contributed almost one-third of the gross domestic product in 2016 at 31 per cent? Even more impressive is the fact that small businesses in this province account for more than 98 per cent of all businesses in Saskatchewan, and that per capita Saskatchewan has the highest rate of small businesses in the entire country. These small businesses help to grow our economy, create jobs, and encourage investment in communities across the province.

It is with these facts in mind that this Saskatchewan Party government stood firmly against the federal government's recent proposed tax changes that could have had a significant negative impact on small businesses in this province. This new federal tax fairness plan would have hurt our economy and threatened jobs. It is good to hear that the federal government has backed away from most of its proposed tax changes.

The raising of the small business threshold is just one more step that this government has taken to create and maintain a positive business environment with policies that enable this sector to thrive. We are advancing our vision statement as the best place to start a business.

Exports, Mr. Speaker, are big business in this province. More than 100,000 jobs depend on exports, and international trade is an important part of our economic activity. According to the Saskatchewan bureau of statistics data from 2015, international exports of goods were 41 per cent of our GDP [gross domestic product]. Saskatchewan exports approximately 70 per cent of what it produces to countries around the world. The United States is our top market followed by China, India, Japan, and Brazil.

I met Tariq Azim Khan, ambassador to Pakistan, at the Speaker's tea following the Throne Speech. He was pleased to inform me that exports from Saskatchewan to Pakistan are up 293 per cent to 548 million. Through the efforts of our Premier and trade missions and support for trade-focused organizations, Saskatchewan's exports to China have increased 530 per cent to

\$3 billion in the past 10 years. Exports to India are up 272 per cent to 1.5 billion. And exports to Indonesia are up 132 per cent to 543 million. The efforts of this government have paid off. The new Canadian Free Trade Agreement will be another tool in our toolbox to further expand our export markets.

Just last month, Mr. Speaker, Moody's investment service confirmed Saskatchewan's AAA credit rating. This is the highest rating possible, and the first time this province ever received this rating was under this Saskatchewan Party government. They base this rating on our government's strong fiscal management, and in large part to our three-year plan to return to a balanced budget. The difficult decisions in our budget have paid off with lower debt financing costs. We have less operating debt than we inherited from the NDP, and we have the second lowest debt-to-GDP ratio among the provinces. We will not burden future generations with growing deficits as other governments are choosing to do. That promotes this government's vision statement as the best place to live, to work, to build a life.

There is no arguing, Mr. Speaker, that this government in an innovative two-for-one approach to MRIs is helping patients get care sooner. Since this program was introduced in April of last year, 905 people have purchased an MRI with a corresponding number being provided at no cost to a patient on the MRI public wait-list. That means that 1,800 scans have been provided at no added expense to taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, my husband was one of those 905 Saskatchewan residents who purchased an MRI. We had previously travelled to Calgary to pay a private clinic for an MRI on his back and we were grateful that this time we could go to Regina for an updated MRI. We felt good that a person on the public wait-list would have access to an MRI at no charge in a much shorter time period. I'm pleased to report that Jim underwent successful back surgery at Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon in June.

Just last Friday, Mr. Speaker, Jim and I attended the Knights of Columbus 4th annual celebrity dinner in Saskatoon, an impressive fundraiser for the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital currently under construction. I think it goes without saying that the recruitment of more than 750 new doctors and 3,400 nurses in the last 10 years has benefitted residents of our province and advanced our government's vision.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech includes the introduction of individualized funding for preschool children under the age of six who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. This fulfills a Saskatchewan Party commitment made during the 2016 election campaign.

Our province, Mr. Speaker, has the dishonourable distinction of having the highest rate of impaired driving among the provinces. In an effort to change this reality our government has introduced a number of measures over the past year to prevent further death and injury. This government will encourage municipalities to allow ride-sharing services to operate within their jurisdiction, as well as introducing legislation enabling SGI to offer affordable insurance to drivers working for ride-sharing companies. It will be one more measure the government will take to provide a safe ride home for Saskatchewan residents and one more measure that fosters the

government's vision statement as the best place to live, to work, to build a life.

As a former trustee with the Greater Saskatoon Catholic board of education for 13 years, I am proud of this government's decision to introduce legislation that will protect the right to school choice by invoking the notwithstanding clause of The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

On April 20th of this year, a Court of Queen's Bench ruled in the Theodore court case that the government must stop funding non-minority faith students to attend separate schools. The ruling could also risk provincial funding for 26 other faith-based schools in the province. By invoking the notwithstanding clause, this government will protect the rights of parents and students to choose the schools that work best for their families, regardless of their religious faith.

This legislation will provide clarity, will provide parents with the assurance that they can continue to choose the school they want for their children to attend, and remove future uncertainty as the Theodore court case moves through the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal and possibly the Supreme Court of Canada. It can set parents' minds at ease that this government will protect their parental right to choose the education that is best suited for their children, rather than a decision made by the courts.

While attending the fundraising dinner last Friday, guests at our table wanted to discuss the notwithstanding clause legislation with me. One guest was a teacher who had taught in the Holy Family Catholic school system, the Saskatoon Misbah Muslim school, and now the public school system. He felt strongly that it was up to parents to choose which school their children attended, as the schools he had taught in all followed the provincial curriculum but were otherwise very different, in his opinion. Another guest at our table was a non-Catholic who chose a Catholic school for his son and is pleased with the faith-based education his son is receiving.

[16:00]

It was exciting to watch 21 new schools in the province welcome students this year. Mr. Speaker, 18 of those schools are joint-use facilities built using the public-private partnership model on nine sites in Regina, Saskatoon, Warman, and Martensville — 18 schools that will meet the needs of our growing communities for generations to come. They were constructed in less than two years, on time and on budget. This was the largest publicly owned and operated schools building project in our province's history, and I was pleased to be directly involved in the planning of six of those schools as a trustee with Greater Saskatoon Catholic.

In August of 2016 I was appointed as the Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Education for curriculum development and consultation. My mandate was to engage stakeholders in discussions on curriculum renewal and development and to provide options and recommendations to the Minister of Education regarding guiding principles for future kindergarten to grade 12 curriculum renewal and development, as well as subject areas and topics that should be prioritized for curriculum renewal.

I held five engagement sessions in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina, with representatives of the education sector and interest groups between October and December of last year in order to hear responses to key questions regarding the future of curriculum development. There were meetings with specific groups as well. Written submissions were also received. The result of this process is the stop/pause on curriculum in place since August of 2013 has been lifted, and curriculum renewal will continue in a number of subject areas. More details will be forthcoming as the process unfolds in the coming months. I want to thank the many individuals who took the time to attend the consultation sessions, to meet with me individually, or to prepare written submissions. Their passion and commitment were evident.

Mr. Speaker, protecting parental right to school choice vis-à-vis publicly funded education, opening 21 new schools, and lifting the pause on curriculum development are all examples of how this government advances its vision to be the best place in Canada to get an education.

Mr. Speaker, we are preparing for a big change as we elect a new leader of our party, a new premier for Saskatchewan. It is with a heavy heart that we bid farewell to the most popular premier in Canada. I want to take some time to share what others have written about our Premier's pending retirement. John Lax, manager of the Saskatchewan Construction Association, writes in the fall 2017 issue of *We Build*:

Premier Wall's tenure in politics was long and distinguished, dating from time as an advisor in the Devine era to Leader of the Opposition and capped by a 10-year run as Saskatchewan's 14th Premier. His legacy will tower over those who follow in a way that few legacies do — Tommy Douglas and Peter Lougheed are the only western examples.

Here are some excerpts from Derek Lothian's editor column in the fall 2017 issue of *Prairie Manufacturer* magazine:

I moved back to Saskatchewan from Ontario in 2014 in large part because I shared in Wall's passion and optimism for the future of the province. By that time Saskatchewan had well eclipsed one million people. Skilled graduates were no longer our chief export, and Calgary had finally lost its moniker as Saskatchewan's most . . . [popular] city. I remember flying into Regina every Christmas, marvelling at the sheer scale and pace of development — entire new neighbourhoods complete with shopping centres and restaurants that weren't there 12 months prior . . .

Owning the narrative has been Wall's most effective ability; and I would contend we as taxpayers have reaped the benefit as a result. Investment has flowed, business has prospered, the population has flourished and we are punching above our weight class in the international arena. Few will debate style versus substance when you're producing results.

For manufacturers, the proof is in the pudding. Since Wall was first elected premier in 2007, manufacturing sales in Saskatchewan have swelled by 37 per cent . . . Manufacturing exports have spiked 48 per cent. Average

weekly earnings for manufacturing employees are up 33 per cent — roughly double the rate of inflation.

. . . there is no disputing that Wall will leave the industry in a far better state than when he found it.

Wall is departing politics at a time when, on principle, it is difficult for him to leave. Few elected officials would do so, with as much humility or grace.

But change is good, and I am confident the best is yet to come. That belief — a conviction in ourselves — is the legacy Brad Wall will leave behind.

You see, Mr. Speaker, many Saskatchewan associations send their publications to my office, and I do actually read them.

An open letter to Brad Wall from a young Saskatchewan rancher appeared on a blog called View From the Ranch Porch on August 10th. That rancher is Adrienne Ivey and I would like to share her letter with you:

Dear Premier Wall,

Today you announced your impending retirement from politics, from the position of Premier of Saskatchewan, and my heart broke a little.

Born and raised here in Saskatchewan, I never dreamed of a leader like yourself. I never dreamed of what Saskatchewan, as a province, was capable of. For myself, your time as Premier was a little like the blind being blessed with sight, as I never had the smallest vision of what was possible. A vision that, thankfully, you did have.

You see, I grew up in a very different Saskatchewan than the one that my children know. In my formative years, Saskatchewan was quite literally the joke of Western Canada. The gap, as Canada knew us as then.

It was not until you took our amazing province's reins that I dreamed that we could ever become anything but a have-not province. A sentiment I can only imagine was shared by the majority of my classmates, by the way they fled Saskatchewan in droves after completing their education. Your leadership changed that.

With the last decade, I have developed the type of puffed chest pride of our province that can only be likened to that of the pride in my children. I have shouted to the world that right here, right now, Saskatchewan is THE best place in the world to live. THE best place in the world to raise my children. THE best place in the world to farm, ranch, and feed the people of this world. For that I thank you.

Thank you for bringing the people of Saskatchewan together. Thank you for ensuring my children's prosperity here. Thank you for making the difficult, unpopular decisions that are best for our province in the long run. Before you, I never knew that politicians could make decisions based on what is right, rather than what gains votes. For that I thank you. Thank you for making the RoughRiders win (ok, I may be getting a little carried

away . . .). Thank you for teaching me the word “Jackwagon.”

Thank you, Premier Wall, for pouring your heart and soul into Saskatchewan, because as you have proved, we are worth it.

It is said that when others speak well of you, it is a prayer. Well, Mr. Speaker, our Premier is blessed with abundant prayers.

Our Lieutenant Governor started the Throne Speech by quoting the late Ron Petrie, an author and long-time humour columnist with the *Regina Leader-Post*, who died in 2012 after a one-year battle with cancer. Here is some of the Thanksgiving column that he penned:

As a younger man, brash and full of swagger, I considered my calling to be Vancouver, Montreal, even New York. Only now do I appreciate that what I actually fancied was merely the idea of . . . [a] farmboy self destined for the big city; that, in reality, traffic jams, restaurant queues, cut-throat office politics, six dollar cups of coffee, shoebox apartments and crammed elevators are not for me, and never were.

Where I am is Saskatchewan. Thank goodness. With the possible exception of the Maritimes, nowhere in Canada can be found folks with a keener feel for the absurd, with a more grounded sense of purpose and place, the confidence to enjoy the gift that is a good laugh at one’s own expense. The job description calls me a Saskatchewan humour writer. Hardly. I am a stenographer. I simply take notes.

That my Saskatchewan grows the food that feeds the world makes me guilty of a deadly sin. Pride.

That is how I feel, Mr. Speaker. Where I am is Saskatchewan. Thank goodness. And I make no apologies for the pride that I feel for my province. Despite the challenges that we face, we continue to be the best place in Canada to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, and to build a life. I hope I have proved my thesis statement, that this Throne Speech advances the vision of this government.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion moved by the member from Estevan. I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks so much, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause]

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you to my colleagues for that warm welcome. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s always a pleasure to be here at the Legislative Assembly, of course, representing the great people of Regina Gardiner Park, and always humbled to do that, always looking forward to that and to the session that’s coming along.

I’d like to talk about the Throne Speech for a little bit. I recognize the excellent speech by the previous speaker, the

member from Churchill-Wildwood. She talked about, right at the end, about the beginning paragraphs of the Throne Speech, and there was quotes by Mr. Petrie, and I thought those kind of hit home. I always . . . You know the part of the Throne Speech that I thought was pretty eloquent, and all of it is of course, but just that last statement by Mr. Petrie in his column there, “Where I am is Saskatchewan. Thank goodness.” I couldn’t agree more.

You think about where you are. You get to work in this beautiful building. Every day you come to work — and boy, the marble palace, the oak finishes — and get to work with great people, and boy, this is a great place. This is a great time for our province, and I’m so thankful I am here and be able to represent the people of Gardiner Park as I mentioned earlier.

Thank goodness. Thank goodness for my family. I’m so lucky to have a young, healthy family. We’re definitely very busy. We’re both working and very active, three active boys in Regina here. So I’m very, very thankful for them and their support as we do our endeavours here at the Legislative Assembly.

I’m very thankful. Thank goodness — I can definitely say this — thank goodness for the staff in the building. And Brittany at my constituency office does a great job as always — I try to mention when I get up to speak — does a great job on behalf of the people of Gardiner Park. I believe she’s been serving those folks and working with me for five years now. So I think that’s a pretty good job, and keeping me in line is definitely a full-time job, Mr. Speaker.

In the minister’s office, there’s Jim and Damien and Jolene and Catherine. They do great work on behalf of the people. So thank goodness for those folks who do so much work behind the scenes on behalf of MLAs and ministers, Mr. Speaker.

I also thank . . . At this time of year we get back to the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It’s a lot of back and forth, a lot of good debate. That’s fun. But I always really like this time of year. My wife doesn’t like it at all, but I certainly like it. It’s getting cold and the leaves are falling, the winds are blowing, but it’s more of a personal thing for me and I’m sure a lot of folks around Saskatchewan.

But we just wrapped up football season with the Regina Minor Football League on Sunday. Two great league finals. The peewee game, I was fortunate enough to be able to coach in that game on my son’s team. We won that game so . . . And then there was the bantam playoff after that. Of course it’s not, certainly not even close about me or winning — that’s fine and great — but certainly it’s about, as we always do this time of year, we have to . . . There’s always, I guess, a championship, and the kids are excited about that. But of course we all know it’s about families coming together, competing, enjoying being out there with your friends, your buddies, and having a good time and learning some skills.

I think the best part as a coach, of course, as I mentioned before, maybe not necessarily the winning all the time, but when you see kids grow socially, the skills they pick up, they acquire while doing the activity. And I think that’s the best part of coaching. When you see a kid maybe who struggled at the

beginning of the year be able to grow just exponentially, boy, that's what you do it for. And that's what it's all about, and it's so much fun.

And I'm proud to be part, or the minister responsible for some of the programs that are funded by the lottery system, Mr. Speaker. Not directly referenced in that Speech from the Throne, but those just . . . The word I was looking for is leverage, so many volunteer hours. And those funds, they go a long way in so many areas.

Of course a lot of times I speak about football because I'm most familiar with that, but it is a great and unique part of Saskatchewan is that lottery system, and those dollars definitely go to good use. So thank goodness for that, and all the coaches, all the volunteers, all the parents that get behind that particular entity, the Regina Minor Football.

[16:15]

And I should also mention that they just continue to build. They continue to grow — a few years ago a new field, turf field, new stands in the last few years, and now an extremely ambitious project in the north end zone at Leibel Field. They are building a new clubhouse to store equipment, to have locker rooms for folks, bathroom facilities. And it is absolutely first class. It'll be tough to beat in terms of a facility for . . . a minor football facility, even within Canada, the ones I'm familiar with.

Another great one, and I don't know where it ranked, is Saskatoon Minor Field as well. That's where the Hilltops play, and of course they're on to the national championship, Mr. Speaker, a great program there. But their facility is outstanding as well, and I think that speaks to again all the people that are involved, all the volunteers. The folks that raise money for those programs are so valuable to our communities, so valuable for those young folks, and boy, I don't know where we'd be without all those people.

A little bit of leeway, Mr. Speaker. I'll get directly to the Throne Speech if I just, if you give me a little room here. We're talking about football, so I know a couple of days ago there was a bit of a disturbance in the force, so to speak, on Friday as the old Taylor Field, old Mosaic Stadium, was taken down. And certainly that was a kind of end of an era, certainly.

I know that was here in Regina and I guess there was some involvement in the new stadium and the old stadium with the provincial government. But you know, that was certainly . . . I don't know. We knew it was one of those things that you know is coming and it'll eventually take place. I didn't necessarily drive down that part of town quite often, but I was . . . It's very different to see the Regina skyline. You know how flat Regina is, and you can see that stadium for a long time, but when you go to look now, it's not there. It's kind of eerie; it's kind of different. And to see that stadium come down, boy, I can think of a lot of memories that were there. Not just for my family, but for, I'm sure, for thousands of thousands of people across time here in our province. And what a great facility that was. It certainly served its purpose.

I know it's been the home of the Rider nation for 80 years. Just quickly a brief history of it. In the 1910s there was of course the

Regina Rugby Club in the teen years, and they played at Park de Young, it was called. And it's part of the original, the footprint of the old stadium there just off of, west of Albert Street, north of Sask Drive there — we all know where it is — and rugby, baseball, and soccer all shared that stadium over time. And it went through some different changes, different configurations for many, many years.

It was interesting to note in the article I was reading when they talked about enclosing the building, certainly different now from the 1920s and '30s when we talk about enclosing a building. What they were talking about was putting a fence around it so they could charge admission and make some money off the gate, whereas people would just I guess before that would just walk in and do their thing there.

So in 1966 of course it was renamed Taylor Field, and to a lot of folks over the decades it's always been Taylor Field. You know, when the name changed . . . But I think it was called Mosaic Stadium at Taylor Field, and of course it was named after "Piffles" Taylor who did so much work in the rugby club and bring it to prominence. And of course he was a world war veteran who served his country very honourably.

So it was changed in '66. The west side grandstand, it expanded over the years and the west side was voted on by the citizens of Regina. It won by about 60 per cent in '78 and it was finally erected in '79, only to be again . . . Got nearly 40 years out of it, and it came down just two days ago. Also temporary seats were put in in time for the 2013 Grey Cup. And of course I mentioned SMF [Saskatoon Minor Football] field in Saskatoon. They're getting a lot of those temporary seats and so that's great to see the legacy of the old building is still being used in other facilities here in the province for those facilities that need new stands, and it's going to look great. I've seen pictures of SMF and it's awesome.

I certainly remember lots of great memories. The first time I ever played at Taylor Field was, I believe, 1991. It was the senior bowl, so all the high school players that were selected to sort of a north-south all-star team. It poured rain that day, Mr. Speaker. I remember it clearly. It was just coming down in sheets. It didn't make for great play, but I always certainly remember that.

I remember in 1995, my first year in the league, it was the year of the first Grey Cup ever in Saskatchewan, and that was certainly a big deal in our province. And there was 56,000 people for a regular season game at that time with all the temporary seating. I remember in the Grey Cup, of course there's . . . Saskatchewan's known to have windy conditions once in a while and there was some concern whether those stands on the south side could be opened because of the wind. I think around Rider nation, people have had their Rider family at those seats and they had good relationships, including myself when I was done playing. So lots of memories there.

I remember my boys, when they were young, on days off we'd go into the locker room and they had these chairs that were on rollers, and my guys would jump on them and kind of skateboard all throughout the locker room. The trainer, Ivan, wasn't very happy with that but . . . He couldn't find the chairs to do treatment on the guys, and I still remember that. The

chocolate bars that he had tasted terrible but my kids loved them for some reason, the energy bars that were there. But lots of great memories, Mr. Speaker, for myself, for many folks who sat on the sunny side, the shady side. You didn't have to say much more than that to know where you sat at old Taylor Field. So it's one of those things, but I think it's progress.

Progress happens and it's great to see that happening in our great province of Saskatchewan. I think that's a lot similar . . . I thank you for the latitude to talk a little bit about that, but I think it's kind of a thing where we talk about the Throne Speech, we talk about moving forward to a new stadium. There's been so many new projects here in our province and here in Regina. I think about the bypass and I think about the new stadium, and all the things that have been built, those major economic drivers for our province. And boy, Mr. Speaker, I think that progress, that movement forward, that continually trying to better, I think we've seen that from this government in the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's highlighted in the Throne Speech. We're not just sort of sitting on our laurels and looking at the past. We're looking forward; we're moving forward; we're going ahead, and just like we've seen from our favourite football team, moving to a new stadium and new expectations and new excitement about that.

So I think, you know, I'd just like to highlight a few things that are in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, that prove that we are moving forward. We're not just, you know, thinking about the past, and wanting to . . . continuous improvement, always looking for the future, looking towards getting better, trying to do things. Of course mistakes will be made in any situation, in anything you're trying to accomplish, and we acknowledge those. But I think for the most part, for the great part, I think we've moved this province forward quite a bit, Mr. Speaker.

I will be wary of my time here, but I think to this autism spectrum disorder, I've heard a lot from my constituents about that, when is that coming, and how important that would be, that individualized funding for the folks who have kids with autism spectrum disorder.

I can think of the organ donation legislation that is coming, Mr. Speaker; the move to a single health authority that will hopefully save . . . Well it will save money and lead to better service, Mr. Speaker. Ride-sharing services, Uber and Lyft, to operate in our province. I think that's an important part. I don't know if the members opposite are on board with that. From what I understand, they're not for some reason. I'd like to hear why. Maybe some of them will mention that in their speeches, Mr. Speaker.

So just quickly, in the ministry that I'm honoured to be a minister for, there is new legislation coming for a new provincial park in the Porcupine Hills. We'll hear more of that in the coming days, Mr. Speaker. And I think over the last, as was directly referenced in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, over 100 million that has been spent in our parks in the last 10 years, substantially 110 per cent more than the members opposite did when they were in government the previous 10 years.

So we've seen numbers increase to our provincial parks. They're certainly jewels. They speak to the quality of life we

have here in our great province. And I think a lot of that has to do, part of it anyway is the amount of capital projects we've put into the parks system, Mr. Speaker, to increase the usefulness and the amenities that are available to all those park goers. So we thank them for coming to our parks. They're great assets for our province, Mr. Speaker. So again it references directly in the Throne Speech which I'm very happy to report to the House. It's the second park that's been created in Saskatchewan in the last five years. Blue Heron of course up in northern Saskatchewan was the other one.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also glad to see in the Throne Speech references to Creative Saskatchewan, the good work those folks do to help creative entrepreneurs in our province, help them move their projects and their businesses forward. And so . . . [inaudible] . . . million in grants in a tough budget. It's great to see that amount of commitment to that creative sector. And not just in the film sector, Mr. Speaker, but of course all screen-based media, television, interactive digital media we are seeing great, large changes in that business with the digital age, Mr. Speaker, similar to what we saw in the music industry with the rise of the Internet and digital recording and those sorts of things. So great changes and Creative Saskatchewan's on top of those changes to work with our great artists we have here in our province.

And of course the music industry, the publishing industry, visual arts as well as the performing arts, so Creative Saskatchewan helps in all those creative entrepreneurs, as I mentioned. And also a million and a half to help those industry associations at Saskatchewan, those creative industry associations I just mentioned previously. So good support for that. We see good work with the Arts Board continuing in the creative sectors in Saskatchewan.

The other part of my portfolio I guess is Sask Liquor and Gaming. And we've seen some movement certainly in that in the last little while. As it directly referenced in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, 24 locations have been converted over to private retailers and they are having service. We're seeing service in previous communities that have not had an SLGA store in the past. And I think it's more good news on that front, Mr. Speaker. Six of the stores have former SLGA employees working for . . . Sorry, not working any longer for SLGA. They are owners of their businesses. I'm sure that's something that they are proud of.

Also on the liquor file, Mr. Speaker, concerned over the provincial trade barriers, the Agreement on Internal Trade, what is now the CFTA [Canadian Free Trade Agreement], we're very concerned that the province to the west of us has created an unfair, inequitable grant program for their local breweries which shuts out Saskatchewan brewers. And so it's been ruled by an independent panel that that is an illegal action and we certainly hope, we plead, and we invite the members opposite to talk to their counterparts, I guess is the right word, over in Alberta and ask them to remove this illegal activity. An independent board ruled against the Alberta government in their unfair trade practices, Mr. Speaker, and they of course appealed that, unfortunately. So hopefully we'll get the members opposite onside with the people of the province and help our local brewers here in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, another thing I am certainly . . . And where I am, Mr. Speaker, is nearing the end of my speech. I can see my time. I've probably gone over here. I should always look when I start, Mr. Speaker, but I tend to go on and on, Mr. Speaker.

[16:30]

But another thing I'm very thankful and I say thank goodness, is we've had the Premier of Saskatchewan as our leader of this party of course, Mr. Speaker. He's given 18 years I believe to the people of the province in his service, so I just wanted to mention how grateful I am. I think the province is grateful for his service. He has been a leader not only for the people of Saskatchewan but for, I believe, Western Canada. He's been very astute and he is a great communicator and we have been very lucky to have him as our Premier for the last decade.

And I'd like to acknowledge the sacrifice his family has given. Of course he's the MLA from Swift Current. He has to travel a long way and I'm sure he's missed a few things, over the past nearly 20 years of service, in his family life that I'm sure he would have liked to have been to. But the people of the province asked him to serve in this role and he did so with wonderful distinction. And I thank him for that.

I think there's people that, you know, they kind of look for a career path and look for something to do and where their life's going to take us. But there is some people, I think, that they're just born to do something and that's where they end up. And I can't think of that more fully than with our current Premier, Mr. Speaker. He was born to do that job, and he's done a great job. So I thank him for it, as I mentioned before.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I'm very thankful for where I am. I'm honoured to serve and I would just like to once again stress that what Mr. Petrie said, at the beginning of my speech and the beginning of the Throne Speech, thank goodness, thank goodness I'm in Saskatchewan. There's no place I'd rather be.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I am going to wrap up my speech and say I will, of course, when voted upon, be supporting the 2017 Throne Speech. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly it is a great honour to speak in this Chamber while representing the people from Regina Pasqua. I give great thanks to the Regina Pasqua residents who chose me to represent them. Also thanks to my campaign team who worked tirelessly day and night. Also thank you to our leader whose wisdom, sincerity, and love of Saskatchewan earned the people of Saskatchewan's trust.

I would like to not forget two people — my best friends — Shaun Spelliscy and Waqar Bokhari. I had an initial talk and the first talk ever when I decided to run for this office.

Mr. Speaker, I know my wife Attia-Tul-Ilm is watching this session live. Mr. Speaker, Attia's name means "a gift." She is truly a gift in my life in the last 18 years, and we together having three boys: Ayaz, Kashif, and Arsalan. Also many thanks to my parents for all their praise and raised me along with other 11 kids, 11 kids.

The Speech from the Throne highlights sustainability, well-being, and economic growth, debt-free Saskatchewan, and maintain the standard of life of people of Saskatchewan and the generation to come.

Mr. Speaker, it was tough living here in Saskatchewan before 2007, as between 1991 to 2007, about 56,000 people left Saskatchewan. There were many reasons for the people to leave Saskatchewan. In fact the economical growth rate from 2000 to 2007 under the NDP government was 1.7 per cent, well below the national average rate of 2.5 per cent. Mr. Speaker, the road to recovery started when the Saskatchewan Party government came in power. The GDP had increased by 24 per cent. This was the largest increase across the provinces, with Canada increases by 17 per cent. In 2007 the Saskatchewan debt was \$3 billion and was paid off by the Saskatchewan Party government.

The NDP government closed 52 schools, 52 hospitals, and also had the shortage of 1,000 nurses in Saskatchewan. There were doctors shortages as well and the longest surgical waiting time in the country. The road to recovery started in 2007 when we hired more than 3,000 nurses, 750 doctors, and built the children's hospital in Saskatoon, hospitals in Moose Jaw and North Battleford.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP closed 1,200 long-term care beds and had zero increase to the seniors' income plan benefit for 16 years. I am proud to stand here and say that this government has built 15 new long-term care facilities for seniors.

The NDP caused substantial damage in many communities when they closed 176 schools, as well as having a major teacher shortage, crowded classrooms with no one to repair any schools. Our road to recovery started by building 40 brand new schools or replacing schools and 25 major renovations, hiring 875 more teachers and 173 student support teachers. Eighteen of those schools are joint-use facilities built using a P3, or public-private partnership, model that reduced construction costs by \$100 million. Those schools are located on nine sites in Regina, Saskatoon, Warman, and Martensville, and were completed in less than two years.

Altogether our government has constructed or renovated 65 schools during the last decade, including several new community schools. Mr. Speaker, in Regina if you drive down Elphinstone, we see Scott Collegiate, a recreational complex, a public library, a community police station, and a First Nations elder ceremonial room, Sacred Heart Community School, École Connaught Community School.

We have worked with the school divisions and teachers on the province's first education sector strategic plan, which has led to the higher graduation rate and most students reading at grade level. This government collaborated with indigenous leaders to develop programs to assist First Nations and Métis students, such as Help Me Tell My Story and Following Their Voices.

Mr. Speaker, since 2008 we have provided 8.3 billion to support post-secondary education, including nearly 1 billion in direct support for students. This includes the graduate retention program, the most aggressive student attraction and retention program in Canada. Since 2008 nearly 70,000 students have

taken advantage of the graduate retention program, receiving about \$345 million in tax credits. This government also provides the direct financial support to students through the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, which offers all Saskatchewan grade 12 graduates up to 500 a year to help cover tuition costs to a maximum of \$2,000.

Mr. Speaker, we all know under the NDP government, 56,000 people moved out of Saskatchewan, finding jobs in Alberta, Manitoba, and in BC. But under the Saskatchewan Party government, 167,000 people moved to Saskatchewan and we still had the lowest unemployment rate in the country. In fact we have nearly doubled the national rate of job growth. Saskatchewan is one of the greatest provinces to live in, and I am proud to be here as a member of the party who works tirelessly to bring back many families to Saskatchewan.

Creative farming in Saskatchewan inspired the world with hard work, innovation, and with productivity, which helped Saskatchewan's economic growth. Farmers are absolutely the strength of Saskatchewan, feed the world, and supply food for dining tables around the globe. In 2016, \$14.4 billion worth of agricultural products were shipped.

Mr. Speaker, we as a government do what we can or what we should do. On October 25th, the day of the Speech from the Throne, we invited many international delegates from many different consulates, to improve and build our correlation to emerge in international markets; to keep the momentum of our exports, growth, and investment in Saskatchewan.

There are now more than 300 food companies operating in the province, generating more than 4 billion in revenue and employing 5,000 people. And it is a grave sadness while the federal government and the Saskatchewan opposition is forgetting that who decorates their dining table three times in a day. Mr. Speaker, is this not a thankless action to impose the carbon tax on Saskatchewan, which is substantial damage to the farmers' and ranchers' community?

Mr. Speaker, we have committed \$7.4 billion to the province's highway system. This record investment has resulted in the repair and improvement of 12 000 kilometres of highway; and the completion of significant projects, such as Saskatoon Circle Drive South bridge, the St. Louis bridge, the twinning of Highway 11, and passing lanes on Highway 7 and Highway 10.

Mr. Speaker, October 27th, I visited the Regina bypass, along with the member from Regina Fort Qu'Appelle and the Minister of Highways. The Regina bypass is the largest infrastructure in the province's history. It addresses the growing commuter traffic issues; improves safety on Highway 1 East and Victoria Avenue; diverts large truck traffic from Regina; construction of overpasses at Balgonie, White City, Pilot Butte, and Tower Road; eliminates key transportation bottlenecks while creating an efficient traffic flow on Highway 1; provides better access to Regina, the GTH, Highway 6 and Highway 11.

The new Regina bypass will include 60 kilometres of 4-lane highways; 40 kilometres of greenfield 4-lane highway; 20 kilometres of brownfield 4-lane highway to be resurfaced; 12 new overpasses; 55 kilometres of service roads; two new all-movement intersections, first time ever in Saskatchewan;

two bridges crossing Wascana Creek.

Mr. Speaker, it is all about Saskatchewan, our economic growth, and building a future for the generation to come. So I will be supporting the motion moved by the member from Estevan. I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I am greatly humbled to be part of these historical proceedings in these beautiful chambers and joining in the Throne Speech debate. I think of the many members who have preceded me over the decades and all the beautiful words that have been spoken in this building. These members' efforts and beliefs, morals and personal standards on who . . . representing their constituents and on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, they all debate to enact legislation to help the quality of life of these very same people that we represent.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne and this legislation helps make Saskatchewan the great place it is to live, to work, to raise your family, and to enjoy all the aspects that Saskatchewan has to offer: the parks, lakes, resorts, and different amenities. Freedoms, liberties, and fresh air seem to be taken in stride and are a given.

As my colleagues are well aware, our constituency assistants at our home offices work hard in the front lines. So thank you to Marcus and to Cora. Jason Beebe out at our Big River satellite office has had some health challenges recently and I would like to wish him well. So best wishes, Jason; get better. Your province needs you, and we appreciate the work and efforts that you put forth. Thank you to the staff in the Assembly that assist myself and my colleagues to make our life more manageable.

[16:45]

The Throne Speech shapes the legislature's agenda and gives us an advancement of the vision of government as defined by Saskatchewan people's voices. In a quote from Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, at a Silver Jubilee steak dinner address in 1977:

Confederation itself was not a French idea or a British idea. It was an idea born of this land. The need for it arose from a shared experience and common problems. Its fulfillment sprang from shared attitudes and beliefs.

I look at the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, like that: a shared attitude and belief of Saskatchewan people. As we look into the future with certain legislation and prepare for generations yet to come, we must continue to build with the same dedication and resiliency that our forefathers and settlers did.

The foundation continues to be strong, Mr. Speaker. This foundation formed on the backs of the men and women who settled this province, made it home, and also on the new settlers who are carving out their future here with the right to establish a good quality of life wanted by all citizens. They might not be plowing, turning the sod into grain fields, or felling trees for land; however settlers are nevertheless in their right carving out

a place and establishing their own community spirit and new home.

“Growing Stronger” was our theme to the 2017 Speech from the Throne and we will continue to be strong, to meet the challenges committed to the protection of Saskatchewan people, their families, and communities against hardship inherited or newly created. We will continue to improve revenue sharing such as Candle Lake resort with an increase of 115 per cent, and Big River with an increase of 97 per cent since we formed government.

The cornerstones of our future successes are health, education, economy, and justice. Our government is delivering in these areas and we have a formula to address these concerns. We heard that more has to be done to prevent crime in rural Saskatchewan, so we appointed a government committee of MLAs to consult communities in Saskatchewan. Our recommendations on our government created a new protective and response team, consisting of 258 armed officers to improve response times to emergency calls and increase the visibility of uniformed officers in rural Saskatchewan. Composed of 120 police officers from the RCMP and municipal police services, 40 enforcement officers, and 98 conservation officers, this team can arrest and detain those suspected of committing crimes. Nearly 6 million has been committed to support this team and other initiatives arising from the communities’ report.

Mr. Speaker, we have and we will continue to listen to the concerns of Saskatchewan people, respond, and provide protection and opportunities for all. Mr. Speaker, our accomplishments over the past 10 years of government are many. The largest income and property tax cuts in the history of Saskatchewan. We’ve reduced the province’s operating debt by 40 per cent. We created surgical wait times from the longest to now the shortest. And Saskatchewan received a AAA credit rating from Standard & Poor’s for the first time in the province’s history, and continues to . . . [inaudible] . . . that status last month.

We’ve created more support for people with disabilities, including the elimination of the original 440 wait-list for people with disabilities waiting for the dignity of a home.

Population growth of 132,000 people in eight years. We’ve had more growth in the previous 75 years combined, to an all-time high of 1.14 million people, and a record 8 billion investment in infrastructure to improve roads, schools, senior facilities, and hospitals. And that is keeping Saskatchewan growing stronger, Mr. Speaker.

This was a summer of many changes. Our lives are constantly evolving and growing, not only politically, but personally as well. Our family grew by one more again this summer. I would like to announce on August 28th our daughter Brigitt and son-in-law Christie gave birth to their third child, Robert Benfield de Villiers V. He’s a little brother to Ella and Jane. And this new little human reminds us of renewal and growth. Doug and I are immensely overjoyed to have eight grandchildren, ages eight and under.

I’m happy to say Saskatchewan is growing and that all of our four children, their spouses, and grandchildren live and work in

this great province. The support of my family means a great deal to me as I continue to work for the citizens of the province we call home.

Summer was also a time of parades, events, and volunteerism. Being able to see the positive impact you make is one of the reasons why people choose to volunteer, and Saskatchewan still ranks there up in the numbers for volunteering. It can be a real test of character and highly challenging at times, however the choice to volunteer is a demonstration of a very positive impact on the world. Therefore I encourage Saskatchewan people to continue and inspire others to keep up the good work. It gives humanity dignity and good spirits. If you want to touch the future, touch a life and all for the freedom of giving. I met young, old, and in between, all making the decision to give of their time. Saskatchewan is strengthened by Saskatchewan people and their ability to give.

I must mention Wayne Bartel and Wayne Hyde. They’re the recipients of the 2017 Lakeland Citizens of the Year. They’re very strong, deserving volunteers. So thank you to them — Waynes’ world.

Now one small part in helping out this summer that I enjoyed was serving food at the Ukrainian booth at the fair, with the delicious smells and the great comments from the consumers on both sides of the booth. Their homemade bread baked in an outdoor kiln was a one-of-a-kind experience and tasting pleasure. So thank you to the crew it took for daily mixing, kneading, and baking that wonderful bread all week long.

Another event I enjoyed this summer was helping out at the 2017 provincial 4-H judging competition held in August, hosted by the Prince Albert Exhibition agriculture producers. So they brought the sheep, cattle, and horses from their pastures and took some time away from the farm, some more volunteers wanting to help. The parents and chaperones commented on this generosity and will surely pass it on. The 4-H senior members did a great job of judging and I believe we are in good hands of the Saskatchewan future.

This year’s Throne Speech is working to ensure a future for the next generation, a future of safe and strong communities, better Internet and cellular coverage throughout rural Saskatchewan, and investing in schools, hospitals, and improving our provincial parks.

William James said, “The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.” And the enjoyment we receive by small acts of kindness are sometimes worth more than the grandest intention. Kindness is like a boomerang: it always returns, maybe not tomorrow or the next but eventually, when you least expect it.

And all these acts of giving are important to someone, such as the act of giving of yourself. And by that I mean literally, the organ donation program. Our government reviewed the current organ donor program and will implement a new program led by donor physicians who will educate and champion organ donations in Saskatchewan. This will be a gift of life or better quality for many who suffer with the need of a healthier organ that is diseased or damaged.

Mr. Speaker, as I belong to a family whose child has autism in the program I was paired with . . . It's called adopt an MLA program. So this child has the autism spectrum disorder and I go visit him in Prince Albert several times a year. I was happy to see we fulfilled our commitment to provide individualized funding to children under six with autism spectrum disorder.

Mr. Speaker, our government unveiled life jacket loaner stations. That was piloted in 2016. Now one of these stations will be available in the Great Blue Heron Provincial Park in our beautiful constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers. Life jackets can be borrowed free of charge, ensuring everyone's safety while they enjoy the provincial parks across Saskatchewan.

Our constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers continues to benefit from record investments in highways and infrastructure. Some of the projects currently under way in Saskatchewan Rivers include 18 kilometres of paving on Highway 3, 28 kilometres of paving at the junction of Highway 55, 17 kilometres of paving on Highway 55 near Big River, 14 kilometres of paving of Highway 2, and 16 kilometres of widening and paving on Highway 2 North. The Government of Saskatchewan has invested 7.4 billion in transportation infrastructure since 2008, improving more than 12 000 kilometres of Saskatchewan highway — that is keeping Saskatchewan strong.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech day will be very memorable to me as it was the last in the company of our Premier. Throne Speech day is an annual speech with usually general information, and in recent dates, we had specific information. We offer remarks on our government's priorities and on focus on the economy and supporting Saskatchewan people. It also affords the opportunity for both sides to roll out their plans.

The Throne Speech shows how we keep Saskatchewan strong. We owe the people the very best that we can do. We owe the people a positive government, and provide what the people need. Our duty is to the farmers, the business people, the loggers, people in the urban cities, and people in the rural constituencies. And that's why we debate the speech. We show the people of Saskatchewan what is so important and how it can help their communities and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I also must thank Premier Wall . . . pardon me, the Premier for his service to the province. It's been a privilege to work with the Premier under his strong leadership, with a great decade of great vision and memories. Saskatchewan has grown stronger these past 10 years, and believing in our province has brought us so far. I'm grateful that, and I'm grateful to live in the great province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the helicopter . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . STARS. Yes, thank you. I have a little story regarding STARS. A few years ago before we had the STARS helicopter, I was snowmobiling in the northern part of Saskatchewan. There were a few of us all together and we had a snowmobile accident. And one of the young gentleman was trapped in his snowmobile, entangled in it. Fortunately my father was a Polaris snowmobile dealer, so he was able to take apart the snowmobile track and get this man out of it, yes, get him out.

But it was pitch dark, and at that time we didn't have STARS helicopter. All we had was some broken-down snowmobiles

that we had to put back together. So we took off with this young man, once we got the snowmobiles. We had wrapped him up in what clothing we could take off to try and keep him from bleeding to death. And I was the last one on the trail, and as we were all moving, my snowmobile stopped. I could hear the wolves howling in the distance. We were in the boreal forest, and they could probably smell the blood. But one person came back, started my snowmobile, and away we went again.

We had to go to a village to find a truck, to put this young man in the truck and then take him on to the hospital. And of course he lost his leg in it, and he almost lost his life, so unfortunately that was a sad story. So that's why I think STARS helicopter could have saved his life, and it would have been a wonderful thing back then if the opposition had agreed to it.

Yes, so I see my time is up, so, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, ultimately I will support the Throne Speech but I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: — It now being 5 o'clock, this Assembly stands adjourned until tonight at 7.

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

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Steven Bonk

Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Trade

Hon. Kevin Doherty

Minister of Advanced Education

Hon. Larry Doke

Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water
Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre

Minister of Education
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Joe Hargrave

Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Finance

Hon. Nancy Heppner

Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

Hon. Gene Makowsky

Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor
and Gaming Authority

Hon. David Marit

Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds

Hon. Paul Merriman

Minister of Social Services

Hon. Don Morgan

Deputy Premier
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Greg Ottenbreit

Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Jim Reiter

Minister of Health

Hon. Lyle Stewart

Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell

Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation