



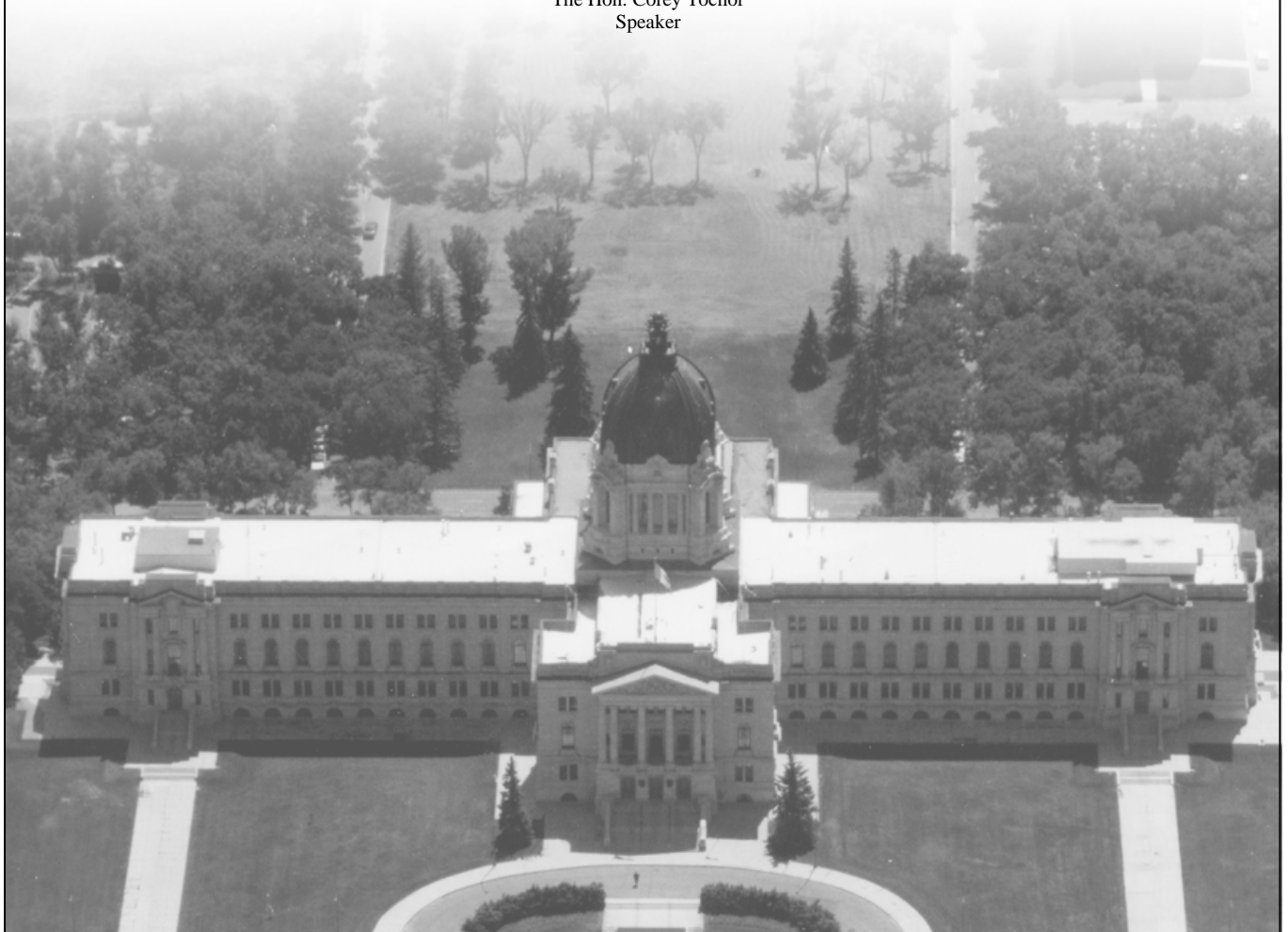
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Corey Tochor
Speaker



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2nd Session — 28th Legislature

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being 7 o'clock, we will resume with the debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

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 Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

[Applause]

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't expecting applause like that because actually when I'd just quit talking there, just when we got shut down at 5 o'clock, everybody said that was the best speech I'd ever made. They thought I was done. So anyway, Mr. Speaker, now I'm back up again.

I would like to start, Mr. Speaker, of course as in tradition, by thanking a lot of the people who work around me and work with me and basically do the majority of the work. First off I would like thank to my constituency assistants, Cindy Warner and Shelley Meyer. They do fantastic work back in our office, keep me on track, and today they were very busy handing out chocolate bars. We had a lot of Halloweeners there today. And I had 140-some chocolate bars — and I always get the full-size chocolate bars — and they basically they ran out. So that was a good day for the Halloweeners in Carrot River. So I want to really thank them.

And of course I want to thank my wife and my children for supporting me all these . . . I guess it's getting to be quite a few years. Now it's not near as many years as the member from Cannington because actually the topsoil has gained a couple of inches since he got in. But I've been in here for quite a while, so it's a great place to be. And I was talking to, when I talked to the new member from Saskatoon Fairview, I think she'll find it a very rewarding time here, although I will hope that her time's going to be rather short.

But, Mr. Speaker, the other thing, the other person I want to really thank is our Premier. You know, our Premier has been there, he was in there when I first was elected in 2007, and I certainly give him a lot of credit for all the things he has done for this province. He has put Saskatchewan on the map, not just in Canada, not just in North America, but basically throughout the whole world.

Saskatchewan has become a place . . . It used to be when you

went down to the States and you said you were from Saskatchewan, nobody had a clue where you were even talking about or whether you were even speaking the English language. Now, Mr. Speaker, you can go down to the States, you can go to Ontario, you can go down to Nova Scotia and everybody knows about Saskatchewan. I guess that kind of shows that we have the most popular premier in all of Canada.

He's done a great job. I certainly give him a lot of credit. I never realized until I was actually in here how hard the job of the Premier and the cabinet ministers are. That is a tough job. And I know there's former cabinet ministers on the other side too, and I think everybody will tell you that is a tough job. And contrary to what people think, I don't think the pay really covers it for the job that these people do day in and day out.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to get on to the Speech from the Throne, and of course I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne and won't be supporting the amendment, much to the disappointment of the members across the way, but that's one of those things.

You know, this is a very, very ambitious Speech from the Throne. It covered a lot of things on moving this province forward. Really what we've been trying to do now for the past 10 years is to try and move the province forward.

We don't want to go back to the days of the NDP [New Democratic Party], you know, when we were losing people in droves. Every time that kids were graduating, they were moving to other provinces to get a job. Of course, you know, mainly going to Alberta was one of the main ones where they had a Conservative government, but then it turned around. Now we're getting all those people from Alberta moving back now that they have an NDP government over in Alberta. And we certainly hope to keep this government on track here, keep on going and inviting all of those people to come back.

Because you know, when you take a look at it, and I've said this many a time, the reason I got into politics was because of my children. I wanted to see, I wanted to see my children grow up and prosper and to be able to live, as most parents do, but to be able to live in Saskatchewan, so eventually — and I can say this, and I hope the kids are listening — eventually when I become a grandparent I don't have to go that far to see my grandkids or they don't have to go to far to come home.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank all the good people of the Carrot River Valley who have elected me now for three times and put their faith in me to come in here and bring their concerns forward. And I just wanted to bring up just a few things that have gone on in Carrot River Valley over the years, you know, since we have formed government — just a few odds and ends, like revenue sharing.

You know, Tisdale's revenue sharing increased from \$304,805 in 2007 to \$690,219 in '17-18. That's a 126 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker. Nipawin revenue sharing, Nipawin revenue sharing went from \$414,501 in 2007 to \$938,266 in '17-18, also 126 per cent. Hudson Bay, the revenue sharing at Hudson Bay has increased from \$169,209 and then on to \$299,214, a 77 per cent increase. These are things that have happened in my

constituency.

You know, the North East School Division, their operating funding . . . I know that the NDP, they like to talk about how we keep on cutting education but, you know, their education total operating funding now is up to \$54.3 million, and the increase from the last budget is 14.8 per cent. I don't really call that a cut, Mr. Speaker.

We start looking at some of the other things, and not just in my constituency. And we look at all the new schools that have been built within the province. And we take a look even in my constituency, we have a brand new school in Hudson Bay that we just built here a couple years ago. And then the constituency next to me, Kelvington-Wadena, there's a brand new school in Porcupine Plain. And Mr. Speaker, I can remember, I can remember going to that school with my son when he was playing basketball — and this is back in the NDP days — and they had five-gallon pails all over the place collecting water because that's how bad the roof was leaking. For the NDP to sit there and say that we're underfunding education, we've made tremendous strides in education.

You know, advanced education, we built a new campus in Nipawin for Cumberland College. And I'm a great believer in Cumberland College, and now they're starting to do university-accredited programs. This is very helpful to people. They don't have to move to the city to be able to go to university.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I'd kind of like to talk about health just a little bit. And I remember when I was first elected we only had four physicians in Nipawin, Mr. Speaker. That's all we had. I had people calling my office every single day trying to get a family physician. There's 13 physicians there now.

An Hon. Member: — How many?

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thirteen, and that hospital is growing. They're looking after the people. This government is committed to looking after the people. So we've done great things on that.

We've also done a lot of things on the highways. I could start talking about all the highways work that has been done up in our constituency, and there's been a lot. But it's been all over the province, Mr. Speaker, because we picked up a real deficit from the previous administration on highways. And the members across the way, they can laugh all they want, but they didn't have to drive . . . Well maybe they were driving over the highways. I don't know. But it was really tough.

But, Mr. Speaker, some of the other things I want to kind of get on to here is we have to keep on moving this province forward. Now one of our great things . . . We have a downturn in resources right now, which makes it a lot tougher. However I wonder what the NDP . . . They just had their convention on the weekend here. They have a brand new leader. And this leader was asked by *The Toronto Star* on September the 21st, 2017: "Are you in favour of any of the current pipeline proposals?" You know what he said? He said, "I have said no to Energy East and Kinder Morgan and most recently Keystone XL." How is that going to help our province? Are they going to . . .

You know, we all know that when you go and you get an NDP membership, you're a member of both the federal and the provincial party. So are they going to go along with their federal cousins? I can just guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, that as they sit there, and at their convention they said that what they wanted, they wanted a made-in-Saskatchewan carbon policy which, Mr. Speaker, we all know what that means: that carbon policy means carbon tax. Just like their cousins in Alberta, yes siree, they'd put on a carbon tax right here in Saskatchewan.

I happen to have an invoice that came from a woman out in Alberta, had it sent to me, and she actually heats her house with coal. Now the coal was \$42 a tonne, and the Alberta carbon levy, which they haven't even finished putting the whole thing on yet, came to \$35.39 a tonne, almost as much as the coal. Then to top it all off . . . Well the total price actually came, with what she got, was \$918.96 for the coal. The carbon levy was \$774.33, and to top it all off they turned around and charged GST [goods and services tax] not just on the coal but on the carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, is this what the NDP really wants to do here in Saskatchewan? Do they want us to sit there and not even be able to heat our houses in the wintertime? What they want to do, what they want to do, they want to throw on a carbon tax. And you know what that's going to do? That's going to shut down our Evraz pipe here right in Regina, one of the best pipe manufacturing outfits in all of North America. They'll shut that down because I'll tell you what, Evraz, if it gets too high, they will turn around and they'll move that pipe down to the States, that factory down to the States. They'll be going down in the States.

It's the same thing as our oil rigs. Our oil rigs are very movable. They can move down into North Dakota. The Bakken extends into North Dakota. If they put on a carbon tax, which is what they want to do . . . That's basically what they're saying at their convention on the weekend. They want to throw on a carbon tax. So they're going to nail us. So there we go, we lose our workers. We don't have a pipeline anyway if they get in because they're against all pipelines, Mr. Speaker. And so we lose those workers.

It also puts our farmers at a disadvantage because we sell grain over to . . . China's one of our big customers. We sell grain into China.

Now Australia tried the carbon tax. Guess what? It didn't work. They turned around and took it off. But Australia happens to be one of our main competitors on selling grain into China. Now, Mr. Speaker, now let's just use a fictitious number of some type, but let's say we go over there and we want to sell our grain for \$10 a bushel over to China and Australia goes in there and they say, well we'll sell you our grain for \$8. And we say, yes, but here it costs us more money because we have a carbon tax, because we have to pay a carbon tax in Canada. We're helping the environment. Who do you think the Chinese are going to buy from? They're going to buy it from the cheapest grower, Australia, which is one of our main competitors.

[19:15]

Mr. Speaker, there are so many things that we can talk about

here when you talk about the tax reductions. Now another thing that was brought up at the NDP convention is they want to have a \$15 minimum wage. Now, forgetting about the people who actually employ these people, I can tell you right now that probably if they put in a \$15 minimum wage all of a sudden what you're going to do is you're going to have employers that won't be hiring as many people.

Then the other thing the NDP would do, and this is pretty well a given because they did it before, they would have the tax on the people, on the lower wage earners. Now we all know, Mr. Speaker, that when we took office, anything — and I'm just going to use rough figures here — anything above \$8,000 you had to pay income tax on. Now rounding the figures off again, a single person going out there and working, it's going to be . . . It's about \$17,000 before you have to pay any income tax.

Now, Mr. Speaker, yes you can raise that. You can raise that minimum wage up to whatever you want, but if you're going to turn around and take it back out of their pockets after they get the increase, that doesn't do any good, Mr. Speaker. But that's the NDP way. And they've been that way all along.

The way we've lowered the income tax, right now a family of four in Saskatchewan pays no income tax on the first \$50,495. That is an amazing feat. That is an amazing feat, Mr. Speaker, and this is something that this government has done. We've made it fairer for all of the people in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I want to go back to health for a second because that seems to be one of the big things that they talk about all the time. Since we have come into office in 2007, we've hired 750, 750 more physicians. That kind of leads me back to this Nipawin thing when we went from 4 to 13.

The other thing that we've done is we've hired, what is it, 3,800?

An Hon. Member: — 3,400.

Mr. Bradshaw: — 3,400 more nurses within the province. And the NDP says, well you're not doing anything with health care. How would we like to go back to what we were when the NDP was in power when we had the longest surgical wait times in all of Canada, the longest? And they can sit there and they talk about how our surgical wait times are increasing. It's light years ahead of when they were sitting on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as we're on health, we could talk a little bit about long-term care also. You know, the NDP shut down . . . They sit there and say, well we have to look after our seniors. What did they do? They shut down 1,200 beds in this province when they were in power. Mr. Speaker, we built 13, 13 new long-term care facilities within the province, one in our own constituency in Tisdale in the Carrot River Valley constituency.

Mr. Speaker, we can go on and on about the seniors where, you know, they had only a \$90 senior income supplement for 16 years. It's now \$270, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we're looking after the seniors. The same thing as when they used to get a prescription. You know, if the prescription cost \$150 back when that government was sitting over here, they paid \$150. Now what do

they do? Those seniors go in and they pay \$35.

An Hon. Member: — 25.

Mr. Bradshaw: — What's that?

An Hon. Members: — 25.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Twenty-five? Okay, 25. I've been corrected on that, been corrected. Not too often I make a mistake, but, Mr. Speaker, that . . . But, Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca is sitting there chirping away from his seat. He used to be the Highways minister when they were going around telling people to fill in their own holes on the highways. Now we have a minister who actually understands and gets highways done in a proper fashion, and doing a great job of it.

Mr. Speaker, another thing we can talk about is the financial management. You know, there are some things that we had to do under financial management, and one thing we didn't want to do is we did not want to shut down the STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company]. But it was financial. It was a tough financial decision to do, and we feel sorry for the people that were working there, but it was costing the money a lot of money.

Also in the convention I see where the NDP, where the NDP says they will bring back STC, even though they shut down routes when they were on this side of the House. They're going to bring back STC. But I'm curious. It's kind of like the tree book, because I'm curious where they're going to get the money from, Mr. Speaker. They think that, you know, this money grows on trees. Like, they did have the tree book. And where are they going to get the money from to be able to do that when it was a money-losing proposition? Are they going to get rid of a bunch more doctors? Are they going to get rid of a bunch more teachers? Are they going to get rid of a bunch more nurses like they did in the past, Mr. Speaker?

I guess my time has pretty well come up so, Mr. Speaker, I have to say again that I strongly support the Speech from the Throne and I do not support the amendment. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to stand and address the Throne Speech and the theme in growing stronger and where the province is going.

I have to start off, Mr. Speaker, by acknowledging my colleague from Cannington. When he did his presentation, he had the Throne Speech and he got to page two in the 28 minutes that he spoke, so I thought I'd try and finish it. I think there's 19 pages, so it might take me an hour or so, but we'll try and get through it.

I just want to, as all my colleagues before me, Mr. Speaker, we all have people that we want to thank, and I too want to do the same. We don't get the opportunity to do it very often, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I want to acknowledge my family and what they have done for me and the support and sacrifice they've made for me.

First and foremost is my wife, Lois, who I had a chat with her tonight, and she's handing out candy back in Assiniboia. Also she runs, manages an insurance business. And she's very busy with it, but she's given me this opportunity to represent Wood River constituency and I really appreciate it.

Of course our two kids, we have two kids: a daughter here in Regina, Katie and her husband, Darrel. And they've blessed us with two granddaughters that I have the privilege to see any time I want. I was up there at suppertime to get them dressed for Halloween, and it was a pretty good treat when you can take a five-and-a-half-year-old and a one-and-a-half-year-old and take them down the block a little ways. I did steal some of their candy, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Also our son, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who is a doctor finishing up his special residency in Calgary, and he's hoping to come back into Saskatchewan and practice. I sure hope he does and can take advantage of the tax credit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it would sure help us out a little bit on the home front. So we're looking forward to that, and that's what he wants to do.

I think that's one thing that really speaks well of what this government has done for the youth in this province. It's not so much that they don't want to leave, but they want to come back too, a I think that's a great thing for what we have done.

I also at this time would really like to thank my ministerial staff, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Jason has put a great team together up there in my office and they support me and handle it well. With Mark and Robyn and Brenda there, they look after all the issues that come forth to the ministry, and I really want to take this moment to thank them also, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And of course my constituency assistant, Sandy Kuffner, who fills in for me. As many know that when you're in cabinet, you don't get home as much as you would like. And she takes the issues on and she addresses them for me and we communicate every day. And also we have an assistant there, Wendie Yorga who fills in for Sandy when she's on holidays. So I just want to recognize the people that really support me.

And first and above all of course is the constituencies or the constituents themselves, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We had the highest voter turnout in the election, which was great to see. And I just want to take this opportunity to thank the constituents for supporting me in the previous election and everything that we're doing in Wood River constituency.

I want to try and talk briefly about a few things really that are in the Throne Speech that really address what the theme is in growing stronger. And one obviously is agriculture and what's happening in this province and how it's growing. And we're led by a great minister in Agriculture promoting it and moving it forward, not only in the country but also globally. And in a brief discussion I had with him today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, working out trade agreements and trying to work trade issues out with our partners to the south. So he really is to be commended.

But the way we're moving agriculture in what I feel is the right direction . . . And being a farmer all my life, I really get a treat out of watching the young folks in rural Saskatchewan in the

farming community and the sector and what they're doing, how they're embracing technology and the changes that are happening, how they're addressing diversity in growing crops, and what they're doing.

I really want to talk about a couple of young people in my constituency. And I'm sure everybody here that has farmers could talk about quite a few of them in their constituency. But I have a young cousin down in the Coronach area, Craig Eger. And him and his wife, Mary-Jane, farm a nice successful farming operation there. I was talking to him here a month or two ago at harvest time, and he had just marketed a bunch of durum down into the United States, received a pretty good price for it. And, Mr. Speaker, that just tells you what the opportunities that have for the young farmers, with the Wheat Board gone, that these young farmers can go and market their grain in the States like they want to or anywhere else they want to do that.

And also another young gentleman who happens to be the president of my constituency, Derek Tallon, who also is a young farmer in the Lafleche area, that was doing the same thing with chickpeas. And he was actually, he sent me a picture a few months ago when he was loading chickpeas on Saskatchewan grain cars that were purchased by Great Western Rail. And he actually sent the picture and saying thank you very much for giving us this opportunity to move grain in the cars. And I'll talk a bit about that in a minute also.

So I think it's important to recognize where the agriculture community has gone and where they're moving things when you look at technologies. And I think that's why I really do want to address the minister here and the leadership that he has shown in technology at the universities, and how we're moving and assisting that in funding programs to move technology forward because I can just see agriculture becoming even a bigger player in the province of Saskatchewan's economy. I think now we've surpassed — what? — 20 billion in agriculture exports in the province of Saskatchewan. It's probably higher than that already. But it's good to see that we're seeing agriculture commodities move that way. And I think it also gives opportunities to value add, and I think that's something we really should be embracing and looking at, is how we can do that.

And that kind of leads me into the shortline segue, if I could, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know the member from Saskatoon Nutana made a comment about the dispersal of the railcars, and I thought it's something that really has to be addressed because this is a good news story for rural Saskatchewan, for farmers and for shortlines to do business and to operate.

And I'm going to give a good example on why it is. I was talking about a week or two ago with the president of Great Western Rail. They purchased 150 of the cars, and they've been very busy moving grain off of those. And they said, what we do like now is when we have orders for producer cars, we have the cars to be able to supply them. And they actually had a company down in the Shaunavon area that called them up and said, jeez, if we could get 25 cars we've got an immediate order here for some wheat that we could pay a premium on and support the farmers in this area to move it. And the Great Western Rail manager said, well it just so happens we've got

lots of cars here; we can have them down to you tomorrow.

Guess what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? That deal was made and the farmers were paid a premium on their wheat. The railway got to haul 25 cars of Saskatchewan grain, and I think that's important. That has to be recognized, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is these cars are used by Saskatchewan farmers to move Saskatchewan grain to markets all over North America. And I think that's an important thing to recognize, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Of course I would be remiss if I didn't talk about transportation and the highway system and what's going on and what we've done in the province of Saskatchewan that I think really has to be recognized as true leadership in improving our infrastructure in rural Saskatchewan to grow the economy and to assist in the growth that's happening.

We all know there's major projects going on around Regina right now with the Regina bypass. And I had the privilege yesterday — I know it was a little breezy out there — of being on top of the overpass when we opened up what we call stage 1 on the east side of the province. And I would be remiss if I wouldn't say this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we were up on the overpass and it didn't matter what direction we looked. If we looked east, all I saw was commercial development out towards Emerald Park, when I see Redhead with new buildings and South Country Equipment with new buildings and other manufacturing moving out there. SeedMaster is out there. It's good to see, you know, commercial development, what's going on.

[19:30]

And then you turn around and I looked west towards the city of Regina, and I see a massive new Costco going up just on the east side of Regina. You see all the residential development. You see all the commercial development, and guess what I also saw, Mr. Deputy Speaker: just on the outskirts on the east side of Regina: a brand new school. And I think that just shows that the growth that's happening around this province, but obviously around the capital region and what's happening here in Regina, in the Regina area. So I think it's nice to see that.

I know even, you know, where I live in Harbour Landing now, another new school opened up. And I remember when they started that development in Harbour Landing — in about, oh I think it was '06 or '07, somewhere in there — they didn't know when it would be built out. Built out in half the time of what they thought it would be.

But I do want to talk about highway infrastructure and what we have done over the . . . And I think we have to talk about what we have done because I think it's an amazing story. When you look at over \$7.4 billion invested in the province of Saskatchewan's highways in the previous 10 years, I mean that's a phenomenal increase in investment in what's going on. And in just over the past two years, we're well over \$2 billion invested in the province of Saskatchewan.

And if I could, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to list some of the projects that we have done if I can. You look at the Saskatoon South Circle bridge and what the province has

invested in that, just about \$300 million; the St. Louis bridge, \$60 million; the Highway 11 twinning, \$62 million; the Pinkie Road overpass, \$43 million; the Lewvan-Highway 1 overpass, \$29 million; the Estevan truck bypass, \$45 million; the Highway 7 and Highway 10 passing lanes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$26 million; Highway 16 twinning, \$45 million.

Mr. Speaker, those are projects that we've already accomplished. And the ones that we have on the go right now obviously are the overpasses at Martensville and Warman. These are great projects for those two fastest-growing communities in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Pinkie Road, we're doing more work there, another 43 million, and great to see that. And I mean, we look at what's happening at the Regina bypass and the work that's being done there. I just had a tour of that just last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is phenomenal what that is going to accomplish when it is all said and done, to get traffic flowing not only into the city for commuters coming to work, to get around the city, and also to get right around the city and head north to Saskatoon, but also to establish and to grow the commercial side and the GTH [Global Transportation Hub]. And we'll see great opportunities coming there. So I think we have lots of opportunities in what we've seen.

I do want to talk about a priority we have made at the Ministry of Highways, if I could, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is in light of passing lanes and what we're planning on doing and what our plan is on that.

We're seeing increased traffic in some of our major corridors in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact my understanding is today we opened up the passing lanes on No. 5 west of Humboldt, and that's great news. But also we're looking at the corridor from Regina down to Estevan, 6 and 39. It's a very busy, very busy segue of highway in the province of Saskatchewan. We're seeing massive growth in truck traffic happening on that segment, so we're undergoing the planning studies on where those passing lanes would be. Also to finish No. 5 from Humboldt into Saskatoon, so we're looking at that segment. No. 7 from Rosetown to the Alberta border is also part of that process.

No. 4 north of North Battleford, we're seeing increased oil traffic coming into North Battleford. We're seeing the forestry industry growing in that sector and also the ag sector. I think there's three terminals north of North Battleford that see very significant agriculture commodities moving in. And also from Melville up to Canora, that stretch of No. 10 and No. 9 highway is also going to see obviously some increased traffic. As I know, the Minister of Agriculture is very well . . . two big expansion projects happening up there in the Melville-Yorkton area that we're very proud of, and I think that's the kinds of things we want to see.

I know in my part of the world, down in west of Assiniboia in the Kincaid area, there's a huge fertilizer chemical plant coming into there. You look up in the Wadena area, two big terminals going in there with Bunge and, I think, Viterra. And G3 is building over in the Melville area. So we're just seeing all kinds of growth in the agriculture sector that just gives great opportunity for the people and the farmers in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You know, we're excited about the overpasses opening up. We're glad, you know, with the Balgonie overpass opening up, and we had great meetings with ministry staff, with my deputy minister and officials there and meeting with the town council and talking about their concerns. Obviously they had concerns about emergency access. We are delivering an emergency access to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It will be on the east side of the town, close to the school. We're going to address their issues on traffic flow going west out of the city with traffic lights being installed and a double turning lane on to the overpass. So we're doing the right things and we're listening to the communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we are trying to do and work with them to make it work for them.

Coming from a small town, I know the importance of highway access to these communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I also want to, if I get the opportunity here, to talk about the P3 [public-private partnership] model and how well it is working. I have to say when you look at the Regina bypass and that P3 project, when I can stand and we can say that it was delivered on time and on budget . . . In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was a day early.

We had an interesting meeting with the Regina Bypass Partners yesterday at a luncheon. And we talked about the whole issue of maintenance, and what we're going to get in 30 years. And I think that's one thing that the opposition really should take note of is that in 30 years we are going to get a highway that is going to be in like-new condition, not one that's going to be deteriorated that we're going to have to fix up. That is all part of the contract and that's all factored in.

As with the North Battleford hospital, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We knew there . . . They recognized and found an insulation issue, and what it was was insulation was shrinking in the walls. They found that; they're correcting it. They had to remove the outer skin. They've replaced the insulation, and they're putting it all back together at no cost to the taxpayers of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think that has to be recognized.

It also has to be noted, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if this hospital doesn't open on time in the date that was in the contract, there is a penalty that the partner has to pay and we will hold them to that. They are working diligently to meet all obligations, and we hope that they will achieve that for all concerned so that we can move into it and they don't have to . . . we don't have to hit them with a penalty.

And you look at the P3 in the schools. We had an issue in one of the schools here in Regina where they had a waterline break. Mr. Speaker, the private partner moved in and they moved the daycare kids to another daycare. They had everything looked after at no cost to the parents and no cost to the province of Saskatchewan. So I think it's a great model that we should be looking at, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you look at the P3 model and how we can fund things out like that.

I do also want to talk if I can, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . I have to talk about partnerships and what we're doing in the Ministry of Highways with partnerships and working with our municipal partners out in Saskatchewan. We have a good relationship with SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]

with what we call the MREP [municipal roads for the economy program] program where we work with them in keeping the traffic off our TMS [thin membrane surface] highways and give primary weight to the industry on the municipal system. And we partner and we compensate them for that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think that's a good working relationship and it's agreeable amongst all parties, both the municipality and the ministry, and we work collaboratively that way.

And also with SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] on the urban highway connector program, Mr. Speaker, that's a good program that has worked for cities building truck routes around, for smaller communities to get highways fixed that are running through their communities. And we look at those things, I think, and those are good partnerships.

I also want to talk if I can, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of a partnership with municipalities where we're actually working collaboratively with them on highways that run through their municipalities that probably don't see the traffic numbers that, you know, that our busiest highways do, and where they rate on our priority screen. I'm hoping that here in the next few weeks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I can announce a very first partnership between the Ministry of Highways and a rural municipality, on a highway where we have partnered where they are going to collaborate with us and were going to work with us, where they'll do the maintenance on a highway and look after it for us, and we will compensate them to look after it. So those are the kinds of arrangements that we're trying to work out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we think they are very good arrangements.

And I think, you know, I really wanted to focus on that, on the highway issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's lots in the Throne Speech. I think I only got to about page 4, so somebody's going to have to carry on later.

But I do want to, in closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to say a few words about our Premier if I may, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I had the pleasure of meeting him, obviously, years ago when he was elected into opposition. But I have to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the very first public appearance that the Premier made after the election was at the SARM convention the next day. We invited him to come and speak as premier-elect. I didn't know the formality and introduced him as the Premier, and when he come up on the stage and I introduced the Premier of Saskatchewan, he shook my hand and he said, that sounds kind of funny. But it's amazing what he has done over the last 10 years as Leader of the Sask Party for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, and I have to talk about it. In my previous life when I was on SARM, we travelled; we travelled all across the country. I was Chair of the rural forum, and we would sit with all our colleagues from across the country and we'd talk about what's going on in the province, in each other's province, and things that we could collaborate and maybe get ideas from.

And the one thing that we were the envy of the country, really was, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was when this province took a very strong commitment on revenue sharing and the importance of it. We were the only jurisdiction in Canada that had dedicated

funding for municipalities, and that was a great thing. And a lot of municipal organizations across Canada had spoke to me about that and said, how did you get that? And I said it was just really in discussion with the government and recognizing what our issues were that they came to the table with this. And when you look at the revenue sharing formula, and I know my colleague from Carrot River talked about it, when you look at the increase in funding that we've seen over the last 10 years for municipalities, it's significant. I think in my municipality, where I still have farm land, I think our revenue sharing has gone up well over 100 per cent just in the last decade. So that's great news to hear, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I also, you know, everybody was very envious of our Premier and the way, you know, the way he spoke and the way he stood up for Saskatchewan and the things that he did, but I mean he really did. He led this province to growth levels that we have never seen before in history, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And of course he would always say that it's a team effort. And I agree it is a team effort, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but every team needs a captain. And, Mr. Speaker, we couldn't ask for a better captain than the Premier we have today.

Mr. Speaker, our Premier has led this government and led this province with integrity, honesty, and humbleness. That exemplifies his character and that has made him very respected, not only in this province but across this country. It's been an honour for me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to serve with him in cabinet. And I just want to thank him for giving me this opportunity and this great honour to serve with him in cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment brought forward by the opposition, and I will be supporting the motion as made by the member from Estevan, seconded by the member from Kelvington-Wadena. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to join in and respond to the Speech from the Throne. Before I start off of course I want to give a little credit to the good people back home, my constituency assistant, Devin Bernatchez. I also have a couple other people who do some work for me as outreach and translating. And I just want to acknowledge the good work they do and how they come across and do casework in my office.

You know, Devin makes the job easy. He's the type of person, he's very willing to do whatever he needs to do to help people. And he'll work with whoever, departments or whatever ministry to deal with situations, and sometimes they're pretty serious crisis that many of the northern people are dealing that live in the Cumberland constituency. And I want to thank Devin for his dedication and commitment to the office and the role he does. You know, he serves very well.

I also want to thank my family, my wife, my kids, and my grandkids, you know, as we all do. I've got 17 of them, so they keep me pretty busy and occupied. I can say that.

[19:45]

But having said that, you know, I was listening to different

members, you know, talk about their response to the Throne Speech. And I think about what I've been hearing all summer as we've door knocked — and I've been to many communities, not only in the Cumberland constituency but in many of the constituencies — doing outreach and trying to find out, getting petitions signed and finding out what are the issues and how are people happy, and what are the challenges. And some people will say, yes things are all right in some areas. But I'll get into the challenge that many people are facing shortly.

But before I do I just want to . . . I know the Premier and, you know, some of his colleagues on that side of the House are, you know, leaving and have left and so I just want to say to the Premier I know, you know, as he leaves I wish him well on his retirement. Some will say different things. He may be looking at this to try to change the way I think Saskatchewan people looked at him and at his government over this last budget. And they can talk about all the terrible things, and I understand that. We go back and forth on comments. Members opposite will say how terrible it was under certain governments. And that's fine.

But at the end of the day — and I've said this — there's many people in our province that are struggling and, you know, I think of some of the seniors out there that are struggling. And when you talk to them, their power bills, you know, government wants to brag about, oh we don't raise taxes, you know, taxes, taxes . . . And it's good to pat yourselves on the back and I know you like doing that. But at the end of the day you have no idea the impact. And you know who voted for a budget that put such strain on many people. The most vulnerable, you took away things. And I want to talk a little bit about that.

And to say that frustration that I've heard from people and they're desperate to make ends meet, to whether they put food on the table. They pay their rent. They buy their medications. There are many hardships and struggles. And then you see a government who adds more and more and more taxes, tax burdens to residents who are already taxed enough. So what does the government do? Instead of saying, oh we're lowering taxes. It's the best. Yes, you're giving credits and you're giving those that probably don't need it more of a benefit than those that are most vulnerable.

And when I think about some of those residents and young families that I talk to, their power bills. The rate of some of the power bills up north — I've seen some of the seniors' — it's unbelievable. We're not talking about a few hundred dollars. They don't have, you know . . . They maybe heat their home with electricity because that's all they have. They don't have natural gas. Maybe some of them, they're older.

So if you see the cost of living for them going up . . . People are struggling. Time and time again you see the frustration and the calls we get in to the office with saying, they're cutting off the power. They're shutting down this; they're cutting off that, because I can't afford it. I just don't know how to do it anymore. And you see frustration with paying everything. The rents go up. Utility bills go up.

Yet you hear the government saying that the province is getting better and it's stronger. It's stronger for some. You know, some are doing quite well but . . . You know, I think some of their friends are doing quite well, and some of those supporters that

they do. They take care of them pretty well. But there are a lot of people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are truly struggling trying to provide for their families.

And then I think about, you know, the medical services of our province. And I think about mental health. And, you know, this government, there's nothing in this Throne Speech . . . I thought it was supposed to be about a vision about where they're going to be going maybe with the finances next budget, and they're preparing to talk about how proud that, you know, this document is going to take them . . . But I don't see much in here for northern people. I don't see much in here for indigenous people. It's pretty lacking. And that's their vision.

You know, at the end of the day you think about this. And I know there'll be challenges here. I was hoping, you know, we talked about . . . Some mentioned the Sixties Scoop, the apology. And I know we've been raising questions, and some of my colleagues who have spoke before me have talked about some of the numbers and the stats. And I think at the end of the day, the government cherry-picks what they want. And they will say, well we cherry-picked . . . But I think one of my colleagues has come out with some numbers that are pretty factual with percentages and actually did a great job of presenting that, and I want to thank her for that.

But having said that, these are troubling times for many people in our province. And sometimes this government . . . And every one of the Sask Party members, you voted for the budget, but I didn't hear any of you, I didn't see any of you standing saying, no, this is wrong to put the burden on Saskatchewan people. You all supported it. You said it was another best budget. Well you know what? Some of you believe that.

And then you come back and you have . . . You're reversing under pressure — and I'm glad — because of the rallies and people saying enough's enough. This is wrong, what you're doing. You're going after the most vulnerable. When we look at . . . You're going after the most vulnerable. When you're going after, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . The most vulnerable individuals were cut. The cuts you made. And I heard people saying heartless cuts. The rallies. The most vulnerable are struggling to make ends meet and that's what you chose to cut.

And then you reversed because there was pressure put on you. And I guess maybe the Premier and his government don't want to be, as he leaves and I said, he leaves, he doesn't want that budget to be what we'll send him out on and people will say, this is what they'll remember him for.

So they're reversing some of the stuff. Well why didn't you guys listen to the people when they said to you . . . And you all voted on this budget. Getting rid of STC, the programs that you guys cut for families, the most vulnerable for funerals, people are saying . . . I heard people back home even that support your government say they can't believe some of the stuff that went on here. They just find it ridiculous. So that's your own members that support you, and I know they support you. And to have them say that to me out there, how that makes you sit there. I bet I know you guys will just laugh it off like you always do but remember, and I've said this to you guys before, the backbenchers — stand up.

And then, you know, on top of it, you now have a leadership race and it's amazing to watch some of your members throwing the Premier . . . Yes, yes, the members that I have seen throwing the Premier and other ministers under the bus, saying the terrible things . . .

An Hon. Member: — What bus? There is no bus.

Mr. Vermette: — Oh yes, that's right, there is no bus. Throwing them under the vehicle. You know, let's be very clear here. You can't have it both ways. You guys, you all vote on a budget that impacts Saskatchewan greatly. You put PST [provincial sales tax] on kids' clothes. That was something and we talk about that. And you talk about this budget and this vision you guys have and you have the nerve to call it growing stronger? How is that? How is that growing stronger?

Go tell that and try to sell this to people back home, the ones that are most vulnerable, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Go and try to sell that. Let them go and try to sell that to them. I don't think they'll be doing a very good job of it because the people have figured it out, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They know that the members on that side voted for the budget that hit the most vulnerable out there and now they're reversing it.

And then you have different members out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, different individual members that are running for leadership. They're all coming out saying well, if I'm . . . But they voted. They voted for the budget that did all those cuts, that impacted the most . . . And then they have the nerve and the gall to say, oh but if I'm the premier, I would reverse that; I would change it. Well where were you? You were at the cabinet table, some of you that are running.

So when I say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just find it very frustrating and I mean many people find it frustrating. You can't have your cake and eat it too. You just can't. The people are seeing, and you're going to pay a price one day, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That government will pay a price. The members of that party will pay a price to the people. The good people of this province know.

You know, you think about some of the challenges. And I want to give credit out to some of the leadership out there. I think about Chief Tammy Cook-Searson. I think about Montreal Lake Cree Nation. I went to the official opening of Camp Hope. It is a place where families, the kids can go to deal with some of the issues that are facing them, whether it's families or addictions, mental health. They bring in the services to them. They have to do something. They have to do something because of the suicides, because of the challenges with mental health and addictions that so many young people, so many young people are faced. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are doing a job for the family, for the kids, trying to bring them back. So I went to that opening.

But I also say, I know La Ronge Indian Band. They're working hard to get a wellness centre for La Ronge and area, not only to serve First Nations. They'll also take in Métis, non-status. They're going to work with other community members, non-Aboriginal as well. They're going to be open to work with everyone, and I give them credit for that.

The government, this government has an opportunity. The Premier has an opportunity if he would like to. And I would suggest this to him: reach out to La Ronge Indian Band. Reach out to those bands and those communities that are trying to come up with ways to help their community so we don't have as many suicides. It's a crisis in our community, in the province. But in the North, I have been to too many funerals. I have sent too many condolences to those families, and to watch them suffer, and been with friends who have lost loved ones because of suicide. Kids that should have never have ended their life. Can you just imagine losing hope, losing hope?

And we have a government that has so much. You know, I think about the money that they have spent on many areas, many areas, you know, that it was a priority, that they say is a priority. But to my feeling and to the way I feel, the people and the leaders that I've heard back home advocating for their community and the families that are advocating for their loved ones to get the mental health, the addictions, this government has failed, has failed miserably. And honestly you should be ashamed of yourself for failing to deal with the mental health and addictions and the crises that are going on.

And I think about it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The child advocate has made it very clear. He's now come out and saying this government is not doing enough to deal with the crisis, and it needs to do that. So the government could, if the Premier and the government decide, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they want to reach out, I've given them an opportunity to reach out to La Ronge Indian Band. They've got money from the federal government to do the planning. They've got the land; they've got a plan; they're moving in a very productive way. The government, this province could do the right thing and reach out to northern Saskatchewan and I'm hoping they will.

Like I've said before, there was no talk about some of the crisis that we're dealing with in the North but it's not just . . . I think of the rural areas and thinking about the challenges that are business wise. And I think about whether it's rural or not.

STC provided such a great service. And I know this government made their decision and that's the sad reality. They can sit there and say, well what you got to do? You guys form government, you're going to bring it back? But we have a commitment from our side to talk and consult, and we will. We'll work with the leaders; we'll work with our farmers; we'll work with the people out there in the industry, the business, to find out. Our seniors, what do they need? What can we do? How do we get this so that they have a public service that's called a transportation company, however that looks? That's that commitment.

We also see that this government has made some serious challenges when it comes to education, the cuts to education. And they want to spin it the way they want to spin it. You can't spin the stuff that they have. You cannot spin it when you're seeing classrooms and you're hearing from parents. And kids that are most vulnerable are the ones that are feeling it when it comes to, you know, resources in the classroom to support kids with disabilities.

So there are many challenges and the government's, you know, yes it's great when oil is high and everything's good and there's

lots of money. And this government had record revenue, record revenue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They had years of record revenue. What did they save? Well you know, when you think about it, the Regina bypass, and we talk about that. It started out at 400 million; it's now over \$200 billion. You know, it started at 400 million, it's now over \$2 billion, close to 2 billion, maybe over. I'm not sure of the numbers but let's talk about those challenges and what people are saying.

You talk about the GTH land deal. They had money for that, money for that, to subsidize that, but less money to help STC or other areas. And then you see, everywhere you see where there are Crown corporations that do provide a great service, you see the increase, you know, that this government is putting on residents. Yes, and I've talked about that a little bit about, you know, they say oh, it's all good, you know, the taxes are down. But at the end of the day, everywhere that they can get Saskatchewan residents, they find a way to tax them. It's unbelievable.

[20:00]

You know what? I got a bill in the mail, and I posted it on Facebook because I just found it just unbelievable. They wanted me to pay. I pay for my private insurance as well for my family to make sure, you know, we're covered. We've got private insurance. I do that to help out, you know, and I do my part to make sure we're covered. To get PST, and the only province in all of Canada to get PST on my own private health insurance that I pay for, that I pay for for my family to cover, you found ways to even go after that.

Life insurance, house insurance. I mean we've talked about it. It's unbelievable. I have people saying, is this government for real? Like you hear it in the coffee shops. They're mad when they get their bill and they're looking at it. So I look at life insurance, I look at . . . Everywhere you look, they're just trying to get more and more money from Saskatchewan.

And I mean many are vulnerable and can't afford it. But this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just keeps adding it on, adding it on at the end but says it's cutting taxes. Well good luck. See how that works.

When we look at property tax, and we've had a few meetings up north, and I know some of the communities are seeing . . . And a few of my colleagues have talked about that, about the property tax going up. Like we're talking about 250 per cent in property taxes. You know, it's unbelievable. And they might say, well they want to blame this, but they knew months in advance. They could have adjusted. They could have helped out the communities.

Like I think about La Ronge and some of them in Air Ronge, some of the business people. So when you see business people saying, this doesn't even make sense . . . Like so many are appealing their notice of assessments. They're going through that process because they're mad, they're angry. They're very upset. How can you get away with this, they're saying. And some of them, they vote for the Sask Party. They vote for the current government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They vote for them but some of them are not happy, let me tell you, have made it very clear they're not happy.

So having said all that, we have a vision that's supposed to help so many. When I think about our trappers and I think about the most vulnerable out there, whether housing, education, there are so many places where this government could have done a better job over the years to look after . . . [inaudible] . . . Now, tough times and they say, we can't; everyone's going to feel, you're all going to feel the crunch. Well you know, it's just amazing to watch. And how they switch and say they'll . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, they voted for this budget, and now they're reversing so many things.

And I'm glad that the people are rallying all over, whether it's in the cafeteria here like yesterday. We had protesters saying it looks like a good place to eat. They were here. They made the *StarPhoenix* today, or the *Leader-Post*. I just think it's people like that that are coming out, and all the petitions that are being signed and people that are saying a message to this government. And like I said, as the government leaves and the Premier does his retirement and on his farewell, I think he'll be remembered for some of these challenges that he's made as his government. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they will pay a price.

And you know, and again I'm lastly going to . . . Just about done. You know, at the end of the day, at the end of the day we'll just see how many of these members . . . And I mean they mock and laugh and they say they can raise taxes 10 times — I've heard them say that, heckle from there — the people will still vote for us; they'll never vote for the NDP. We'll see what will happen. We'll see what will happen, how many of those members back there will be elected back in. We'll see, and how many are jumping the ship and leaving. We're waiting to see how many leave.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the end of the day there are many people in this province that are not happy and that are suffering because of the government's handling of the budget, of the government's mismanaged scandals and waste that this government had. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then it's time. I know. I will not be supporting this budget . . . Throne Speech, but I will be supporting the amendment. So I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Docherty: — I appreciate that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and from this far away I'm surprised that you did recognize me, but thank you for that. When I was over in that corner I got skipped over a few times, but it's good to see you in the chair, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And again I'm happy to enter into this reply to the Throne Speech. And I believe I'll be supporting the Throne Speech and not the amendment, but we can wait till the end just to be sure at the end of the remarks, but we'll see. We'll keep it open at this point.

But as is customary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've got a number of people to recognize that have supported me over the past year and I'd like to do that now . . . [inaudible] . . . First, thank you to my spouse, Lisa, for your unwavering support. I certainly couldn't do it without you. This is my first Throne Speech with Lisa working out of the building, and so there's a very good

chance that I'll run amok. Actually, a pretty good chance.

But, Mom and Dan, thanks for coming to the Throne Speech. I'm sure my mom is watching this, so it's always great to have you in this building, and we welcome you at any time because after all this is your legislature. And again, sorry for the ticket mix-up; that's on me.

I'd like to thank my constituency assistant, Kristy Shaw, and thanks for keeping the office together. And she's been with me now for three years. I think it's three years. And then she went on maternity leave and there was a steady stream of CAs [constituency assistant] that filled in. There was four in a row in that one-year period, so either they left because of, I don't know, me. There was other options but it could certainly have been me. But she's got a wonderful baby now named Kodi. I tried to suggest Doc, but that didn't quite fly. He's a year and a half old right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm also proud of her recent journey. She started at First Nations University and she's taking Indigenous Social Work. It's her first semester, and as an alumni of First Nations University myself, I'm particularly proud of her choice. Apparently, in 1993 when I graduated I had a pretty sweet 'stache, so please go find it and mock me with all your will because I deserve it.

To the constituents of Regina Coronation Park, thank you. It's my pleasure for serving on your behalf for the last six years. Coronation Park is a very diverse constituency. It is truly a reflection of the new Saskatchewan, from seniors at Eden Care Communities, Regina Lutheran Home, William Booth operated by the Salvation Army. It is true: seniors have built this province and they deserve our appreciation and respect. And I am grateful for the care that they receive in their homes in Coronation Park.

Coronation Park is also diverse in education with O'Neill and Thom Collegiate, Dr. Hanna, St. Peter, Imperial School, Gladys McDonald, Coronation Park to Mother Teresa Middle School and Regina Huda School.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the citizens, permanent residents and refugees, they all have a story. Some inspiring, some heroic, some tragic, but all with a common theme: hope for a better life, hope for their children. Last week I met and celebrated the graduation of 20 people from the INVOLVE [integrating newcomers with volunteer opportunities to add leadership values through education] program operated by the Regina Open Door Society, how it's integrating newcomers through volunteer experiences and networking. It's a fantastic program. I was happy to be at their graduation for the last four years.

I asked them to share their stories with me. Again, all had a similar theme but with an added piece: they all want to work. They all want to contribute to their new home.

Their English studies are progressing. We talked about settlement, and how does one truly settle in a new country? You have to be able to communicate. English study is at the top of the list of newcomers. And English isn't an easy language to learn. It's certainly problematic. I have difficulty at the best of times. But it's a little more difficult for adults than it is for

children.

They're well aware, either their second winter or first, I mean they know full well what's coming up, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Some of them are on their second winter. Some this is their first, and definitely winter is coming. And I'd hate to channel *Game of Thrones*, but winter is coming.

The country of origin for the newcomers was amazing: China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Congo, Eritrea, Ukraine, Japan, and the South Sudan. Amazing stories of resilience. A great reminder of what we, when we are born here, take for granted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the Throne Speech there is a passage that reflects gratitude, and I'd like to acknowledge a Thanksgiving column in the *Leader-Post* by Ron Petrie:

Let it be known that I am grateful.

Grateful to be where I am, for starters.

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 ideal of my farmboy self destined for the big city . . .

Where I am is Saskatchewan. Thank goodness.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the spirit of our newcomers. This is what they were envisioning. I was at the airport welcoming the first Syrians arriving from refugee camps almost two years ago — December, cold, snow. Through translators they explained how happy they were to be here, grateful and hopeful. This was for some their first snow, their first real cold.

I came with a box of Rider toques and mittens. I explained that they needed toques and mittens, but also that this was their new team to cheer for. Football to them was soccer, so I tried to explain it through rugby. I left it there because they'd figure it out later because I knew they would. But they were thankful for the toque and thankful for the fact that they did find a new team.

I'm grateful for how different cultures and associations have opened their doors to welcome you to ceremony and celebration. I'm honoured to attend and learn.

One of the things that I've been confronted with as I go to some of these organizations and meeting some newcomers, last week they said, where are your soldiers? Why are you alone? In our country, we would never be able to get close to a politician. It's such an interesting perspective from them, and just grateful people for being here. But their perspective is fascinating, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I said, well we travel without soldiers and without anybody making sure that we're okay. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that is something to be grateful for, that we can go around and be with our citizens and serve. I'm absolutely grateful for that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, why am I using the perspective of newcomers as a response to the Throne Speech? Because, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, they want to see themselves reflected and they're starting to. And those two years since meeting them at the airport, we were together again at a business and newcomer networking session. Their English was better. Some are working but they were still grateful. We talked about volunteering. It's something Canadians do, but particularly it's something Saskatchewan does. Newcomers get it. They told me last week they figured it out. We give back because that's what community is, Mr. Speaker, that's what they said. I asked them, they also said in their countries you expect to get paid when you volunteer. And I went, well here it's slightly different. They said, okay in our country your time is spent working and then you keep working. You'll help some people, but that's just helping. That's not volunteering, but we get it.

I asked them what it is to be a Canadian. And they thought for a second and they went, you welcome everyone; you appreciate diversity. And we're experiencing that now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're experiencing that. I asked them again, what's culture? I was teaching, I taught sociology at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], at the university. Culture is certainly a piece of sociology. So what's culture? What's Canadian culture? Again they answered again through the multicultural lens of diversity.

[20:15]

Then I really wanted to challenge them and I said, what's Canadian cuisine? What would we have as food? And I'm not talking about Scottish cuisine, which is based on a dare. Come on, I dare you to eat that. But as I said, it's all food. It's food from every single country, and I would harken to say that's true.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I invited a significant number of immigrants, newcomers, and friends to the Throne Speech. It was their first for most of them. I'd like to thank my colleagues for helping me with the invites. You're very generous, and that allowed me to invite an awful lot of people that normally would never have gotten here.

I want to say their first names. So they included Nish and Poonam and Aniket and Nidhi and Purvi and Geeta from the India Canada Association; Abdi from Prairie Somali Association; Faisal, Mohammed, Sajjad, and Mohammed from the Islamic Association of Saskatchewan; Amy from the Philippines and the Rotary; Kim from Street Culture. And of course Principal Nistor and the grade 12 class that sat in the west gallery from the Huda School, I'm very proud that they came. It is a grade 12 graduation class, and they had some great questions and they were certainly a smart and very committed bunch. So looking forward to going to the classroom and getting beat up, cause I will, because I'm going to get beat up. And it was absolutely great to have them here.

So, Deputy Speaker, there are a few other things included in the Throne Speech that I'd like to reference. Saskatchewan's rate of organ donations is low compared to the rest of Canada and many other countries. I was on the committee to review the province's current organ donation approach, recommend ways to increase the rate of donations. So the program will be led by donor physicians who provide education and support to fellow health care providers and champion organ donations across the province. We're going to expand the pool of donors by allowing

for donation after cardiocirculatory death and a mandatory referral program. We continue to explore the option of moving to a presumed consent model of organ donation. It was great to have an open dialogue with individuals and stakeholders. It's a promising start. I'm hopeful lives will be saved. So please, participate. It's a great, great opportunity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've taken steps to reduce impaired driving and we, as a province, need to do better. We're urging municipalities to allow ride-sharing services to operate within their jurisdictions. Looking forward to the models that they come up with. We're also introducing legislation enabling SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] to offer affordable insurance to drivers working for ride-sourcing companies like Uber and Lyft.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've not used either of these services before, but I'm certainly interested in trying them. They help to lower the instances of drinking and driving that I think will be worth the exploration. Of interest, the members opposite had a convention this past weekend and had a resolution against it. But oh well, as per usual, because the sky is falling with a new idea and we fear and reject it.

Mr. Speaker, I had another opportunity to engage in open dialogue. I was on the committee looking at crime — rural crime, urban crime. The community was very interested and they certainly showed up and they gave us an awful lot to think about. And a lot of them feel isolated. And just wanted to hear what they had to say, and they certainly weren't shy.

We went to 10 locations and we had 12 consultations. We went to Regina twice, to Saskatoon, went to Estevan, Swift Current, Meadow Lake, Yorkton, The Battlefords twice, P.A. [Prince Albert], La Ronge, and La Loche. We had dozens of presentations from groups, and I certainly applaud the efforts of my colleagues that were with . . . We all went together and we explored the province and certainly listened and heard from a number of people, and I value that. And I value the input from my colleagues because I thought they did a really good job . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There was an awful lot of driving but some did better than others, but thanks. But I was happy to . . . And the highways were pretty darn good too.

I was happy to serve on the committee after about 25 years, 25 years you've got a career working with young people in frequent conflict with the law. So I know a lot about young offenders. I know a lot about addiction. I know a lot about mental health, about sociology of crime, justice studies at the university. Thought I heard it all.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Cattlemen's Association came in and they talked about cattle rustling, and I had no idea how that was going to be accomplished. So I'm looking at the Cattlemen's Association and my head's going back, I'm thinking about *Rawhide* days and old western movies, and we've got horses and we're rustling cattle. Yes, that wasn't even close. That's not it; no. It was semis and loading docks and it was pretty mechanized now. And I went, oh, that's how they do it; none of this taking them across pastures to pastures. They go, no. Okay, and then changing the brand, they go, no, that's not it; it's semis. I went, okay, I guess I've got a long way to go before I'm the next Ag minister. But I listened, and it was

fascinating. It was amazing, amazing stories. I don't know . . . Where am I at here . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, no it's Ag minister. It's okay.

One last piece in terms of the sharing of intimate images, and I mean it's despicable, the shameful practice in bullying. And young people are taking their own lives and they're hurting themselves. They are absolutely hurting, Mr. Speaker, and it's a very tough crime to police. The reverse onus that we've talked about in the Throne Speech is going to be helpful. So we're seeking redress through small claims court, and it's a step forward; it's a big step forward. And I'm hoping through our legislation that we're going to help young people that are suffering through cyberbullying and sexting and all the rest of the pieces. Intimate partner violence, interpersonal violence, these are all issues that affect all of us as a society. I'm proud of our government for taking a stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was with the Deputy Premier. We were flipping pancakes at Man Up Against Violence at the University of Regina, another great organization that has taken a stand against interpersonal and domestic violence. And proud of our efforts, proud of their efforts, and yes, looking forward to next steps. But we've got a lot to learn. We've got more to do. And men? Men, we can do better.

With that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I'm going to wrap it up. But I alluded earlier that I might not, wasn't sure exactly where I'm going to go, but I won't be supporting the amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'll be supporting the Throne Speech.

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

Mr. Olauson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to stand in my place and provide my comments and my support for the Throne Speech from last week. I think it's been said here before, but I think we all should be very thankful and know how blessed we are to be able to stand here and do the work that we're doing. And I know that I am very thankful for many things in my life, but I'd like to bring to light a few of them.

I'm thankful for our Premier and the leadership that he has provided to us over these last 10 years. He has provided it with integrity, dignity, humility, and has really set the bar high for anyone who wants to follow in his footsteps. I only got to serve with him for just a little bit over a year, but I'm very thankful and blessed that I was able to do that. Not many people have been able to do that, and for that I'm really thankful. And I think our province should be thankful for the good governance and the proud and strong leadership that he gave us.

I have a few other people that I need to thank, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as everyone else has done the same. I think I need to start with my partner, DonnaLyn. I think it would be very hard to do this job every single day without the support that we have, all of us have at home while we're here in this place doing the work for our constituents.

To put this in perspective, Mr. Speaker, we're here from Sunday to Thursday for 17 weeks of the year. And now that doesn't seem like very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we seem to be here at the busiest time of the year, and that's the busiest

time for school and activities and life in general, Mr. Speaker. I have three young daughters, 13, 12, and 10. Now they each play soccer, and of course because they're all different ages they play on all different teams, and they're very competitive. They practise at least once a week, every week, and they have at least two games each week as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, in those short 17 weeks when we're down here in Regina, that's over 100 events, and that doesn't count the tournaments that they're in. And some of those tournaments fall on the weekend and so I'm able to be there and watch them, but more often than not all those games and practices happen from Monday to Thursday. DonnaLyn gets them to each and every one of those practices and games, never late. Maybe sometimes they're hungry, but they're at every practice, game, and tournament. And for the most part, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're there without any help from me at all. She does this while holding a full-time job. She does her charity work and she sits on various different boards as well. So you can see, Mr. Speaker, I am blessed to be able to do this job, and I owe her a debt of gratitude, so thank you, DonnaLyn.

Now my kids sometimes get the short end of the stick. That's what happens when you're the son and daughters of a public servant. Many days and nights I'm not around to celebrate their successes, but I hope they all know that I'm very proud of them and I love them. Now my son Connor works at Canadian Tire. He's been there for three years. He's now a supervisor in the service department. He does a good job, and he's very proud of the work that he does. The biggest issue they have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the store, is being able to hire qualified, available, and service-oriented staff. They're busy growing a robust shop and are struggling to ensure that their ranks are always full.

Now that's a problem, but it's a good problem to have. I know that back in the day when I got out of school — no, it wasn't that long ago — there was usually 20 applicants for every single job. Now Connor's team will survive and they'll succeed regardless of those challenges. They have a good team and good leadership, and like I said earlier, it's a good problem to have. The alternative has been seen before, and we know how that turned out.

My parents were both teachers and I was blessed to be able to stay in Saskatchewan once I graduated from high school, and continue my schooling. They made many sacrifices, Mr. Speaker, as parents do, to ensure my siblings and I were able to stay here, get educated here, and make the choice of a career. Unfortunately all three of my siblings had to move away as there was no opportunity here, and that's too bad. I have to say thank you to my mom. These past five years as I sought public office have been tough on her. We aren't used to being in the limelight, either good or bad. She was always humble and preferred to work in the background. Mom has been a tireless volunteer at church, and most recently on my campaigns. So Mom, thank you.

Saskatchewan almost single-handedly built Calgary. Our greatest exports were our kids. The standard graduation present, especially in rural Saskatchewan, was luggage because our parents knew we would head out to greener pastures. I hated that time in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I personally had already graduated from SIAST and had to work a full-time job

and a part-time job just to make ends meet. I didn't really enjoy it very much, Mr. Speaker, but I love Saskatchewan and I wanted to stay right here.

[20:30]

I also have to thank Madelaine Fast. My constituency assistant is a godsend. I have to give her a big shout-out. She looks after everything in the office, makes sure all the correspondence gets followed up on and that she provides great customer service. She has a heart of gold and treats every single constituent like family. She does a fantastic job of ensuring that our constituents are heard, and we act on all their concerns.

Maddy also has another job. She makes sure that I get to where I need to go, when I need to get there. After attending about 400 events since I was elected in April of 2016, that can be a big challenge. But every day I get to each and every one looking as good as she can make me. And that's quite a feat, let me tell you. It's a test. So thank you very much, Maddy.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech is filled with good news, and it is no surprise that I will be supporting it and not supporting the amendment moved by the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

The Saskatchewan plan for growth focuses on international engagement, innovation, fiscal responsibility, and investments in infrastructure, education, and training.

Today Saskatchewan's operating debt is \$1 billion lower than it was in 2007. We have grown by more than 160,000 people in the last 10 years. We've recruited more than 750 more doctors and 3,400 more nurses of every designation. Thirteen long-term care facilities have opened. We have a new hospital in Moose Jaw, a new hospital being built in North Battleford, and a new hospital being built right in Saskatoon University. Saskatchewan has gone from having the longest surgical wait times in Canada to having among the shortest wait times today.

Why is this important information, Mr. Speaker? Well I can tell you why it's important to my family. My mom just received a new hip. Earlier this year she was placed on the waiting list. She was in tremendous pain and her life had become severely restricted. She had plans to go with our church to Spain and Portugal. She wanted to cross off a trip to Fatima off her bucket list. In late May, she received a call that her surgery was going to happen the first week of June. She got that new hip, did her physiotherapy, and in late September went on that trip. And she visited Fatima.

Mr. Speaker, that outcome wouldn't have been possible under the NDP. She would have languished on the waiting list for over a year while sitting in pain, waiting for her turn to come up. The investments we made to ensure that the waiting list was reduced had real consequences for my family, and I'm grateful and thankful for that.

The Jim Pattison Children's Hospital of Saskatchewan is on time and on budget. I can't say enough about what that means to my family, our constituency, our city, and our province. Our government and our Premier made a commitment in 2009 of \$200 million, after the project had languished under the NDP from 1992. The NDP just didn't think it was an important

investment for the citizens of Saskatchewan.

However just two years after our first mandate, we took action. Our investment now is almost \$236 million. We're finally getting a new children's hospital because the people of Saskatchewan deserve it. Construction is 70 per cent complete, and within two years, we'll have a world-class facility right here in Saskatchewan that will provide excellent care for moms and kids alike.

Now why is this investment important, Mr. Speaker? I can tell you how it would have affected my family and how it will affect my family. My niece was born with some huge health challenges. In fact, it was touch and go as to whether she was even going to make it. But she's a fighter, and while she continues to have challenges, has grown into a playful, happy young girl. When she was younger, my brother and his family had to take extensive time off work to care for her. Now this included many trips to specialists out of our province. I just think of all the stress they caused him and his wife, not to mention our extended family.

It would have made that experience much easier if they had been able to get care for Anna right here at home. The stress and expense of travelling to another province is overwhelming, not only for Anna but for our whole family. The new children's hospital will help hundreds of families like mine by keeping our kids close to home, providing best-in-world care, and comforting families in their time of need.

So how does the 2017 Throne Speech affect Saskatoon University? Well I can tell you lots of ways, Mr. Speaker. I always like to tell a story, and this one is very compelling. Derek Reimer owns Konzept Sign Group in Saskatoon. Derek moved out of Saskatchewan to go to school in 1993, and he moved to BC [British Columbia]. He stayed there and bought part of an existing business after high school in 1999. The NDP were in government in BC, Mr. Speaker. It was tough for small business. He was paying staff out of line of credit.

Those of us that have worked in small business and have owned small businesses know how gut wrenching it is when payroll is coming up, the money isn't in the bank, and dozens or perhaps even three or four people are counting on you to make that payroll. It keeps people up at night. It causes them stress. It causes stress for the whole family, and it makes people sick. That happened to Derek more than once.

When the Liberals were elected in 2001 in BC, their policies helped Derek's sign shop grow quickly. Sales grew exponentially from 2001 to 2006. They hired more staff, provided great customer service, and became profitable.

Now at the time, Derek's niece was working with the Premier's marketing committee prior to the 2000 election, and she told Derek it looked good this time around. So with a huge leap of faith, he sold his shares in his Kelowna business in October 2006 and moved back to Saskatoon in January 2007. Our Premier and the hope the Saskatchewan Party inspired for Saskatchewan was the only reason he moved back. He had confidence that we knew how business worked, and we would set the policies for success for his business. Derek started Konzept Sign Group shortly after the Sask Party government

was elected. He hired three employees and they went to work.

Now fast-forward to 2017, just this last year, Mr. Speaker. Konzept Sign Group now has 10 great employees. His business is thriving and contributing to the local economy while helping all of their customers succeed. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they're so busy that one evening last year, last summer, I was waiting for some printing that I needed done for a project of mine. They're so busy, Mr. Speaker, that I had to actually go out on site and help Derek and his team because they were installing signs for a new development in Saskatoon. It was a new development called Brighton. You know, I went out and I helped and we got the project done, and because of that — in spite of my help actually, not because of my help, but in spite of my help, Mr. Speaker — I got my project done too. That's how busy he is. That's how dedicated he was to me. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the way Saskatchewan works today.

Mr. Speaker, policy matters. It mattered to Derek, it matters to business, and it matters to every person in Saskatchewan. And let me tell you what else Derek and his team have accomplished. There's rarely a charitable event that I attend that Konzept Sign Group is not a part of. Whether it's golf tournaments, charity dinners, or gala evenings, it's the exception when you don't see Derek and Allison in attendance and all the signage provided for free to whatever organization they're supporting. Derek's also an active member of Vipond, whose mandate it is to have a day of fun and good fellowship while helping those less fortunate. Through this organization, they've raised more than \$5 million for those with intellectual disabilities.

So, Mr. Speaker, the point of my story of Derek and his company has three points. One is through our government's policies we have attracted and retained many new businesses. Number two is bringing our lost generation back to Saskatchewan. Number three is the amount of philanthropy these small businesses generate through being good corporate citizens and proud members of our community. They give back so much to our communities and non-profit organizations that their contribution is really invaluable. We have much to be thankful for, Mr. Speaker, and we should be thanking people like Derek and his team at Konzept Sign Group for coming back to our province and investing their money and their time in our communities.

His business, co-workers, and staff and our province will directly benefit from the announcement in the Throne Speech that we will be raising the small business income threshold from \$500,000 to \$600,000, the highest threshold in Canada. This will allow small businesses like Konzept Sign Group to keep more money in their business, expand, reinvest, and create new jobs and opportunities.

What I found interesting, Mr. Speaker, is when the Throne Speech was read and the NDP were speaking about this initiative, I heard something alarming. The comment was, and I quote, "It does not 'reduce small biz taxes.' It allows larger businesses to take advantage of the small-biz rate." Really, Mr. Speaker? Who thinks like this? Obviously it's someone from the old way of life. We don't think that way in Saskatchewan anymore, Mr. Speaker. I, for one, am sure glad we've left those days behind.

So let's talk about Saskatoon for a while. This year in Saskatoon we're going to be sharing in revenue of \$48,427,797, Mr. Speaker. That's up 161 per cent from 2007-2008. At that time, in 2007, it was \$17.8 million, Mr. Speaker. As a former member of city council in Saskatoon, I can tell you we really appreciated the investment in our municipalities.

In February 2009, new on-campus residence of the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] was granted \$15 million for that project. In November 2009, University of Saskatchewan, research roof top renewal, \$6.375 million; October 2008, U of S Canadian cooperative wildlife health centre, \$240,000. Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on with that. But let's talk about some other things that are going to be helping Saskatoon and Saskatoon university people.

Let's talk about education, Mr. Speaker. This year 21 new schools accommodating more than 11,000 students opened their doors for the first time. These schools are located in Regina, Saskatoon, Warman, and Martensville and were completed in less than two years. Altogether we've constructed or renovated 65 schools during the last decade, including several new community schools.

I also wanted to touch on some new curriculum initiatives. A pause on curriculum development has been lifted and curriculum renewal will continue in a number of subject areas. What's of particular interest to me, Mr. Speaker, is we will also begin the development of a computer coding curriculum to help prepare students for careers in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology.

The reason that is of importance to me is I had a conversation with the folks at Sask tech at Innovation Place at the U of S campus recently. They're working with the Ministry of Education to develop Saskatchewan into a key tech centre in Canada and the world. They did tremendous work and provided our government with a discussion paper on how to strengthen the tech sector and make it the best-in-world place to develop, build, and grow a healthy, prosperous tech community right there in Saskatoon.

Part of their strategy is to get computer coding into the school curriculum to help prepare students for a career in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? We listened. We listened and it's in the Throne Speech. I'm excited about the sector and what it will mean for the U of S, Innovation Place, and all of the other tech companies that are currently housed there. Co.Labs is doing fantastic work already, providing incubator space, and mentoring for tech startups. Our economy will grow exponentially with these strategic investments in our kids and our technology. So I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, but I'll let somebody else take my place.

I won't be supporting the amendment and I will be supporting the motion made by the member from Estevan. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege for me to rise to take part in the debate on the Throne Speech that was delivered. Before I do, I want to begin

by thanking a number of people, first of all, the people of the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency for giving me the honour of representing them in the Legislative Assembly.

[20:45]

I also want to thank obviously the staff that I get to work with in this building, not only, Mr. Speaker, the staff that I work with as Minister of Environment, but also obviously there was a cabinet shuffle a couple of months ago, and the staff that I had the privilege of working with for the past year as Minister of Energy and Resources. I want to thank my constituency assistant, Marcie Swedburg, who has worked for me since 2006, but in fact she has worked for the people of the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency for 16 years now working for my predecessor. And Marcie does a great job in our constituency office.

And I also I want to thank my family. We obviously had an opportunity, or I had an opportunity — not obviously because you wouldn't know that — but I had an opportunity over the supper break to join with them tonight. For everybody's information, Jack was Gekko boy from PJ Masks for all of you, that . . . Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you're quite well aware of that. He dressed up as Gekko boy and had a great time. And little Ephram was a pumpkin; wasn't originally going to be a pumpkin. He was going to be a fox, except for he's growing so quickly that he outgrew the costume. And so Amanda had to find the pumpkin that Jack wore when he was about that age, and so Ephram was a little pumpkin this evening. And they're just . . . I could go the next hour and a half, two hours just on those two boys, but I won't do that. But so, Mr. Speaker, we're really blessed with a growing family and really enjoying, really enjoying this time with them. And obviously, I do want to thank Amanda for all of her support and the great job that she does in raising our two boys and just the best mother that these two boys could ever have dreamed of having.

I also want to thank Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor. This, I believe, was most likely the last Throne Speech that she would have delivered as the Lieutenant Governor and she, I think, has done a superb job in representing Her Majesty as well as the people of this province in her duties. And I do want to thank the Premier. Members have recognized the fact that this is the last Throne Speech that will be delivered under the Premier from Swift Current, and so I want to thank him for the roles that he has asked me to serve. I'm pleased to have been recycled back into the Environment file.

And you know to be honest, Mr. Speaker, I think like a lot of people. I certainly am sad that he has decided to step away from elected life. You know, I thought he was just starting to get the hang of the job, and so . . . But certainly I understand that, you know, he's moving into a new season in his life and wish all the best for he and Tami as they finish very well the last couple of months serving the people of Swift Current and the people of Saskatchewan.

I want to welcome the member from Saskatoon Fairview to the Legislative Assembly and congratulate her on her by-election victory. It's always . . . No doubt it's exciting to enter this House by an election. I think it's a little extra special to do so through a by-election where it's the only game in town. It's the

only election at any given time, so all the spotlight, the focus, is on that race. And I think it adds an extra element of excitement for all the parties that are involved.

And I do want to — and he was in the Chamber earlier, but I know he's here — I do want to welcome back Ken Krawetz to the Legislative Assembly. It is great having Ken, even though it's for a limited amount of time, serving back in now a new role as chief of staff to the Premier.

So he has served in a leadership role in our party. He has served as a deputy premier of Saskatchewan, and now chief of staff to the Premier. He only has one step left to go, that being the deputy minister to the Premier, and he will have hit a cycle. So he's getting close to that, but we'll see. I'm not sure that's in the cards for him. But it's really great to have Ken back in the Legislative Assembly.

I'm not going to speak for very long, probably much to the relief of all my colleagues, but I do want to touch on just two areas in the Throne Speech. First, the section that speaks to the environment. Obviously now having that role, I do want to touch on what the Throne Speech has laid out, and I then want to touch on an area that has a lot to do with, I think, not just our province, but the economy of my constituency and the role that I previously had. But I think the two do tie together.

So the Throne Speech does lay out the government's plan to not only to continue to oppose a federally imposed carbon tax on the people of Saskatchewan. I won't belabour the point. I think it has been spelled out quite clearly by members of this side of the House, particularly the Premier, of why carbon tax would be a detriment to the economy of this province. And I think it has been borne out quite well, the fact that Saskatchewan's economy is an export-intensive economy, largely based on exporting goods across the world, across the globe, and the importance of ensuring that we are competitive. And, in fact, that has been recognized by even the working group on carbon pricing mechanisms as a part of the working groups that were established by the premiers over the last two years or so, which spoke specifically about the issue of carbon leakage. This is from the working group on carbon pricing mechanisms, the final report, and I quote:

When their competitiveness is affected, Canadian firms may face pressure to reduce domestic production, or shift production/investment to a country that has not yet priced carbon at a comparative level . . .

It later goes on to specifically refer to this as carbon leakage. And in fact a national panel . . . To further that thought, a national panel of economists had suggested that perhaps the federal government or the country should look at subsidizing those industries in the country that will face the threat of carbon leakage. And in fact a national panel of economists specifically pointed out Saskatchewan:

The oil and gas sectors in Alberta and Saskatchewan are the biggest factors. There's no way that they can pass on the higher costs to their consumers. As a result, they essentially have to eat those costs.

And, later, they went on to talk about how the fact that

vulnerable industries, while making up only about 5 per cent of the economy overall as a country, they are as high as 28 per cent of the economies in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and I quote:

There's competitiveness and leakage implications for Canada moving ahead of the United States. The bigger the carbon price, the more the issue matters.

So it's very real, and that's why we believe that not only is a carbon tax not the right policy for this country, has been shown to not in fact reduce emissions, but it in fact will do harm to the economy of Saskatchewan and frankly harm to the Canadian economy. And that's why we are developing a made-in-Saskatchewan approach. I think that has been largely recognized, not by all quarters, but largely recognized as the right approach to take, to have our own plan in Saskatchewan that will, among other things, see, as we've said before, 50 per cent renewables by 2030 which is significant. This will be doubling the renewable generation within a 15-year time span. It will see SaskPower cut their GHGs [greenhouse gas] by 44 per cent over that time frame. Also what we would put forward and have put forward is the fact that Saskatchewan really should benefit from what we do well in this province when it comes to uranium mining, when it comes to agriculture, and the jurisdictions around the world that are benefitting from the developments that have been developed here in Saskatchewan.

And so that will be a part of what we'll bring forward, to not only demonstrate how a made-in-Saskatchewan plan is the right plan for Saskatchewan. It takes into account the needs of the people of Saskatchewan. It takes into account the intricacies of our economy in Saskatchewan, and it takes into account the fact that, yes, we do need to be resilient to the ongoing effects of climate change. And why I say that, and as a part of that, yes, BD3 [Boundary dam 3] is an important part of that.

I had an opportunity in the early days of being in this role to speak at a symposium that was hosted in Regina, where there were delegates from over a dozen countries around the world looking specifically at carbon capture and sequestration technology that has been demonstrated here in Saskatchewan. I know my colleague from Estevan, as well as Cannington, attended that conference, and to hear people from around the world acknowledge the need for this, but also recognizing the fact that this is first generation technology. And so we need to work with and collaborate with organizations around the world to understand the science and the technology, but also to work together to ensure that the next generation of technology that, yes, it improves, that we can bring the cost down, bring the price down. And it's in recognition of the fact that coal is not going away around the world.

And in fact I find it interesting, when I was still the Energy minister, at our meetings this summer in New Brunswick, the Energy and Mines ministers' meeting, the federal minister handed out an energy fact book produced by the Natural Resources department in Ottawa and noted the fact that Canada produces 61 million tonnes of coal per year and we export 30 million tonnes of that. Largely half of that is Alberta and half of that is British Columbia. So in two jurisdictions that have carbon taxes and yet they are exporting coal to places like, well 24 per cent of coal exports from Alberta and British Columbia

go to Japan, 20 per cent go to South Korea, and 16 per cent go to China.

And in fact we import, as a country, 6 million tonnes of coal, and 76 per cent of that comes from the United States, which doesn't have, as we know, a carbon tax and likely never will have a national carbon tax. The other interesting thing about this is that half of the coal that we're importing is for the production of steel and half of the coal is for electricity.

Most of the coal that we're exporting is for steel production, particularly coal from British Columbia.

An Hon. Member: — Importing.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — No, exporting actually. So we're exporting coal to places like South Korea and China that are using it to produce steel products which are then competing against steel products that are produced, in the case of pipeline, here in Regina at Evraz.

And I can tell you, and I've had presentations, the way that steel products are produced in China is much different than they're produced in Regina. And in fact most people would not know this, but Evraz is one of the largest owners of car wreckers in North America. Why? Because they rely heavily on scrap metal. And how do you ensure that you have enough scrap metal? Well you own wrecking facilities, wreckers, car wreckers, all across North America. And so I don't have the number on me here, but I believe it's about an 80 per cent fewer carbon emissions and associated emissions from the way Evraz produces steel in Regina, Saskatchewan than compared to how steel is produced in China.

And so as a country, we're sending coal largely from British Columbia, that has a carbon tax, to China to produce, in a much dirtier way, steel products including pipeline that then competes against steel that's produced using recycled products in Regina. Not sure how it makes sense, but that's the reality today. And I'll come back to that point on another issue.

[21:00]

So we're going to move forward with a plan that works for Saskatchewan, that recognizes our unique needs, that recognizes our economy and the importance of ensuring that our economy is strong going forward, but also recognizing that we have to, yes, do our part. And we are going to demonstrate that going forward.

This ties into another area, and I've already touched on competitiveness when it comes to steel products, but this does tie into the section on competitiveness. And I just want to speak to that, specifically to really projects that have already, I think, gone through the process, and I'll speak a little bit about the process. In some ways, Mr. Speaker, this will just be a bit of a venting session, but it will feel good, I hope.

You know, it was really, I would say, frustrating to sit around the table in New Brunswick this summer with the Energy and Mines ministers from across the country and the federal minister. We certainly, as a province, have allies at that table. But when you see projects that are being cancelled, such as

PETRONAS [Petroleum Nasional Berhad], their liquefied rich natural gas projects, when you see now subsequent to those meetings, when you see now companies, proponents, having decided to walk away from pipeline projects in this country and to hear the federal minister basically wash the hands of the federal government and saying, well, these are business decisions that these companies make and to somehow suggest that the economics just aren't right to get a liquefied natural gas project, a \$36 billion project, built in this country or to get a pipeline project built in this country are simply business decisions, as if governments don't, either for the good or for ill, influence the decisions that businesses make, was certainly profoundly disappointing to hear the federal minister say that.

We need to ensure that we are competitive. And the record of projects that are leaving this country, the record of companies that are selling their stakes in Canada and deciding to invest their dollars elsewhere means that we will continue, in the case of oil, for a project as — and this point has been said time and time again, but I'm going to continue it — for a project that was two-thirds already complete in the ground, for a project that would allow for the ability not just to displace imported oil but would also allow for the ability for Western Canadian crude to get to tidewater, to try to get to that world, to try to achieve the world price . . . We are selling oil each and every day out of Western Canada at a discount, which doesn't just mean that the companies are selling at a discount because there's only one customer and there's a glut trying to get that oil to that one customer, but it means that we're all suffering. It means that the people of Saskatchewan that own the resource are not receiving the full return that they should be because of that.

And for those jurisdictions that are against these types of projects, they're actually costing their provinces money because as everybody knows, non-renewable resource revenue is a factor in equalization. And so in the case of Saskatchewan, the number has been anywhere, depending on the price of oil and depending on the differential, it's anywhere from 40 to \$50 million a year, as high as I think 2 to \$300 million at the height of oil prices.

And I can tell you it's much higher in Alberta. Last year I think it was closer to \$650 million that was left off the table because of that differential which then is factored into the formula, which then means that places like Quebec — where Montreal is located, where the mayor of Montreal resides — is receiving less dollars in equalization because of the fact that we're not receiving the full return for those projects.

And I will say it's disappointing to see and kind of hard to get the members opposite on the record in terms of where they are at on any given day on a carbon tax. Sometimes they're in favour of a carbon tax and sometimes they're not really, and sometimes they're in favour of pipelines and not really sometimes.

But certainly at their federal level where I think they probably take a lot of direction, their new leader, that's a concern. He said, in terms of pipelines, I have said no to Energy East and Kinder Morgan and most recently Keystone XL. Niki Ashton, who's a very high profile member, obviously didn't win the leadership, but she certainly was very much against the project, the pipeline projects that have been tried to be advanced across

this country.

And so that means today we will continue to import a million barrels, according to Minister Carr, Jim Carr. We will continue to import a million barrels per day in this country. And last year 62 per cent of that came from United States, where there isn't a carbon tax, and it came to Canada mainly by pipeline; 9 per cent of it came from Saudi Arabia, came by tanker up the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Bay of Fundy; 9 per cent came from Algeria, same way, came by tanker through the Bay of Fundy, through the St. Lawrence Seaway; and 8 per cent Nigeria.

And I think it's just getting to the point of beyond frustration of having to prove that whether you're from Saskatchewan or Alberta or you're working on a drilling rig at Lloydminster or if you're working at a battery site in Cannington or if you're in the Southwest in the Shaunavon play or even, yes, in the oil sands in northern Alberta, it's getting beyond frustrating having to prove that you're a better source for energy, that whether you like it or not we need as a country and will need for, I would say, my lifetime. Certainly beyond that. I hope it's a long lifetime, but certainly for many decades to come.

Somehow we don't reach a standard that apparently the United States, that they apparently achieve, that Saudi Arabia achieves. Like we're just not as good in Saskatchewan at producing oil in an environmentally friendly way, in a way that respects for all the issues that we have to continue to work on, but worker safety in a socially responsible manner. To the people of Montreal, to the mayor of Montreal and to other provinces, we just don't achieve the same standards that Algeria and Saudi Arabia and Nigeria, Mr. Speaker.

It's getting beyond frustrating, I think, for many of us. I would hope all of us in this province that continually have to fight against this, while at the same time a million barrels a day are going to be imported from those countries. And tomorrow a million barrels a day, in a way that it just . . . If we can't satisfy from this province those questions for the mayor of Montreal and others, I don't know how they justify what's going on each and every day in this country.

We have to, I think, recognize in my final minutes the fact that this is a big deal when companies are leaving this country. You know some will say, well, you know, the Canadian company, they're able to buy out the other half of their operation from the foreign entity. And so that's good for Canada because now they own 100 per cent of it. For their shareholders, I hope that turns out to be true. But those dollars aren't staying in this country. They're fleeing; they're going elsewhere.

And if you want an example . . . and I won't go into a lot of detail but I will challenge members to take me up on this. If you want an example of how important for our Canadian economy outside dollars are, all you have to do is look at the volume of trading on the Toronto Stock Exchange on the Monday before Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the Monday of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and the Monday following Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in the United States. Because on the Monday of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, it's a holiday in the United States and so traders in the United States have the day off. And so I would urge everybody, just to see the importance of outside dollars into our economy, just look at the trading volumes of the three

Mondays that I just mentioned. And you will see — just as one indicator, one indicator alone — the importance of those dollars into our economy.

Finally, we should all really care about this, our competitiveness as a country. And I will be sharing this this weekend with my environment colleagues, as I did this summer with energy and mines ministers, when I meet in Vancouver this weekend. This affects this country. Nearly a million people are employed directly and indirectly by the energy industry. And we hope that that energy industry in the future will include more jobs like the people that create and build and install solar panels and wind turbines. You know, hopefully, in the future those jobs will grow. But that's not really where they are, the bulk of them are, today. And so we need to be mindful of the economy as it is today and as it will be over the coming years.

The fact of the matter, that when you look at last summer to this summer, the fact that the world stock indexes were all in positive territory except for Canada. So why would that be? Well probably because our stock index, the Toronto Stock Exchange, the benchmark, is more heavily weighted to the energy sector than others. And so that has an effect for everybody.

If you're collecting CPP [Canada Pension Plan], that has an effect. Policy, government policy, particularly in this case, federal government policy has an impact. It has an impact on CPP. It has an impact on the Québec Pension Plan. It has an impact on the teachers of Ontario pension plan. It has an effect whether you like this issue or not, whether you like this industry or not. It has an impact and government policy has an impact.

And in closing, I would just say that we need to be mindful as a country, as a trading nation, as a country that relies heavily on trading with other nations, with customers. We need to be mindful of what are we telling our customers in terms of our reliability, our inability to get projects built and approved and the changing goalposts. And now we have to factor in this when it comes to a pipeline, but we don't factor that same thing in when it comes to building an airplane factory in Quebec or a car plant in Ontario. But we now will when it comes to things like pipelines. We need to be able to show the rest of the world that we can get these projects and move them forward and build them, and that we are a reliable country. And I fear that that's not the case.

And so I've only been able to touch on two points. I know others want to speak but I think the environment and our competitiveness, they're closely tied. And so with that I will take my place and I will not be supporting the amendment but I will be supporting the Throne Speech.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to stand in my place and reply to the Speech from the Throne. I was interested when the member from Cannington stood up and said it was his 28th, I believe, 27th reply to the Speech from the Throne. It wouldn't be fair to the people of Saskatchewan if I had to reply that many times. I think I've been in here for about 18 years. I don't believe I've replied to every Speech from the

Throne because sometimes the numbers grew too large on this side, which is really quite a nice thing, that allow everyone to reply. Some people had to stand back and I was certainly glad to do that.

But I have been able to reply to many of them and it's always an interesting seven days, because this debate, when you reply to the Speech from the Throne, or when you reply to the budget — it's also quite similar — the conversations can be quite wide ranging. There really isn't any particular script; it's not like a bill or anything like that that you stay fairly close to, so it's quite wide ranging. And when it is wide ranging like that you really do get a true feeling of the perspective from this side of the House in what's going on in the province, and the perspective from that side of the House, on the opposition side of the House, on what's going on in the province. And it really is, you'd swear that the Speech from the Throne was a completely different document when you hear the opposition speak to when you hear the government speak. But I'm going to get into a little bit more on the Speech from the Throne in particular as my comments go on.

[21:15]

But I first want to, as many members do, and I think it's the one time annually that we get to stand in our place and talk a little bit about who gets us here, who allows us to stay here, who supports us while we're here, and that's certainly my opportunity to talk a little bit about that as well as maybe some family issues as well.

First of all I want to, and others have talked about it, but for anybody that's been elected for any length of time, they know that the most important part of their political success, really the professional side of it, the backbone of any MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] I believe, is their constituency assistant and the work that those constituency assistants do within those offices. It's quite amazing. I mean as MLAs we're either in this place or we're out at meetings or meeting with people, but those phone calls that come in on a daily basis — and some are pleasant; some aren't — are handled by those constituency assistants. And so Nicole Entner-McCullough, I've talked about her before. She's been my constituency assistant or CA since I was elected in 2007 on the government side. Vonni Widdis had been my constituency assistant up until that point. But Nicole does a great job, lives just outside of Balgonie, and is raising, with Curtis, two young girls that are very active.

But you know, I've always thought Nicole has done a very good job, but I will say that this particular year, over the last number of months . . . Probably she's done a great job the whole time, but even more importantly, as there's been issues certainly around the Balgonie bypass, and I'm going to talk about that a little bit later, but you know, we as MLAs, I've often said we don't have an on and off switch. You can be out at a public event with family and you're still the MLA for Indian Head-Milestone or any constituency and people will come up and talk to you. It's not whether you've got time off, you know, on the weekend or whatever. You're still the MLA and if that's when people see you, that's when they're going to come and talk to you.

Well in this case for Nicole, who is around Balgonie and the Balgonie bypass issue is on, people have been talking to her. And it's not like she can leave work at 5 o'clock and not be my assistant. She is my assistant regardless, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and people have been, you know, raising their concerns to her. So you know, I just appreciate that. It's not a nine-to-five job or a nine-to-four job, depending on the hours that we've set up in our offices. It really is in some situations, and in some matters, a job that they live.

And so I just want to thank Nicole for all the work that she has done throughout my time as government, but in particularly over the last number of months dealing with the public and dealing with the Ministry of Highways, trying to get information to the public and trying to relay information to me and then on to the ministry. She has done just an unbelievably great job.

I also want to talk a little bit about the constituents of Indian Head-Milestone. I've had the opportunity to represent them for 18 years, and it's been a great bunch to represent, even though the boundaries change from time to time. And this is the third boundary change and I'm missing some of the people that I got to be quite close with in the Avonlea-Rouleau area, Wilcox. But picked up Pilot Butte and been a great opportunity to learn and know some more people round there. Yes, lost the Francis area, a great area, but they've got a much better MLA serving them now than they did for the 18 years previous.

But they have been amazing whether it's been at parades through this past summer, or homecomings. I was down in Lang for the homecoming in Lang and just a great response for a small community as people come back into the community. It's kind of the old stomping grounds. I played senior hockey there for many a year, started when I was 15, can hardly believe that. But certainly got to know a lot of people and great support.

People are really, really genuine when they talk about their community and their love for their community. And it's nice to hear that, and it's nice to have their support. It really does mean a lot. So the constituents are extra special, I think, and I think that we'd all as MLAs say we have the best constituency and the best people to represent. I would say that and argue vehemently that I think it's Indian Head-Milestone. But anyway, moving on.

The other people of course that support us of course are the people in our family and, you know, I would be no different. Cindy is still working in the General part-time but certainly has been a great support over the last 18 years in public life. We have two sons, and it's no secret that they've got quite a public life as well. I think Cindy will be very happy, number one, when my political career is over, and their sporting careers are over because they tend to be played out in front of the camera far too often. Mine certainly is a little bit quieter now and she's quite comfortable with that and I think I am too. But the boys certainly have gained a fair amount of, well I don't know about notary, but certainly recognition.

Mark of course after his accident last year . . . It was quite a significant accident and the outpouring of support from the province, from people in this Chamber on both sides, I appreciate, from the province and also nationally and

internationally. He is just . . . A status report really quickly because this is not about him, but he's doing well. He had a myriad of broken bones from his jaw to his ribs to his left arm to his pelvic bone; a ruptured spleen and punctured lung. And he's been able to come back from all of that. After a week he was out of the hospital, which was quite hard to believe, and has been rehabbing in Vancouver and down in the States a little bit and is doing well.

He spent some time over in Australia riding this summer. But most importantly he was just recently in Switzerland where he was actually training for the Olympics again, hitting big jumps and landing. And it's hard to believe it's been a little over five months and is pretty much in game shape. Physically was one part of it and the other part was mentally. And being able to experience his friends again has been significant for him.

So he's looking forward to, much to his mother's chagrin, he's looking to a full competitive season this year. And I think she would rather see him not on the shelf the way he was, but maybe just stepping back a little bit, but that isn't going to be the case. Not that anybody is probably keeping track like we are, but it's 100 days to the Olympic start as of today, and so that's a big countdown.

Our other son Craig is working fairly closely with CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] and will be doing a lot of work in the Olympics for CBC as one of the five hosts for bringing it back to Canada, also doing the colour commentating for the snowboard events and some other things. So we're kind of centred around the Olympics. So 100 days is hard to believe, and it'll be here before we know it.

Anyway, enough of that. But that is the status report. And I've said to many people . . . And you know, there are some issues in the constituency for sure, but the first question I always get is, how is Mark? It's not, how are the roads or anything else. That seems to be the first question I get. So I've done my status report.

I want to welcome the member from Saskatoon Fairview here in this Chamber. It is kind of an intimidating place, I would think, the first time. I remember many, many years ago — I think I can remember that far back — to '99. My maiden speech was a long time ago. But the time does tend to fly by here even though some nights at almost 9:30 at night it tends to drag on a little bit. But it does really fly by. And it's a special place, you know, when you sit in this Chamber and think of the people that have come before us. And quite frankly there'll be many, many that will come after us. We're but here for just a short time even though some of us have been replying to 27 speeches from the throne. But we really are here for a short time, and so it is truly a privilege to be here. So congratulations on your election.

And I was thinking of it, as much as we think nothing changes in this room, it is ever evolving. It is really quite amazing when you think about from even year to year how this place evolves from the number of seats on this side to, unfortunately, a couple more seats on that side. And who knows what will happen over the next two or three years. I would think those seats may come back to this side, but we'll see how that takes place in the next two or three years.

I am here to speak regarding . . . on the Throne Speech, and I was told that I need to go to a certain time. I'm sure TVs are turning off all over the province right now, and I will just warn you that if you haven't turned off now, turn off real soon because the member from Athabasca is speaking after me, and I would not want anybody to be put through that punishment. I have been here for a long time, and I've heard his speeches. And I will guarantee if we could replay the tape from the speech that he gave two years ago, eight years ago, or twelve years ago, it's the same one, Mr. Speaker. I'll know what he's going to talk about, and so I'll just warn the viewers right now, turn it off. If you've heard him before, it's going to be the same thing, Mr. Speaker.

The Speech from the Throne, it really does amaze me how on a Speech from the Throne, and I said it in my opening remarks, how it can vary greatly from this side of the House, which quite frankly has been very positive, not that there aren't issues in the province and not that we haven't heard concerns after the budget, but generally the Speech from the Throne has set the direction of government moving forward. And generally across the province from what we hear, which is quite a wide range from city constituencies to urban constituencies, it really is quite positive, unlike when you listen to the members opposite.

Now they all haven't spoke, but it is so negative. It is so actually quite depressing, and now that they've recently won Saskatoon Fairview and there is a dozen of them, it really has become the depressing dozen, not the dirty dozen, the depressing dozen because I haven't heard any of them that have really come out and talked very positively about a province that has seen growth, unbelievable growth over the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker.

And it really is amazing because it has been a decade of growth, and we are still growing even though we have faced some downturn in the commodities. And that will happen from time to time, but that doesn't mean people . . . A downturn in the commodities doesn't mean people have given up on the province, unlike with members opposite. They truly have given up on the province, where we still think the opportunity for growth — economic growth, population growth, wage growth — Mr. Speaker, is there in spades. And that's why we are so positive moving forward, and that's why the Speech from the Throne, no doubt, is entitled "Growing Stronger" because stronger means . . . growing stronger means that's what's going to happen into the future, and it's very evident when you look at the Speech from the Throne.

I'm amazed that, you know, the member from Wood River was mentioning about he was going to take on page 3 and 4 or 5 and 6. You could do a 40-minute speech on any one of these pages because they are filled with positive aspects of where the province will be going into the future.

I'm not going to get too much into the decade of growth, but what I do want to talk about is, I know the opposition has said, well it's all looking back. What happens is, is when you start talking about 750 new doctors practising in Saskatchewan or 3,400 nurses, Mr. Speaker, that isn't looking back. That is looking at the service that will be provided into the future, Mr. Speaker, of this province.

It wasn't very many years ago, and I can tell you I was the Health critic, where we had community after community after community were seeing their facilities closed, not because government wanted to close it, because they had done such a poor job in attracting health care professionals. Hospitals were closing and, yes, they closed 52 intentionally. That was an intentional closure when they closed 52. But there were facilities around the province that were cutting back services because the opposition at that time, when they were in government, were rationing the health care professionals we had in the province.

I remember meeting with the ministry staff shortly after and I said, we have got a critical doctor shortage here. What can we do to increase the number of doctors? And they went away and they came back and they said, well we . . . You know, I said, can you come up with a couple of ideas? And they came up with 10 different ideas and they expected me to pick two of them and I couldn't pick two of them because they were all great ideas. So the point of that story was, it isn't because the civil service or the bureaucracy didn't know what needed to be done to attract doctors and make sure that there was a proper complement of doctors. It was the political will of the NDP that wouldn't follow through, Mr. Speaker.

The ideas were there before we were elected as government, Mr. Speaker. It took us as a government to follow through on these ideas and because of it we see 750 more doctors practising in this province. Something as simple as the evaluation on how you evaluated doctors. We only took doctors from six different countries and they were evaluated through a process in Manitoba. We brought that back to Saskatchewan where the process is done in province, accepting physicians from around the world if they meet the qualifications here.

[21:30]

I want to just tell you this story. Can you imagine, under the NDP this is what they would do. They'd bring a doctor in from a country, of those six countries. They'd bring a doctor in and they'd put him in a community and they had done absolutely no evaluation of that physician at all. They could practise in the community for six months with absolutely no evaluation. By the time they finally got to evaluating whether this person was safe to practise medicine in our province, they would finally send them to Manitoba to be evaluated. If they didn't pass the exam, this person had been practising for six to seven months. They didn't seem to care too much about the quality. Then they would pull him out of the community after they got a whole complement of people relying on that physician within that community. That's the system that we had in this province years ago. It's hard to believe when you think about it, that the government would've actually done that. So regardless, you know, it has all changed.

And when we talk about the number of physicians that we've recruited, the changes that we've made, it's not to say that pat ourselves on the back, that thank heavens we did it then. The reason those changes were made is so the future is so much brighter in the province, so people can get health care in rural, not just urban Saskatchewan where most of those members are from, and a couple from the North — can't forget those guys because they're the loudest — you know, Mr. Speaker, it's not

for the people within urban Saskatchewan. It's for all citizens of the province to be able to access health care in the community of Carrot River or Melfort or wherever we saw, in Fort Qu'Appelle, in Indian Head, where we saw doctor shortages, Mr. Speaker. So that's some of the changes that we made on that front.

One of the things that I wanted — this is going to take a little while — I wanted to talk a little bit about is the organ donation piece. And I've stood in my place before and talked about this and how important this is for all of the citizens of Saskatchewan to seriously think about making sure they've signed the donor card, that they put the sticker on their, number one, on their licence and on their health card, so that people understand their intent. But it's not even putting a sticker on or signing a card. It's sitting down with family members and having a chat, so that in the time of a crisis where a person has had a terrible accident or whatever the situation may be and is facing the fact that they will not survive, that their family knows their intent. Because there is nothing more stressful, I believe, when the medical team come to you and ask the family members about organ donation and that conversation hasn't been had between the family.

And so I really, really stress . . . And one of the reasons why I just remember years ago, when Cindy was working on the organ donor team in Regina here and getting a call late at night, and she would go and it would be, you know, sad because somebody was passing away. But they called it, for lack of a better term — and don't take this the wrong way — it was called a harvest, where they would go in and they would harvest the organs, and people would come from all across Canada, and those organs then would be transported to save somebody. And it was a harvest because it was harvesting the body.

And I thought about it as a farmer many, many times, and you know, when I think of harvest of course I only think of we're bringing the crop in; we're bringing in what we've worked for all year long. My uncle always said, you know, if you can't be happy in harvest, you'll never be happy because it's your payday, your one-month payday of the year.

But really, what harvest really is — and I thought about it a lot with organ donation — harvest isn't just bringing in the crop. Harvest is bringing in the crop so you can feed the world, so that the world can survive off of what we have here in Saskatchewan. That's what harvest is. It's so that people can survive, that they can nourish their body, whether it's wheat or durum or lentils or chickpeas, that they can feed themselves and they survive because of our harvest. That's what organ donation is all about. It's a harvest but it's so that others can survive from this person that has donated their organs. And so I really, really would urge people, and like what is being talked about in the Speech from the Throne regarding organ donation because I think it is so very, very important.

I want to talk a little bit about education, and it's not normally a topic that I speak a lot about, Mr. Speaker, but I do want to talk a little bit about education. Because again I don't know how often a government has been able to stand in the House . . . I would say it would probably be back in the '50s and '60s where a government could stand in the House and talk about 40 new schools being built, and in one year. Can you imagine? I'm not

sure it's ever happened before in the province. I know there were a lot of schools built through the '60s, some into the '70s because they're all wearing out right now. But 21 brand new schools built and operational in this fiscal year is quite a remarkable feat. Haven't heard anybody on that side talk about it. It's doom and gloom when it comes to education. But the capital spend in education has been phenomenal.

You know, I just have to say, I've been in here for quite a while and there is some words that I just never thought I would ever hear the NDP say, and it happened yesterday in question period. These words would never be uttered when the NDP were in government. And let me just quote from the member from Lakeview. She says, "Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker." Then she talks about forcing people to pay more and they are . . . Just my eyesight here; I'm just having to push this a little bit further away. She's talking about education. But what you would never hear the NDP say is that there's 4,500 more students in school today, growth of 4,500 students. You would never . . . You know, for 16 years when the NDP were in government, year after year after year, it was decline. Decline, decline, decline. And for the first time, the Education critic stood in her place and said, an increase of 4,500 people. Mr. Speaker, that is words that you would never hear with the NDP, if they were in government.

Eighteen joint-use schools that were built in a P3. Now I know the members opposite absolutely reject P3 schools. Those schools never would have been built under the NDP. It is really interesting. I know they have to be conflicted every time they go to an opening. It's one of those, geez, should I go? I kind of feel a little awkward. I didn't support it. You know, I really wish it wasn't funded that way, but yes the school should open. I think I should go. Oh, but no maybe I shouldn't because I don't know about the funding model.

Mr. Speaker, you know, it really is about the kids, about the students that are going to that school. It isn't the funding model. Those schools were needed. There is growth within the student body across this province and, Mr. Speaker, it is a good thing that the Saskatchewan Party would look at other funding models, such as P3, to make sure those schools come forward.

A little bit more? Wrap it up? Mr. Speaker, I do want to talk just briefly on the infrastructure within this province and the investment that we have put into highways. The Minister of Highways was up earlier this evening and talked about it. Certainly we saw an infrastructure deficit coming out of the NDP government, and we've been trying to catch up on that. And we've been doing fairly well, I would say that, the last couple years. There's nothing better for road building than a dry summer. And we've had a dry one and we've certainly made some inroads. There was a year or two when it was pretty darn wet and it seemed like a lot of our budget was just trying to maintain. But the last couple years, we've certainly seen some real improvements.

But I do want to talk briefly about . . . and again, the Minister of Highways mentioned this, but on Friday, had the opportunity to do a full tour, almost a full tour, of the Regina bypass, and how absolutely fascinating that project is.

And I know the opposition, they need to criticize and they need

to find fault. And, you know, they work at it very, very hard, to find fault. But I would just ask a couple of those members opposite, including the highway critic that is just always full of pearls of wisdom for government, but I would ask those members opposite to take government up on the offer. Come with . . . Actually, we don't need to be part of it. Go with the Regina bypass builders; go with the Ministry of Highways. We'll set up a tour for you. Go and have a look at the infrastructure that's being built. Because, you know, they will continually go on about a project that was designed 20 years ago and won't look at the design and the project and the magnitude of the project that is there right now. It is a fascinating project.

We went and looked at a couple of the borrow pits, is where they took us first, and how unbelievably huge and deep these borrow pits were. You know, I remember the opposition when they were in government; they talked about the big dig. Big dig was a pretty big thing for the NDP and how proud they were of that big dig and they'd use big trucks to haul the big dirt away, and how impressed they were with the big dig, Mr. Speaker. But you know, the amount of earth that has been moved for this project is four big digs. Four big digs, Mr. Speaker. Can you imagine how proud they would have been if they were the government with four big digs going on at the same time, Mr. Speaker? It is an amazing project. And when you look at the borrow pits it is really quite fascinating.

When you look at the number of interchanges, there are 12 new interchanges on this bypass. Now I know they'll look at a project that was talked about many, many, many years ago under their government, where it exited No. 1 Highway on the east side of Regina by Tower Road. And at that time, because I saw the plans, they would go and they would tie back in before Wascana Parkway on the south side of the city. And it just was absolutely unfeasible with the growth in traffic. That's what they keep citing, and that took on . . . That project was about two or three bypasses. And they keep citing that and comparing it to the project that is there today.

Quite frankly, I think the opposition has a responsibility to do the research and be honest with the people of the province, because they simply are not. They continually mislead the public between a project that was developed in the '90s and what is being delivered in 2017. So what I would say to the members opposite, come for a tour. We'll take you on the tour. The Minister of Highways will even get you coffee and doughnuts, if that's what it will take to get you on a tour, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Muffins. Okay, free muffins.

But 12 major interchanges, starting in Balgonie, that's complete. The one in Pilot Butte, the one in White City-Emerald Park, the one at Tower Road, there'll be an interchange at Highway 33. There'll be an interchange at No. 6. There'll be an interchange at No. 1. Going on further north, there'll be an interchange at Dewdney. There'll be an interchange at I think 9th Avenue North, and there'll be an interchange on No. 11. So it'll be a full bypass around the city. I don't know if that adds up to 12, but it's going to be close — 12 new interchanges around the city. There are 33 new bridges that are going in. Of course you've got to get across the Wascana in a couple of places. Thirty-three new bridges that are being

constructed. It is the largest infrastructure project this province has ever seen.

And you know, I just look forward to the day that . . . I mean, as the Minister of Highways mentioned on Monday, the opening of the first phase of the bypass which would take us from Balgonie to Highway 33, second phase will take us from 33 Highway over to No. 1 I believe, and the third phase will take us from No. 1 to No. 11. Two more years of construction, but I certainly look forward to that being complete.

I know right now travelling — and I've done it twice now since Monday — is going out on Arcola and whipping around. It's still a reduced speed so not like a full whip around as it will be at 110, but whipping around over to the east side of the city and how much better the traffic flow will be and the safety margin will be built up for that. So I'm looking forward to that.

I can imagine, you know, people coming into the city on this brand new overpass and going to a brand new Mosaic Stadium. I sat in Mosaic Stadium and I thought, wow, is this Saskatchewan? And then the other day I was driving on the bypass with bridges . . . [inaudible] . . . going here and there, and I'm going, wow, is this Saskatchewan?

Because you know, when you hear the members opposite, if we could just go back to the '70s and '80s, you know. If we could just go back to those glory days of Roy Romanow and others, Allan Blakeney. That's where they feel the most comfortable; that's where they feel the best. But you know, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the people of Saskatchewan have moved way past where the NDP were and are today.

Are there things that we need to do better as government? Absolutely. And for every government that would the case. We need to continue to improve as a government, but I'll guarantee, the people of Saskatchewan never want to go back to the NDP days. I'll be supporting the Speech from the Throne and rejecting the amendment.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

[21:45]

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud to stand in support of the amendment, along with my colleagues that are in the Assembly. And I too want to take the opportunity to welcome our newest colleague and a great, great election victory. I think it has sent a solid message to the Saskatchewan Party where the numbers just flip-flop, where the NDP came in very, very strong, and of course the Saskatchewan Party came a distant second, Mr. Speaker.

And why did that happen, Mr. Speaker? Because of antics like the member from Indian Head-Milestone, Mr. Speaker. And I'll give you a couple of examples. This was the same guy, when he was a minister, got his niece to write a letter saying what a great minister of Health he was, because his niece was a nurse. And then we found that out. And so people were kind of saying, that doesn't sit very well. And the second thing he said was, well when you look at some of the challenges around the debt, he doesn't remember a guy by the name of Grant Devine, Mr. Speaker, who broke this province, who broke this province.

And then the NDP come along with the people of Saskatchewan and saved it.

And then, Mr. Speaker, the last time I went to a meeting in his constituency, I went to Balgonie. I went to Balgonie and there must have been about 300 people in that room, and I looked far and wide for the MLA for that area, the former minister of Highways. Not to be seen. He didn't have the courage to go and listen to the people of Balgonie. And he's sitting now in the Assembly talking about how bad the NDP . . . And that's the only time they seem to liven up, Mr. Speaker, when it's time to bash the NDP. But in reality, Mr. Speaker, they have no answers for Saskatchewan and that's why the weak approach they have — to bash the NDP so nobody's focusing on them. And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this, that the people of Balgonie are absolutely angry with their MLA.

And don't forget, Mr. Speaker, this is the same member that came along and introduced lean through the whole . . . Sent money, valuable health care dollars, valuable health care dollars, to where? An American-based consultant. Hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, wasted on lean by that member. And yet he has the gall to talk about what happened 20 or 30 years ago and forgets, Mr. Speaker, and forgets the guy that he used to idolize, Grant Devine, Mr. Speaker.

But that's not the point that I wish to raise as I rise to my feet today. I'm saying to the former minister of Highways, the current member from Indian Head-Milestone, and even the Minister of Highways, I say to them tonight that at that public meeting at Balgonie, they didn't have the courage to attend that meeting. And shame on them. Shame on them, because there was a lot of people very angry that night, Mr. Speaker. They wanted to talk to this member. They wanted to talk to this member and he was nowhere to be seen. And instead, Mr. Speaker, we had 250-300 people waiting in the room, wanting answers.

And what did Balgonie want? They wanted representation, Mr. Speaker. They wanted one simple thing that was promised to them in 2016, and that is a right-in and right-out access to their community. And this MLA, this MLA could not deliver for the people of Balgonie. And I say, shame on him for doing that disservice to the great people of Balgonie, because they needed his support and they never got it, and he turned his back on them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Balgonie is not going to go away. We're going to stand up in our place every day and we're going to remind that member in the Saskatchewan Party government of their disservice to the community of Balgonie. So as the traffic is flying by Balgonie now, because they can't access this community, because why? Because a foreign company said so. The Minister of Highways is not standing up for the people of Saskatchewan. He's letting the company from France dictate whether Balgonie can access this main road or not. This government's not in charge, Mr. Speaker. They're not in charge at all. It's a company from France that is making the decisions, and all we have is ministers and MLAs that are no-shows at very critical meetings. And the people of Balgonie deserve to have them there, and they didn't show. And they didn't show.

So for a member that introduced lean, for a member that

orchestrated a letter saying he's a great minister, from a member that as minister hired somebody who worked for SaskPower only to simply . . . [inaudible] . . . that individual who later became an MLA and our minister of Finance . . . And, Mr. Speaker, the pay at the SaskPower office was a phenomenal six-figure amount. But, Mr. Speaker, he forgets all that. He forgets all that. And I say to him today that the people of Saskatchewan will not forget, and the people of Balgonie will not forget the fact that they have deserted them, and he has turned their back on them, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why a Throne Speech is so important to respect the people that sent you here. And I can tell them tonight that the people of Balgonie, they had promised the people of Balgonie as late as the fall of 2016, to the mayor of Balgonie, that they would have the right-in and right-out into that community. And, Mr. Speaker, they betrayed the confidence that the mayor said that the people of Highways promised them that right-in and right-out.

You talk to the mayor. You talk to the mayor. Highways promised them. Highways promised them. And call the mayor and you talk to him, and he's the one that indicated that at that Balgonie meeting, he was promised in 2016, 2016 that you'd have a right-in, a right-out access. And this MLA and this government couldn't deliver. You couldn't deliver, and you turned your back on them. And you didn't even have the decency to show up at that meeting. So don't be giving us advice on how to run the province, Mr. Speaker, when you have failed in your own backyard.

Now, Mr. Speaker, so you throw in the lean, you throw in hiring their friends at a great six-figure price, you get . . . orchestrated a letter, you're not supporting at Balgonie in a very important issue. And instead what he did, Mr. Speaker, what he did is you told the people, the business people in Balgonie, oh okay, we cut off the access to your community with all this traffic, but we'll tell you what. We'll let you rent some signs along the road and we'll give you a special deal for those signs. We'll give you a great deal on the rates for those signs so people know your business is there and they can drive down the road and turn and follow . . . There's what the local people call the snake. So you can go back, back into Balgonie and visit the community of Balgonie.

Well Balgonie said, Mr. Speaker, that that member and the Minister of Highways didn't have the courage to come to that public meeting. And we went and we heard the anger and we heard . . . The point is that they were betrayed, and they're very angry, and they're not going to go away.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Highways is starting to chirp from his seat. This is the same minister the member was talking about, about the challenges with the pipeline. The Minister of Highways when he served as SARM president, they had the greatest agricultural transportation problem in the history of Saskatchewan, the transportation crisis, Mr. Speaker, under Stephen Harper and under our current Premier.

And what did the member from SARM do, the president of SARM? He sat on his hands. He didn't say a word, Mr. Speaker. That member didn't say a word because his political masters told him, you be quiet. Don't say a word because you'll

make us look bad and you'll make our federal cousins look bad. Even though producers were facing the largest agricultural transportation crisis, the president of SARM at the time, sat on his hands and the Premier patted his forehead and said, you don't say a word. Just sit there and be a good boy. And he followed those instructions to a T.

And once again, as is par for the course, Mr. Speaker, when Balgonie wanted his attendance to defend Balgonie's right, where was the minister? I don't know, visiting with someone more important I guess. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, but I know one thing. When we went, when we went, there was no Minister of Highways and there was no MLA there. And the people were quite angry, and they're not going to go away.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was amused, I was amused by the member from Indian Head-Milestone when he said, oh it's going to be the same speech, is what he indicated as well. But hold it, I've got some new information. I've got some new information, information that they hid for a number of months, Mr. Speaker. And that's why the word "courage" doesn't come to mind before the last election when I think about the Saskatchewan Party.

I'll give them an update. Let's see. The debt is projected to be 23 billion by 2020. Well that's new information we didn't know before, Mr. Speaker, because it was all hidden. Oh, also the sale of the Crowns; well nobody knew about that, Mr. Speaker. So, so far STC has been shut down. Liquor stores have been sold off, and Investment Saskatchewan's gone, and so is Information Services Corporation, compliments of that member. Well the people of Saskatchewan didn't know that before the last election, Mr. Speaker.

Oh, how about the GTH land sales? How about the GTH land scandals? Well the people of Saskatchewan didn't know that. That's a new development, Mr. Speaker. And the member from Indian Head-Milestone doesn't talk about the cuts to people and services, Mr. Speaker. That's new. Or how about Bill 40? That was a new plan they had to sell off the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. Or better yet, how about this? The billion dollars in tax increase from those tax-and-spend conservatives over there, Mr. Speaker — a billion dollars. Well the people of Saskatchewan didn't know that before.

How about the power bills going up, Mr. Speaker? The people of Saskatchewan didn't know that before the last election. How about, Mr. Speaker, the high unemployment rates that are particularly being suffered by women in our province at this stage, Mr. Speaker? The people of Saskatchewan didn't know that, Mr. Speaker.

Let's talk about the P3 deals, Mr. Speaker, where we're sending millions of dollars out of province, millions of dollars out of province this year. The last couple years, Mr. Speaker, I think we're sending out \$500 million, \$500 million this year alone, which accounts to about 70 per cent of the Highways budget, Mr. Speaker. It's going to where? Not going to Coronach. Not going to Southey. Not going to Indian Head-Milestone. Not going to northern Saskatchewan. It's going to France. It's going to France. And what does the Minister of Highways do? He doesn't show up for meetings and he sits on his hands again, Mr. Speaker.

Now let's talk about the carbon capture tax, Mr. Speaker, where they put in this carbon sequestration plan and now everybody in the province are paying much more in taxes, Mr. Speaker, through their power bill.

Now let's also talk about the biggest disturbance, I think, to the agricultural sector, Mr. Speaker, is a good, solid, water management plan. You look at Quill Lakes. There's a lot of problems in Quill Lakes. You know why, Mr. Speaker? Because this Saskatchewan Party refused to recognize that we have a water management crisis like you had an agricultural transportation crisis. You just don't figure it out. You just don't get it.

So when a member talks about the importance of pipelines and oil and gas, absolutely they're important to our economy. They're vital to our economy. But so is fair taxation. So is fair taxation. Being \$23 billion in the hole, that's not good for our economy, Mr. Speaker. And a billion dollars in an increase in taxes, is that good for our economy?

Well, Mr. Speaker, these are the people that the people of Saskatchewan trusted, and that trust is dropping steady each and every day, Mr. Speaker. And this is the point that I think is also quite clear to the people of Saskatchewan, that they needed to know what was going on with their province. And the entire Sask Party caucus, including that member from Indian Head-Milestone and the member from Saskatoon University or the member from Watrous, they all knew. They all knew what was going on. And like the Minister of Highways, they sat on their hands and they're very quiet. And the ones that knew but didn't say anything, probably because they didn't know, Mr. Speaker. They were kept out of the loop.

But there is a lot of things that were hidden from the people of Saskatchewan prior to the last election. And as soon as some of that information came available, you see the by-elections in Saskatoon where people turned around and said, well enough of that.

And I predict, Mr. Speaker, that come 2020, they're going to say enough of that for the Saskatchewan Party because of antics like this and the fact that they didn't have the courage to show up in some key communities like Balgonie.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that people are starting to see what the Saskatchewan Party is made of. They had been peeling this onion off bit by bit, layer by layer, to try and get to the core. Now what happens when you begin to peel off that protective cover of an onion? Well it begins to wilt. And some of those guys decided to head out of Dodge, Mr. Speaker. Some went on their own. Others were kind of forced out. And I don't think we've seen the last of that, Mr. Speaker.

This is a tired, old government that ran out of gas. It ran out of energy. It ran out of leadership. And more important, Mr. Speaker, they ran out of cash. They ran out of cash. And this is the reason why we're \$23 billion . . . And the Minister of Finance is chirping from her seat. Perhaps the Minister of Finance, perhaps the Minister of Finance, the current one, wouldn't be the Minister of Finance had they had confidence in the other minister of Finance that replaced another minister of Finance. And I don't know. Between the last two or three years

I think we've had five Finance ministers, Mr. Speaker.

[22:00]

Like obviously the Saskatchewan Party didn't have confidence, didn't have confidence in the previous Finance minister because every single one of them showed non-confidence in him. They showed non-confidence in his budget and they kept on trying to change all kinds of aspects of the budget. And yet this is the reason why, this is the reason why they cannot govern anymore because they don't have the discipline and the teammanship to make things happen on a solid basis for years and days to come, Mr. Speaker. We have seen evidence of that. And that's why on this side of the Assembly we say to them, you're a tired, old government and you have got to go. You have got to go.

Mr. Speaker, the biggest thing that, if you look at some of the points that are being raised, some of the points that are being raised, and particularly the minister of SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] talks about the oil and gas sector. On this side of the Assembly there's no question that oil and gas and the development of oil and gas are vitally important to our economy. The NDP understand that fully, Mr. Speaker, and that's one of the reasons, one of the reasons why the royalty structure we put in place prior to 2007, the Saskatchewan Party won't touch it. They will not touch it because that is what's bringing investment into Saskatchewan because the NDP showed them how to attract investment, Mr. Speaker.

And this is the reason why, when their outgoing Premier says we're going to follow the direction of Premier Calvert's lead, and that'll attract investment, Mr. Speaker. So this is the point I would raise, is that the party across will forever be followers. They will be forever followers and all they're going to do is revisit history, try and rewrite history to their perspective.

And I think the people of Saskatchewan are getting tired of this government, that when they get down in the dumps, about the only thing that brings them up is when they start badmouthing the NDP, Mr. Speaker. All of a sudden they seem to pick up the spirit. They seem to liven up the moment comes down to calling down the NDP.

The people of Saskatchewan want a mature, forward-looking government. They want the government to come along with ideas. What they don't want to see happen is that tired, same approach as evidenced by the member from Cannington a couple of nights ago. It's the same old, same old, same old argument, Mr. Speaker. What is wrong? What is wrong, Mr. Speaker?

We're becoming a world leader in water management where we have proper distribution, where we provide science-based decision making around the conservation of water, where we look at storage, Mr. Speaker, so we don't have the problems of drought in one area and too much water in another area. Can we, as a province, figure that out, Mr. Speaker? Can the green energy opportunity, developing green energy, can it complement our robust oil and gas sector? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. We can make those balances. Can we diversify the agricultural economy by adding energy development, carbon sink banks, and a transportation strategy? And a good example

of that is to make sure the Port of Churchill stays active and a place to which our landlocked province and the producers can deliver their grain, Mr. Speaker.

And that's one of the things that I think is also important, Mr. Speaker, is our very poorly managed transportation system in agriculture will cost this community and this province jobs. And the member, the former member, the president of SARM who is now the Minister of Highways, when that crisis hit, he sat on his hands. And I will never forget that, Mr. Speaker. He sat on his hands because he was told by the governing Conservatives in Ottawa and the governing Saskatchewan Party, you don't say a word because you'll make us feel bad.

And I often wonder, Mr. Speaker, what if we would have had an NDP government provincially? What would have happened then? Well, Mr. Speaker, there would have been a lot of talk coming from him. But because of this, their politically expedient message given to him, that he simply sat back, sat on his hands, and didn't say a peep to help producers. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, when he gets up and says things about rural Saskatchewan, we on this side of the House simply smile and say, you had your opportunity. You didn't deliver. You had your opportunity and you didn't deliver, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the members, the member from Saskatoon University and several other members, as they stood up here and they professed their great, visionary plan called Bill 40 . . . They all stood up. They all stood up, Mr. Speaker. They all stood up and they were talking about Bill 40. I remember this. Speeches by all of them. They were talking about Bill 40. A year later, oh, Bill 40 is not good now because we've got to change that. But what was all that speech, what were all those speeches about? For the messages you were told, like the current Minister of Highways, to follow the script, don't deviate, don't think independently, and don't ever stray from your message box. That's what you were told, and you followed your instructions to a T. A year later say, well we're going to make that 360-degree turn here.

So don't blink. Don't blink. Don't blink. Don't say anything. Just continue following your script. Continue following your script. And, Mr. Speaker, they have continued following their script. So the point is, were you guys committed to Bill 40 or were you not? Answer the question. The member from Wood River, were you committed to Bill 40 a year ago, and now you're not? No answer again, Mr. Speaker. Sitting on his hands.

So the question I would ask all of them, all of the things that you hid from the people of Saskatchewan, and I can list them off again if they want, all the things they hid from the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, was it worth it to achieve their third term? At the end of the day, this province is laden down with debt. This province has . . . They have squandered the future through P3 deals. They have spent \$2 billion on a Regina bypass that can't even accommodate combines, Mr. Speaker. It can't even accommodate agricultural machines, Mr. Speaker. And the list goes on, all the mistakes that they have made.

And I tell the people of Saskatchewan this: this Saskatchewan Party government is running out of gas. They're running out of ideas. They refuse to go back to their communities and meet the people. And most important of all, they're running out of cash.

And once that begins to happen, you're going to see them scurrying away, scurrying away to the private sector after they put this province in debt. And I say, shame on them because the people of Saskatchewan are going to pay for years and years and years and years. And does that deter and hurt the economy of Saskatchewan? You're darn right it hurts the economy of Saskatchewan.

Does a poorly planned transportation system for agricultural products hurt the province of Saskatchewan's economy? You're darn right it hurts the province of Saskatchewan. So I don't need no lessons from any one of you, how important oil and gas or agriculture or mining is to the province. We know all these sectors are important. But you have been doing a great disservice, a great disservice to not only the producers but to the people of Saskatchewan right across the board. And I say, shame on you. I say, shame on you.

And we haven't seen yet, Mr. Speaker, the true debt left behind this government. So as they haul their tired, old government out of power, Mr. Speaker, we are prepared. If given the duty by the people of Saskatchewan to clean up another Tory mess, we will clean up another Tory mess.

And we're telling the people of Saskatchewan, it's time. It's time to tell them that their time is done and we need a fresh, new start, Mr. Speaker. We need a fresh, new team, and we certainly need a fresh, new leader. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to get into details as to what I think, what I think about their current leadership. And we're going to have our fun branding every one of their current leadership candidates, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll point this out. No matter who the leader is on this side, Mr. Speaker, they all voted for those budgets. They all voted to sell off STC. They all voted for Bill 40. They all voted to not do certain things in certain sectors, Mr. Speaker. They all stood in their place, one by one, and they voted. So no matter who the next leader is, they are the Saskatchewan . . . This is their debt; this is their problem; and this is their shortcomings.

So no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker. We know it on this side. We know it on this side that that's a tired, old government. They're fresh out of ideas and, Mr. Speaker, it's time for them to go. We need new energy, new vision, new plan, and a new team.

Before I take my place, Mr. Speaker, I say to them, I say to them that the people of Saskatchewan are disappointed in what you have done. You know it, and we know it. And I say, shame on you guys. You continue following your lines and hope that they forgive you. But I think that there's too many hurt feelings out there, and there's too much anger, too much anger.

So you continue taking your potshots at the NDP, make your little statements here and there, but sooner or later the strength of governing and the responsibility of governing must be realized by yourselves. And if you don't do it, we're in deeper, we're in deeper trouble than I first thought, Mr. Speaker. And I sense we're going down that direction. And most members are smiling and giggling away over there. And these are serious challenges for the people of the province of Saskatchewan, and I tell all the people throughout Saskatchewanland that there is a

better option, that there is a better plan, and that there is a better future, Mr. Speaker.

Before I take my place, before I take my place I want to recognize two impressive individuals that have worked in this building for a long time, Mr. Speaker. And I want to take a few minutes just to recognize two great guys that work in the video and audio booth here in the Assembly, and it's Kerry Bond and Ihor Sywanyk. Now Ihor and Kerry have been working in this building and in the control booth here for the audio-visual service of this Assembly for 35 years. So Kerry told me he started when he was 10 and Ihor started when he was 11.

So these guys have been working for 35 years, and I want to take a moment to recognize that kind of dedication to not only to the Assembly but to politicians such as myself, and to the people of Saskatchewan. I think it's a remarkable achievement. They are professional, dedicated staff that do wondrous things, not just only in the Assembly but as they take their skill set to produce or to cover live events throughout the province. You can see the quality and the professionalism that they have displayed, and these are remarkable people.

And, Mr. Speaker, I noticed that they also are able to adjust cameras, so I've asked them many times, if you can put the wrinkle-free camera on my picture, I would very much appreciate it. And these guys are such great guys, they've done it a few times to make some of us look younger.

But I'll close on this point, Mr. Speaker, I'll close on this point. Any point and any challenge and any debate from any members of the Saskatchewan Party on the future of Saskatchewan, I will stand in my place and tell you, you can't just lambaste the NDP as the only option for governing. You must come up with some solid ideas, solid solutions, and a visionary plan for the people of Saskatchewan. And unless and until you do, then you'll be continuing to decline in your support because we're going to work very hard as a party to reclaim the opportunity to govern. And, Mr. Speaker, that Throne Speech just simply indicates that there's no plan, no new ideas, and that this government is in deficit in many more ways than one.

So I'll stand in my place to oppose the Throne Speech, and I will definitely be supporting the amendment.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thought two weeks ago it was windy. You know, I've been running through my mind when I'm listening to the member talk about economics. I'm thinking we have the member from Athabasca telling us one thing, and we have moonys giving us a AAA rating, and I've got to decide which one I should believe. I would suggest moonys.

But I'm very pleased to stand today and enter the Throne Speech debate. I want to talk today about quality of life for Saskatchewan people. I think that's what we talk about when we're, you know, when we hear how was your summer? That's what we think about, is the quality of life.

Before I do that, I'd like to do some of the traditional thank yous, some that we don't get an opportunity to do. There's

hardly enough words to describe the thankfulness I have for the people, the great people of the Melfort constituency. It's a constituency that is the very heartbeat of our province. From Leroy to Quill Lake, James Smith to Ratner, these people gave me an opportunity to represent them in this grand old building. They made me feel welcome during my many visits to their communities, and they've become friends. I always have been shown respect when I go into those communities, and I hope that I have shown them the same respect.

As any MLA will tell you, there are a few necessary requirements of this occupation. One is probably thick skin. Another one is a very supportive spouse, and I thank my beautiful wife, April. And you must have a great staff back at the office, and for that, my gratitude goes to Peggy Gordon and Debbie Perkins.

[22:15]

Now the Melfort constituency is blessed with some of the finest farm land in Saskatchewan, and therefore by extension some of the finest farm land in the world. And there are no better stewards of that farm land than the farmers of the Melfort constituency, and I congratulate them wholeheartedly on another successful harvest.

And manufacturing is huge in my constituency. And I want to just run through a list of names, and I want people to listen to the list of names. We have Bourgault Industries, and we have Bourgault Tillage Tools. We have DryAir. We have Doepker Industries. We have Schulte Industries; Michel's Industries; FPS, Failure Prevention Services. We have M&K Welding. We have Dwayne Enterprises. And there's many others.

But when you think about those names, that's world class that we've got. But every one of those companies started right here in Saskatchewan. In Bourgault's case, Bourgault Industries' case, it started with Frank Bourgault and moved down to his sons, now Gerry Bourgault. It started in a workshop out back and has grown to over 900 people worldwide. That's the way we do things in Saskatchewan when we're given the opportunity to do that.

And how was my summer? My summer was a great summer, and thanks for asking. I had a great summer. I visited my daughter Kelli, and her husband, Howard, and I attended the graduation of two of my grandchildren in the same ceremony. I also visited with two other grandchildren when I was there, Autumn and Tempestt. Got to visit one of the kids we lost to Alberta a few years ago, when we had the former government here, my son Brenden and his wife, Carly, in Edmonton. Spending time with my stepdaughter and her husband, Brandi and Zach, and their two really neat kids. And then my other stepson Riley and his spouse, Felisha, had three children, and they decided to have one more, and the twins were born last month. Best-laid plans.

That's probably more than you wanted to know, but that's what summer's about. Summer's about friends and families and just quality of life.

And we want to do things like keeping our families close. And that's something that I think most of us have a resentment for

from 11 years ago — and beyond for 16 years before that — is that we lost our kids. Our children, and therefore our grandchildren, and people close to us were leaving this province, and most of us had no idea why because we understood that we have a great work ethic. We have, I just listed some of the inventors, the people who moved this province along. And yet we were losing our children.

And that's why it's important where we support the graduate retention program that nearly 70,000 students have taken advantage of, the Saskatchewan Advantage program of \$500 a year for up to four years or \$2,000. You know, that's keeping our kids here. That's what we need. That's how we grow the province and that's quality of life for people in this province.

But they have to have jobs. And over the past decade and continuing with the innovations in this Throne Speech we have created the second-best job creation record in the country: 64,000 new jobs in this province. Now we look at our neighbours and they can brag, because this year they created 48,000 new jobs in Alberta under an NDP government; 41,800 of them were hired by the government themselves. Who pays for that? The other 6,200? Who pays for that? And what happens to your economy? I know who pays for it, a \$10.3 billion deficit pays for it.

We encourage business in this province. We have the most competitive business tax in Canada now and we have just raised the threshold from 5 to \$600,000. That's compared to the government before that thought that they could grow this province because they would hire people. It doesn't work that way.

We have a future for the community.

Well, just before we leave jobs, let's talk about wages. You know, we hear that again last weekend, the \$15 minimum wage. When we had a higher minimum wage, we had either the lowest or the second-lowest, depending on the month, average wage in Canada. Yet we had the highest minimum wage. Now we have a modest minimum wage and we have the second-highest average wage in Canada. Because we can grow a business here. You can survive through these tough years and grow on.

Our 10-year wages, the average has gone up 36 per cent in Saskatchewan, 36 per cent. That's more than 20 points higher than the average in Canada. That's growing. That's important to you, quality of life, when you have a job and you're getting paid for it.

And I want to talk about the future of our communities. Because our communities 20 years ago, well 10 years ago, were suffering. Remember the old saying — and I hate this line, that line — will the last one out please turn off the lights. That was the concept of the former government to do that. And they talk about revisionist history, but somewhere, somehow, something, prove us wrong on this. Pull a number that shows that you were aggressive and progressive in building this province, because they're not there. There's no numbers there.

And I remember, I remember when I ran for mayor of my community, mayor of Melfort. They talked about, people should come to Melfort — and this was in 2006, right at the end

of the former government — people should come to Melfort because it's cheap to live in and because it's a good place to live. And I got up at the end of that debate and I said, you know, I'm tired of hearing that. I'm tired of hearing that it's cheap to live here. The reason it's cheap to live here is because there's not a lineup of people who want to do it. They don't want to buy your house because they're not coming.

What we have to do is create an environment, which has happened, that makes people want to come to our province. A hundred and sixty-four thousand people in the last decade wanted to come to our province. Now people are lining up to buy property in Saskatchewan. Yes, the values are high. How is that wrong?

Security. We have security. We have an issue with rural security in Saskatchewan, and it's one that is being addressed in this Throne Speech where we're introducing a protection and response team, a PRT, of 120 police officers, 49 commercial vehicle enforcement officers — and they all have expanded powers — and 98 conservation officers to get the response time down in rural Saskatchewan. So when that person makes a call, there's somebody on the way and there's somebody that will be there so they can sleep easier that night. That's quality of life. That's quality of life.

And then we talk about health and we . . . continuing to build on the 750 doctors. Are we done yet? No we're not. We're adding more doctors. We've added 3,400 new nurses of all designations. We have the new Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, and the new Moose Jaw hospital. They're investments in the future of this province.

And I want to talk, just for a minute, about camping. I went camping this summer. It was probably not overly successful because I forgot the wind flap on the tent, but it was somewhat successful. But that's quality of life. You know, I think back to when my daughter was 13 years old and she wasn't a huge fan of camping and so she says to me, Dad, why do you work so hard all year long just so you can live poor for two weeks? And you know, I thought, she's missing the point of camping. And I laugh about that every time I hear that they're back from camping for the weekend.

But you know, I talked earlier about having a thick skin, and I think most of us had to have that thick skin this spring because we had an austerity budget. We made some tax increases. And the member from Athabasca talked about the tax increases, and in fact the tax increases — and we wanted to avoid these — but the tax increases were almost enough to bring us back to the level of 2007 under those people. Almost that much.

But I want to talk about STC because that's a very important part of the thing and that's what people are talking about. So you know, we have in . . . I believe it was '76, but a long time ago we had a high of 885,000 people ride STC. This year we would've had under 200,000 people, less than 23 per cent of that.

And I want to talk about the need, about that cut, where we had 4,500 people that we supported in medical trips from the North to come into medical appointments in Regina, Saskatoon,

Prince Albert — 4,500. Out of those, 44, 44 people took the bus. Ninety-nine per cent of the people found some other way to get to their medical appointment — chose, chose some other way to get to their medical appointment and didn't go on STC.

And the figure I like to think about is \$46,575 a day. That was the estimated loss of STC. So let's work with that number for a second. One RN, one registered nurse, every two days would have to go. Two teachers every three days would have to go. Three continuing care aids every two days would have to go.

Now as far back as 1996, the NDP were talked about stopping the bleeding on STC and closing it. And what did they do? They fired 400 teachers. They fired 475 nurses. They fired 173 doctors, and they closed 176 schools, 52 hospitals, and that was their choice, not ours. We made our choice. We're keeping those doctors. We're keeping those nurses. In fact we're increasing those. And they stand and talk about . . .

And I do want to talk briefly about our Premier, that to me growing is about attitude. When you're in business, when you're in a club, when you're doing anything, it's about attitude. I look at my friend from Yorkton, that it's about attitude, that, you know, making us believe, letting us loose, that we could do what we have done in the last 10 years. And to that I credit the Premier very much. I think that he has allowed Saskatchewan to break loose, to release itself, and to grow.

You know, yes it's not all government policy. It is definitely not. It's the people of Saskatchewan being told not that Saskatchewan will never grow, but being told we will grow. We'll grow 100,000 people.

And I want to mention that I'm supporting the motion, this Throne Speech, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It now being 10:30, this Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]

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