



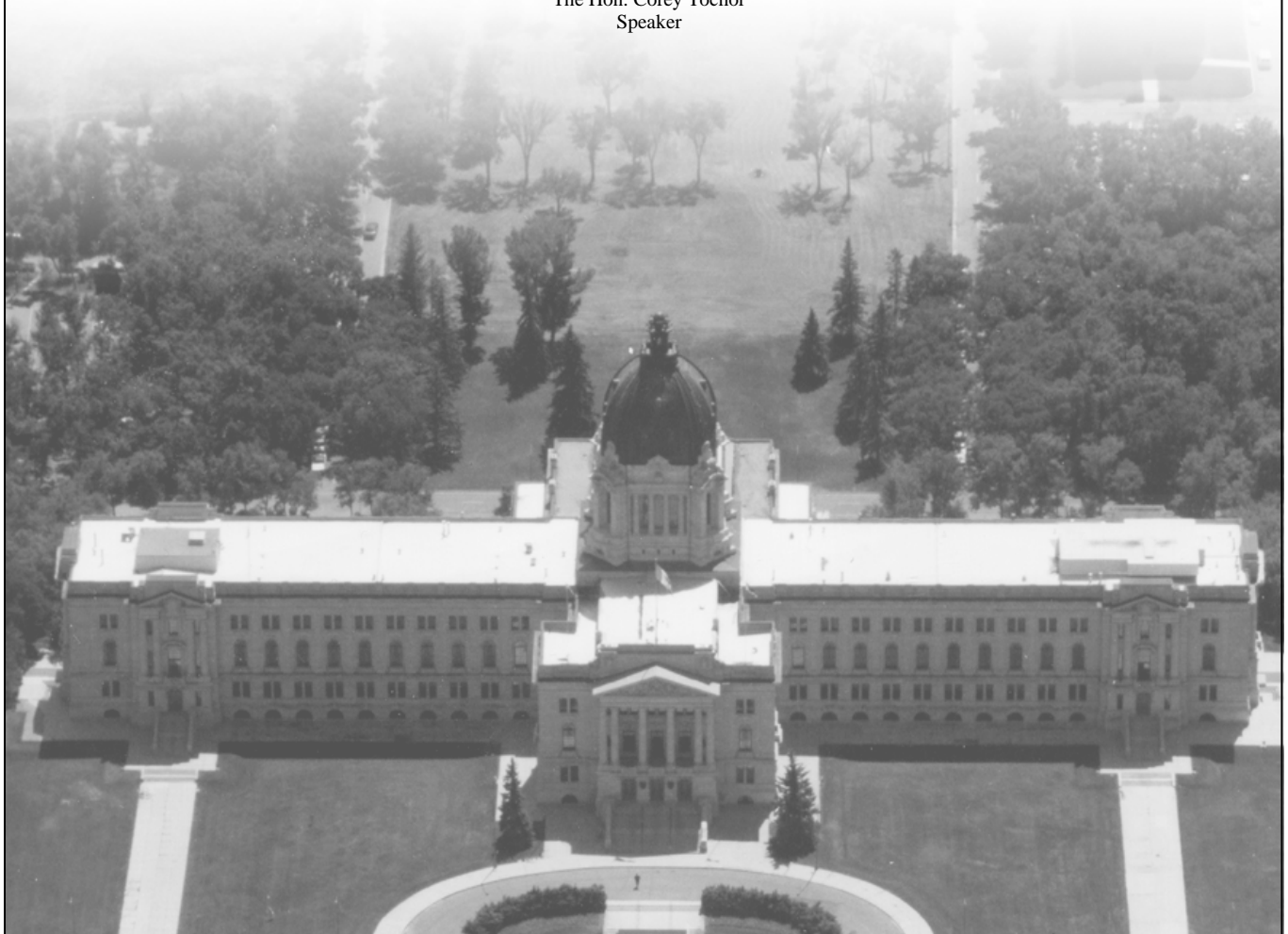
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 28th Legislature

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

Beaudry-Mellor , Tina — Regina University (SP)	McCall , Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)
Beck , Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	McMorris , Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
Belanger , Buckley — Athabasca (NDP)	Meili , Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Bonk , Hon. Steven — Moosomin (SP)	Merriman , Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)
Bradshaw , Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)	Michelson , Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP)
Brkich , Hon. Greg — Arm River (SP)	Moe , Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
Buckingham , David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)	Morgan , Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
Carr , Lori — Estevan (SP)	Mowat , Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
Chartier , Danielle — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)	Nerlien , Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
Cheveldayoff , Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)	Olauson , Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)
Cox , Hon. Herb — The Battlefords (SP)	Ottenbreit , Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)
D'Autremont , Dan — Cannington (SP)	Phillips , Kevin — Melfort (SP)
Dennis , Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)	Rancourt , Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)
Docherty , Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)	Reiter , Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
Doherty , Kevin — Regina Northeast (SP)	Ross , Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
Doke , Hon. Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	Sarauer , Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Duncan , Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)	Sproule , Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
Eyre , Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)	Steele , Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Fiaz , Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)	Steinley , Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
Forbes , David — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)	Stewart , Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
Hargrave , Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	Tell , Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
Harpauer , Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	Tochor , Hon. Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)
Harrison , Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	Vermette , Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
Hart , Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	Wall , Hon. Brad — Swift Current (SP)
Heppner , Hon. Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)	Weekes , Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Kaeding , Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	Wilson , Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
Kirsch , Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Wotherspoon , Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Lambert , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Wyant , Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Lawrence , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	Young , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Makowsky , Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)	
Marit , Hon. David — Wood River (SP)	Vacant — Kindersley

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Gregory A. Putz
Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.
Principal Clerk — Iris Lang
Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyak
Sergeant-at-Arms — Terry Quinn

Hansard on the Internet
Hansard and other documents of the
Legislative Assembly are available
within hours after each sitting.
<http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/legislative-business/legislative-calendar>

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to stand in my place today to present a petition as it pertains to the town of Balgonie, Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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

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

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed these many, many pages of this particular petition are asking for action on this particular issue, and they have signed from many parts of the province, in Fort Qu'Appelle, in Balgonie. And I so present.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we all know how devastating a carbon tax would be on our economy and we know the work that our agricultural producers have done as well as the sequestration in Estevan to counteract carbon. And I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing the carbon tax on our province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is presented by citizens of Moose Jaw, Regina, and White City. I so do present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising to present a petition to end the unfair Sask Party tax hikes for Saskatchewan families and businesses. The people who have

signed this petition want to bring to our attention the following: the Sask Party has hiked taxes on Saskatchewan families and businesses by \$1 billion per year. At the same time, the Sask Party has handed over 100 million in tax breaks to corporations and the wealthy and well connected.

The Sask Party increased the PST [provincial sales tax] to 6 per cent and applied it to everything, from groceries and children's clothes to a case of beer and even insurance premiums. Because of the Sask Party's PST increase, Saskatchewan has become the only province in the country where people are charged PST on life and health insurance premiums.

And the Sask Party's new tax on crop insurance is a devastating hit on producers. Many small and medium-sized businesses, including those in the restaurant, tourism, construction industries, will be hit hard by the Sask Party tax hikes, and these business will be forced to pass the rising costs on to their customers. And hurting job-creating businesses and producers will only cause more damage to the economy and do nothing to help the 40,000 Saskatchewan people looking for work.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to immediately stop their unfair tax hikes on Saskatchewan families and businesses.

And, Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed this petition here today are from the fair city of Regina. I so submit.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the Sask Party government to stop the cuts to our kids' classrooms. The people signing this petition want to bring to our attention the following: that the Sask Party government has cut at least \$674 in government funding for every student across Saskatchewan; and the Sask Party government has hiked education taxes by \$67 million but cut total government funding for education by \$121 million; and even though the Sask Party government is making us all pay more, that our kids are actually getting less.

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Birch Hills and Hagen. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to restore funding to post-secondary

institutions. These citizens from Regina and Saskatoon wish to bring to your attention that the Sask Party is making students and their families pay for Sask Party financial mismanagement; that Saskatchewan students already pay the highest tuition rates in Canada; that this budget cut 36.8 million from post-secondary education; that this budget cut 6.4 million from technical institutions; that funding for the Saskatchewan Student Aid Fund and scholarships have been cut by 8.2 million; and that the Sask Party has broken a 2016 election promise by cancelling their first home plan.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately restore funding to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and stop the damaging cuts to our students.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens from Saskatoon and Regina. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for the reopening of the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre. In addition to the impact on jobs and reconciliation, Mr. Speaker, and having correctional facilities closer to northern residents, this particular closure came as a shock to the residents of Buffalo Narrows and the west side of the North, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by citizens from the good city of Buffalo Narrows. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Women's History Month

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. October celebrates Women's History Month in Saskatchewan. One hundred and one years ago, women won both the right to vote and to run for public office here in Saskatchewan. In honour of that landmark achievement, I would like to bring attention to Sarah Katherine Ramsland, the first woman elected to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

Mrs. Ramsland was first elected in 1918 for the constituency of Pelly, where she served until 1925. She was a capable representative and she determinedly championed the causes of her constituents. Once she camped outside a minister's office until the minister relented and signed an order to fix an infrastructure problem her constituents were having difficulty with.

Mr. Speaker, on her final day in the House, Mrs. Ramsland

introduced a resolution to amend divorce laws to create equal rights for women and men. To her final elected hour, she was a champion for the cause of equality. After her retirement from elected service, Mrs. Ramsland continued to serve this province as a librarian and held several executive positions in various women's organizations.

I call on all members to help me recognize Mrs. Ramsland and the achievements of all Saskatchewan women this Women's History Month. Thank you.

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

Naturalist Wins Award for Literary Excellence

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Trevor Herriot is a household name for people in my neighbourhood and in communities across this province. As a devoted prairie naturalist, writer, and regular guest on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio, he provides ample opportunity to learn from his wealth of knowledge that he's so passionate about sharing.

I rise today to congratulate Trevor on his most recent and well-deserved recognition as the recipient of the Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Award for Literary Excellence. This literary award recognizes Saskatchewan writers who have shaped writing in Saskatchewan through a substantial body of literary work. Anyone who has the pleasure of knowing Trevor would agree he embodies the Saskatchewan spirit. And those who haven't had the opportunity will get a chance to see him tomorrow, as he gives a reading in the Legislative Library for Sask Book Awards.

The jury citation from the award states:

With wisdom and grace, with a head for facts but a poet's heart, with an attention to scientific detail yet a willingness to soar into the transcendental, with a voice that is personal but has a universal resonance, Herriot tells us that natural history — those birds, that river — is our history, that we cannot escape it, nor should we [try].

Mr. Speaker, I call on all members to join me in congratulating Trevor for his efforts to make Saskatchewan a better place, and for the honour of receiving this important literary award.

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

Joint-Use School Opens in Regina

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to stand today to say that the new joint-use school in my constituency of Regina Pasqua has opened for this school year. École Harbour Landing, Regina Public Schools; and École St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Regina Catholic are two new schools in Harbour Landing.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that this P3 [public-private partnership] build finished on time and on budget. The P3 model enabled our government to build more schools at the same time, which would not have been possible

through the traditional approach. This build was made possible through the hard work and collaboration that included input from students, teachers, parents, school divisions, and community members.

The school is full of light, with presentation stairs as well as libraries and classrooms without walls. Both École Harbour Landing and St. Kateri Tekakwitha offer dual-tracking language programming, one of the only handful of joint-use schools across the province to do so. For our government, these new schools are about making students, staff, and education our top priority and meeting the demands of the growth in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Halloween Haunts

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, today is my favourite holiday, Halloween. Tonight kids will be going door to door and getting all kinds of goodies from friends and neighbours. But, Mr. Speaker, what kinds of surprises would our kids find if they knocked on the door of a Sask Party minister?

Well the Education minister's appreciation for witchcraft reasoning is sure to give kids quite the scare. The former minister of Social Services seemed to think it's okay to leave kids in hotels, so her house is likely not worth stopping at. The best treat from the Finance minister, though, would be if she removed the PST they added to kids' costumes and their everyday clothes.

Mr. Speaker, Halloween only haunts us once a year, but the Sask Party scandals, cuts, tax hikes, and sell-offs haunt Saskatchewan people every day. At least, that's until we win government in 2020.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Happy Halloween.

[13:45]

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

4-H Member Makes Donation to Children's Hospital

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm honoured to stand and highlight a very special and inspiring constituent of mine, 11-year-old Porter Wolkowski. Porter is a member of the Good Spirit 4-H Club. This past summer Porter sold his 4-H steer to Logan Stevens Equipment in Yorkton at the 4-H regional show and sale.

Porter has learned many valuable lessons from 4-H club and stays true to the pledge, "My club, my community, my country." He cares deeply for his community and decided to donate a portion of his sale to a cause that means very much to him. Mr. Speaker, Porter donated \$500 of his sale to the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation. His parents said that he's always got such a big heart, and I am inspired by the kind actions of Porter.

Mr. Speaker, Porter has two cousins, unfortunately needed extra

care and attention medically, which is why he chose to donate to this foundation. Porter's cousin Preston Graham has been making trips back and forth between Invermay and Edmonton to seek medical attention to the children's hospital. He has another cousin, Mikayla Babichuk, who is a diabetic for eight years and is looking forward to medical services and support closer to her home so she can receive the best health care and attention possible.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking Porter Wolkowski for his generous donation to the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

HMCS *Queen* Charity Mess Dinner

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 21st I had the honour of attending the HMCS [Her Majesty's Canadian Ship] *Queen* Charity Mess Dinner. The guest of honour for the evening was Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, and the event raised around \$4,000 for the 15 Wing Family Resource Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the evening was filled with great food, entertainment, naval trivia, and music provided by the HMCS *Chippawa* naval band. And the event was attended by several important Saskatchewan military officers including the 15 Wing CO [commanding officer] Dennis O'Reilly, honorary colonels Jorstad, Hutchinson, and the CO of the Royal Regina Rifles, Lieutenant Colonel Grub. And of course the commanding officer of HMCS *Queen*, Lieutenant Commander Nichols. It was also attended by the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] cadets. It is great to see so much support for this event from all branches of our services.

Mr. Speaker, military family resource centres are located on Canadian Armed Forces bases all across Canada. They provide services for serving members who are both here in Saskatchewan and deployed throughout the world. These centres are not-for-profit organizations and depend on fundraisers such as the mess dinner.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the HMCS *Queen* on a successful event and thank the 15 Wing Family Resource Centre for all the great work that they do. Thank you.

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

Girls' Anti-Bullying and Self-Esteem Workshop

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on October the 22nd, the Minister of Central Services and I had the privilege of hosting the girls' anti-bullying and self-esteem workshop again here in Regina. Girls ages 9 to 13 were invited, free of charge, to participate in the workshop with their moms or their mentors.

Mr. Speaker, we were very fortunate to have a packed house again this year of 90 girls who participated in this workshop. Brie Ellard-Jedlic and Coach Kaylan from Girls in the Game gave powerful presentations on anti-bullying, self-esteem, and

the importance of girls' involvement in sports.

Mr. Speaker, we were all very fortunate this year to be able to use the image of the *Fearless Girl*, the statue on Wall Street created by Kristen Visbal. The artist was very generous in allowing us to use this imagery. This statue was commissioned by the State Street Global Advisors and is part of their campaign to encourage companies to recruit more women to their boards. The plaque at the bottom of the statue reads, and I quote, "Know the power of women in leadership. SHE makes a difference." Mr. Speaker, this statue really conveys the message that we delivered to these young girls and their mentors.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank our sponsors: Girls in the Game, Tim Hortons, Advantage Sign & Display, Deloitte, Slayed Esthetics Lounge, Amaranth Designs, and Western Litho. We'd also like to thank Monique Goffinet Miller who helped out with the AV [audiovisual] on the day. But the big thanks goes to all the girls and their moms and mentors, and one dad, who came out and made this day such a fabulous event. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Global Transportation Hub

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, last week and yesterday I asked the Premier a very simple question. Though it's hard to tell from his so-called answers, this was not a question about the auditor or what information the Sask Party may or may not have already provided. This was a simple question about his own involvement in the Sask Party's GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal.

Which of the two statements we've heard does the Premier still stand by? Is it, as he said in November of 2016, "I was there through this whole process. I know what was intended and what wasn't."? Or is it, as his office said, that he was "not involved in any of the negotiations regarding the GTH"?

Mr. Speaker, for the third time in three days: which is it? Was he there for the whole process or was he not involved at all?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the answer is both.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, these are ridiculous answers to these questions. They are very, very . . . And if he doesn't like the questions that I'm asking, he should look over his shoulders, because there's people all around him who don't like his answers.

The member from Meadow Lake says, "We should have never been in this business in the first place." The member for Regina University thinks there should be a full judicial inquiry. And the member for Saskatoon Northwest says, "Unacceptable that there are still more questions than answers."

Mr. Speaker, my question doesn't need to wait for the RCMP to do its work. It's not even about the decisions that led to the Sask Party's GTH scandal. It's about the Premier's own words. So again, clearly, what did he tell the RCMP?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, what I shared with the RCMP were truthful answers to all of their questions, as did I'm sure all that were interviewed. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, I think the RCMP will . . . We have all heard and read that the review is done. We look forward to the results of that review.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, it's unacceptable for a Premier to say that he's refusing to take any action at all and to casually state that he's doing nothing while the RCMP investigates the actions of his government.

Now police investigations may seem normal to this Premier, given the governments that he's worked in, but they aren't normal to anyone else. Mr. Speaker, on September 6, when the Premier admitted to media that he'd been questioned by RCMP, he also said that he was open to finally letting the senior Sask Party operative at the centre of the GTH scandal answer questions about the GTH. So will the Premier commit today to letting that Sask Party operative testify before a committee?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we are looking forward to the results of the RCMP review and, as I've said publicly, we'll not rule out any other review that might be possible with respect to this particular issue. Mr. Speaker, I think the government's track record in this particular instance has been to fully answer all the questions, in fact to request, the government now requesting the Provincial Auditor to do a full review of the matter, including making cabinet documents available, Mr. Speaker.

It's a markedly different approach we've taken on this issue than members opposite have taken on a number of issues that they dealt with, that they managed, that they led when they were in government, Mr. Speaker. I can think of SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]. I can think of the Murdoch, I can think of the Murdoch . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well members opposite seem to think that that's not current enough. Maybe there's some other internal NDP [New Democratic Party] matters that are very, very serious that involve the former leader of the party that would be more relevant and more current, and questions that they should be answering on that side of the House.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, the aforementioned senior Sask Party operative still works for this government . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . May I? That operative was in direct contact with the Premier's chief of staff and the minister of the Economy all along. But each time that we've asked for Mr.

Pushor to answer questions about the GTH, the Sask Party has blocked him from testifying. Even the member from Meadow Lake has said he would have fired the minister and Mr. Pushor.

Mr. Speaker, we know the Premier stands by Bill Boyd, the DNA of the Sask Party, but does he also stand by Laurie Pushor? If not, why will he not clearly say today that he should be brought to committee and allowed to answer questions?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to say to the member opposite that, that individual that he's talking about has answered many questions from the Provincial Auditor. In fact the Provincial Auditor quotes that individual . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, the member is saying that's not good enough. The Provincial Auditor is an independent officer of this Legislative Assembly that reports to the Public Accounts Committee. And the Public Accounts Committee, who as legislators, have the right then and the opportunity to interview the Provincial Auditor.

Mr. Speaker, we won't rule anything out on this side, but we're going to let the RCMP do its work, Mr. Speaker. And in the meantime, I do think it's interesting that the party that's lecturing on the issue of accountability and transparency has a former leader who is alleged, alleged to have a complaint on sexual harassment brought to him, and it's also been alleged that he did nothing about it. We know this because the individual that is alleged to have done the harassing is still in the employ of the NDP office. So, Mr. Speaker, I think there are answers required on that side of the House as well.

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

Wait Time for Young People to Receive Mental Health Services

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, the millions and millions wasted on the Sask Party's GTH scandal is money that went into the pockets of their supporters instead of money going into supporting our kids, Mr. Speaker.

While the Sask Party is not taking this scandal seriously, the Children's Advocate has said:

. . . children and youth in the province do not have timely, equitable access to psychiatric assessment and care. Long wait times in hospital emergency rooms often results in children and youth waiting for hours during times of mental health breakdown.

Mr. Speaker, why has this minister refused to make children's mental health care a priority, and why is he denying these children the care that they desperately need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's simply not the case, Mr. Speaker. We recognize the seriousness of this situation. Mr. Speaker, there's been instances recently that the member's referring to that the Children's Advocate had

referenced, for example, wait-lists for psychiatrists. Mr. Speaker, we take that very seriously. Ministry of Health officials have been working the Saskatoon Health Region to deal with this.

It's important to remember, Mr. Speaker, that that waiting time that they're referring to is in the Saskatoon Health Region. Other health regions have much shorter wait times. But again we take this very seriously. I don't want to leave anybody with the impression that waiting that long is the only services that the children received, Mr. Speaker. They also have access to psychologists, to clinical social workers, to registered psychiatric nurses, and to mental health therapists.

Mr. Speaker, we're working with the health region to recruit vacant positions in Saskatoon, looking at temporary people to help fill in, and doing our best to bring down that wait time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, if that minister put as much effort into supporting our children as he does into delivering his lines, maybe we wouldn't have this growing crisis on our hands. Children's mental health was not even mentioned in the Throne Speech — not a word, Mr. Speaker — a speech that happened the day after the Children's Advocate tweeted:

The wait-list here in Saskatchewan to see a child psychiatrist is up to 2 years! Our kids are literally dying as we continue to fail to meet their needs.

The minister boasts, and they all claim to be concerned about the terrible reality that young children are turning to suicide. So why isn't the Sask Party making this an issue, a priority? Why was it not even mentioned in the Speech from the Throne?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in the first answer, we do take this very seriously, and we are taking steps to reduce that wait time. But, Mr. Speaker, let's look at mental health overall as an issue. Mr. Speaker, we're not at the level we intend to be. We're going to continue to incrementally keep increasing spending on mental health services. The arrangement with the federal government on transfer payments to go towards home care and mental health, certainly we're going to make every use of every dollar we can to increase services.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's put this in perspective. The critic gets on her feet frequently, criticizes, always says that not enough's been done. But, Mr. Speaker, since we've been given the privilege of forming government, we've increased spending on mental health by 44 per cent. Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite is saying that that's not good enough, just exactly how bad was it under the NDP government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Access to Bus Service for Northerners

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, it's about access, and the Sask Party aren't even interested in the people in the North having access to the rest of the province. Since they scrapped STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], the minister has said the private sector would take over those routes. Wrong, wrong, wrong. The one bus to Meadow Lake was just cancelled. So now not a single bus runs north of Prince Albert. How does the minister expect businesses and people in the North to react to being cut off from the rest of this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance].

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the member opposite for that question. Mr. Speaker, as I've said many times in the past in the House here, it was a very tough decision to wind down STC as it affects the 200, over 200 employees that were there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the fact is in the North, Mr. Speaker, that there are . . . Medical health has a budget, Mr. Speaker, that helps provide for passengers to come out of the North. And, Mr. Speaker, last year there was over 5,200 people that were assisted out of the North for medical reasons, Mr. Speaker. Of that number, Mr. Speaker, 44 — 1 per cent — 44 people took the bus, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to also mention, Mr. Speaker, that there are a number of companies waiting approval and not yet in operation, Mr. Speaker, that will also be serving the North. They'll be serving La Loche, Beauval, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Mr. Speaker, and La Ronge. So, Mr. Speaker, it has taken a little bit of time for private companies to develop their full systems but we fully expected that, Mr. Speaker. But we're optimistic that this will all work out in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Well actually they just cancelled that, as I said, but he never answered that. Mr. Speaker, since the Sask Party scrapped STC, people are walking on the side of the highways and hitchhiking. Our elders, people in their 80s, are hitchhiking because they have no other choice. Mr. Speaker, three people have already been hit by cars and killed in the Prince Albert area. So instead of laughing off these questions or ignoring the serious issues, will the minister tell us what their plan is to bring this much needed service back to these communities?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of SGI.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are by no means laughing off this situation, Mr. Speaker. You know, the deaths, any death on the highway is one too many deaths, Mr. Speaker. We know that. We don't know all the circumstances, Mr. Speaker, of why people were hitchhiking on highways, Mr. Speaker. I know of one recent one, Mr. Speaker, that was 1:30 in the morning, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if he was on his way to a medical appointment or what exactly it was, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, we do take this very seriously, this matter very seriously.

There are a number of companies, Mr. Speaker, that have been approved and that are in operation from Prince Albert to Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, and they operate daily and their rates are very competitive of what STC was, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Support for Northerners and Reconciliation

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. From mental health to transportation to the Sixties Scoop, the Saskatchewan Party are continuing to fail the North, and some of our own children are losing the hope to live.

In the Premier's final Throne Speech, there is not a single commitment for Saskatchewan's northern people. They've got billions to hand to a foreign company that can't build a Saskatchewan highway that fits farm equipment, millions of dollars for land deals for their friends and supporters. Meanwhile La Loche school continues to feel abandoned and ignored by this government. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there was not any mention of Saskatchewan's North, not a single word for the North, a region in need of more resources, respect, and opportunity.

Why are they so intent, this government, on leaving northern people behind? Mr. Speaker, we need the North to be strong for Saskatchewan to be strong. Why can't they figure that out?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for First Nations and Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the Sixties Scoop situation, I would report that our government is committed to issuing a formal apology to all those adversely affected by the adopt Indian and Métis program. We've been trying to schedule a time with FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] and the Métis Nation, and that has proven to be a bit of a challenge.

In the spirit of reconciliation, the government remains committed to an ongoing dialogue on this issue as well as those identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, 24 months, two years of waiting for an apology, and they have the gall today to blame FSIN and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, they could have got this done two years ago. They still refuse to apologize because, Mr. Speaker, apology comes with reconciliation, and that means serious projects and issues to be dealt with in concert with FSIN and the Métis Nation.

Now going back to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, another good example of the betrayal of northern Saskatchewan and the abandonment of northern Saskatchewan was a direct result of the La Loche shooting incident, not more than several years ago.

The principal of the high school in La Loche, Mr. Greg Hatch, had these following words to say to the Premier, to the cabinet,

and to the entire Sask Party government, and I quote, “Almost two years later, there is still nothing done to our building. We still have the makeshift offices, and classrooms are closed up. Is there a plan moving forward for our community and our school? We need to heal,” he says. In his final comment he says, “Many dignitaries came to our community for ceremonies, to shed tears with us, and offer support. But what we need is follow-through.”

Mr. Speaker, the North was ignored in this Throne Speech. They continue to ignore the North and once again, in order for Saskatchewan to be strong, the North must be strengthened and respected. Will they finally do that, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Taking specifically La Loche first, Mr. Speaker, of course our hearts will always go out to those who were affected by the tragedy, and it was a heartbreaking tragedy. It is important, I think though, to not discredit or belittle the efforts that have been made toward healing, because they’ve been made in the utmost good faith, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly we appreciated the words of Mayor Robert St. Pierre, who did say last spring that the government cares, they want us to move forward. And he acknowledged that healing takes time. And I spoke with Mr. St. Pierre on Friday, had discussions about the school renovation, which the member opposite references, and how best to move forward. Those discussions continue, Mr. Speaker.

It’s also important to note that following the tragedy that the number of student counsellors at the school has increased from two to six. We increased administrative support at both schools, invested over 100,000 to improve security and put in place a RCMP school resource officer at Dene High School. Several real attempts at real supports, Mr. Speaker, which I think go some way to the healing that the mayor referenced.

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

Northern Teacher Education Program

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, that still doesn’t answer why there wasn’t a single word in the Speech from the Throne about the North. Last year, all the Sask Party gave the North were cuts, including NORTEP-NORPAC [northern teacher education program-Northern Professional Access College], a program that had been successfully run for and by the community for decades.

Mr. Speaker, the need for teachers in the North is growing. It’s estimated that another 145 teachers will be needed in the next five years. This year there are only five students entering the first year of the teacher education program. Last year under NORTEP that number was 35, Mr. Speaker. Not only did they have no plan to get students in the North the support that they need, they scrapped a program that was actually working. When will this government start to prioritize these kids and a strong future for the North?

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

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And teacher education in the North is indeed very important to this government, and that’s why the consolidation of that education program in the North is about expanding programs and enhancing access for northern students while it also ensures that the program remains of a high quality and it is sustainable.

Northlands College has had 40 years experience in educating northerners and has seen significant increases in their university education enrolment program offerings. Since 2007, Mr. Speaker, enrolment at university education has increased by 226 per cent. I think that speaks well for what they’re doing.

Communities of Air Ronge and La Ronge, with just over 3,700 people . . . We felt the best use of taxpayers’ dollars, Mr. Speaker, was to reduce the duplication, and that’s what we’ve done.

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

Support for Education

Ms. Beck: — It also reduced the numbers of teachers being trained in the North.

Mr. Speaker, Chris Steer’s three-year-old son Leslie was not able to register for pre-kindergarten in Kindersley because there were a lack of supports in his school. Mr. Speaker, little Leslie lives with a developmental and physical delay, and he is being left out of pre-kindergarten because of the Sask Party’s cuts. His pediatrician has recommended that Leslie attend pre-kindergarten to aid in his development, but the Sun West School Division told his family they didn’t have a single EA [educational assistant] at Westberry School to support his needs.

Mr. Speaker, after a decade of resource wealth, how can this government possibly, possibly defend cutting education so badly that Saskatchewan kids are being kept from school due to underfunding?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at times it fairly pulls at the heartstrings how attached the member opposite is to programs that, in many cases, didn’t exist when the opposition formed government. Supports for learning funding this year, a challenging budget year, Mr. Speaker, is 277 million — a quarter of a billion — that goes to divisions specifically for students with intensive supports, including in early years, Mr. Speaker.

And it’s important to acknowledge that since ’07, we’ve made significant investment in pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs. We’ve doubled the numbers; they’re up 100 per cent. We’ve increased our overall funding amount to pre-K from 7.6 million in ’07 to 27.3 million this year. These aren’t just numbers, Mr. Speaker; they are significant achievements and important context.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister can pontificate upon these lovely achievements to this little three-year-old boy and his family. You simply cannot pull millions out of education and expect that no one will suffer.

Let's look at the facts. The Sun West School Division was forced to cut more than a million dollars out of their instructional budget — \$1 million cut out of children's classrooms. That has meant fewer teachers and fewer educational assistants. Why can't the minister just admit that these cuts to support staff are hurting kids who need the help the most? Can she please set the revisionist rhetoric aside and just tell us, how does it make any sense to leave these kids behind?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just on some of the numbers that the member referenced yesterday, we would suggest that she check with the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] or whoever gave her those numbers, Mr. Speaker, because the \$4,500 number is inaccurate and, we understand, completely anecdotal. Let's wait for the final numbers and how many of that 181 number include administrators as well as retired and attrition numbers, Mr. Speaker.

We always hope that when it comes to staffing, the classroom is not affected. That's what the member, the former minister, always said, that good decisions are made. I do however take exception, Mr. Speaker, to the comment by the member opposite yesterday that I should get my . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — That I should get my "body" into the schools. I have had the honour, as a previous school board trustee, of being in many schools, of touring them and talking to teachers and students and staff and principals about the issues that matter to them. And I have said on the record, for example, about the staff at John Dolan School in Saskatoon, that they are the real citizens of the year, Mr. Speaker. I have visited these new and cutting-edge P3 schools these past few weeks in growing communities in Saskatoon, Regina, Warman, and Martensville.

In body, in mind, Mr. Speaker, this government and I stand with pre-K programs, and we stand with education.

[14:15]

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

Women in Saskatchewan

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the only people not concerned about the people in Saskatchewan losing their jobs and being out of work are sitting in the Sask Party benches. But even most

of them will lose their jobs in three years. Because, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's wasteful mismanagement and dangerous cuts are hurting our economy.

Mr. Speaker, the situation is even more drastic for Saskatchewan women. Last month there were 28 per cent more Saskatchewan women relying on EI [employment insurance] than a year ago. Twenty-eight per cent in just one year, Mr. Speaker, and that's just while every other province is about seeing a drop in EI use, just about every other province.

What is the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women doing to improve the economic conditions for women in our province?

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know the member opposite isn't known as exactly a glass half-full kind of person, Mr. Speaker, but surely even she has to acknowledge some of the positives. The 875 new teachers, 173 new support teachers since '07, they include women. When new schools open as opposed to close, women are employed in those schools too, Mr. Speaker. There are more specialized staff in the province in the education system than there have ever been. Many of those are women.

In health, those are women too, and they are the real citizens of the year, Mr. Speaker. Across the economy there were over 34,000 self-employed women in the province last year. Female entrepreneurs owned about one-third of the small- to medium-sized Sask businesses. Right here in Regina, employment rates are higher for women. They have higher incomes than the national average. In Saskatoon, they're more likely to complete university. And it's one of the rare cities, Saskatoon, where they're better represented in politics than men, Mr. Speaker. The only way is up, but we've come a long way.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 72 — *The Privacy Amendment Act, 2017*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 72, *The Privacy Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Premier that Bill No. 72 be now introduced and read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly ready for the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

recognize the Deputy Premier.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 73 — *The Insurance Amendment Act, 2017*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 73, *The Insurance Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Premier that Bill No. 73 be now introduced and read a first time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Deputy Premier.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 74 — *The Evidence Amendment Act, 2017*
*Loi modificative de 2017 sur la preuve***

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 74, *The Evidence Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Premier that Bill No. 74 be now introduced and read a first time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Deputy Premier.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 75 — *The Electronic Communications Convention Implementation Act/Loi de mise en œuvre de la Convention sur les communications électroniques*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 75, *The Electronic Communication Implementation Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Premier that Bill No. 75 be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Deputy Premier.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

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

Mr. Moe: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank to you to my colleagues for allowing me some time here to enter in some comments with regards to our Speech from the Throne that was delivered here about mid-last week, Mr. Speaker. I do want to begin with ensuring that everyone is aware that I will be supporting the motion with respect to the Speech from the Throne that was put forward by my colleague from Estevan, and I will not be supporting the amendment that was put forward by the member from Nutana.

As is customary, Mr. Speaker, I want to begin with a few thank yous to people that have been important to me not just over the course of the past year, not even just over the course of my half a dozen years of elected life now, but over the course of my life in general.

But prior to getting to that, Mr. Speaker, I'd just take a quick moment and welcome and congratulate the member from Saskatoon Fairview on her win in the by-election, welcome her

to this Assembly. And I did have an opportunity to listen to her maiden speech yesterday, and I congratulate her on a good speech. Although we may have some differences of perspective, I think we serve for similar reasons, Mr. Speaker, to improve our communities, improve our province. And I can assure her that I won't have near the comments that the member from Cannington had with respect to her maiden speech, but I do congratulate her on being here and look forward to serving with her.

As is customary, Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank also my constituency assistant, Sally Fitch who, thankfully, as I always say, is the eyes, ears, and most thankfully the face to the people of Rosthern-Shellbrook as she serves in our office and in communities across the constituency, brings a great effort to each and every day that she serves in that office, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. And she treats each and every phone call or visit from a constituent from within the constituency, or a resident of Saskatchewan that may be contacting our office, with great care and compassion and the great effort that she brings to bring answers to them on behalf of our office, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to thank our family, my family, not just my immediate family, Mr. Speaker, but my previous, I guess. I guess it is my immediate family, but my mom and dad, my brothers and sisters, my in-laws, my extended family if you will, that live all across the province, all across Western Canada, Mr. Speaker. But they've been a great resource and a great support not just over the last decade and the last number of decades, Mr. Speaker, but in particular over the last number of weeks and months with respect to the efforts that we are making in our party.

And my friends from back home, Mr. Speaker, great supports, a group of friends that I have from across the constituency and across the province — people that I went to university with, attended high school with, formed friendships over the different careers that we've had, Mr. Speaker, both my wife and I, over the years. And I want to thank them for their great guidance and counsel that I rely on from time to time as we serve them and others across the province in this Assembly.

And last — not last and definitely not least — are the constituents of Rosthern-Shellbrook. It's truly a great honour that each of us gets the opportunity to represent people in our constituency, and communities that raised us quite often, across constituencies across this province. And I'm no different, Mr. Speaker. It is truly a great honour for me to have the opportunity to represent, you know, people from the 17 rural municipalities, the five First Nations, the 12 villages, and the five towns that I represent in the vast constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook.

And I thank them again for their input, their guidance that they provide me, the conversations that we have, both that sometimes pertain to politics, sometimes pertain more directly to governance and decisions that we may have made or decisions that we may yet have to make as a governing party. And I am forever indebted with the opportunity that they have provided me to stand here in this legislature for the time that I've been here, and I ask them for support as we move forward as well.

Mr. Speaker, last but not least, I think it's important for us and myself to say a thank you to our Premier for his years of service to his constituents in Swift Current, to the people across the province of Saskatchewan as the leader of the opposition for some years, but most importantly as the Premier of this province. He has represented not just the people of Swift Current, but the people of Saskatchewan I think very, very well over the last decade.

And at times, I would put forward that he has also stepped forward and represented industries and people in Western Canada, as well as our nation of Canada, on trade agreements and our relationships that are so very important — that I'll get into a little bit later, Mr. Speaker — with countries all around the world. And in light of this likely being his last Throne Speech — unless maybe five or so potential candidates happen to step back and we'd see what he does then — but, Mr. Speaker, in light of this likely being his last Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, I think, I would like to wish him all the best in everything that he chooses with his family in the years into the future.

Mr. Speaker, as I read through the Throne Speech — the Speech from the Throne, pardon me — and looked at some of the ambitious goals that we set out to achieve as a governing party as representing the people of Saskatchewan over the course of the next 12 months and months into the future, I couldn't help but be reminded of our plan for growth here in the province of Saskatchewan and the focus that we have as a governing party on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, but working with our industries and the growth of our communities over the last decade, and how that plan for growth and how this Speech from the Throne actually ties in as, and I always say, a rung in the ladder or a step forward in continuing to lay the framework so that our industries can grow, our economy can grow, and ultimately our communities and our population can grow.

And, Mr. Speaker, I was reminded of four planks in our plan for growth, the first being international engagement, the second being our willingness to accept and embrace innovation and technology as we move forward, Mr. Speaker, as well as our commitment, our party's commitment and our government's commitment to fiscal accountability and fiscal responsibility here in the province of Saskatchewan so that the investments in infrastructure and people and services that we make today will be available for your kids and my kids, as well as their children, into the future. And last but not least in the ambitious investment in infrastructure that we have, that we have put first and foremost, Mr. Speaker, investment in infrastructure in our communities that can be used by our families across this great, this great province.

Mr. Speaker, on the first point with respect to international engagement, which this Speech from the Throne definitely supports with initiatives with respect to agriculture and our agricultural exports, what I have been asked over the last number of weeks is, why would we engage internationally as a province of Saskatchewan? Why would we not just allow the nation of Canada to take care of that for us? And here's why.

Mr. Speaker, our 1,165,365 people in this province export on average about \$30 billion worth of products each and every year

to over 150 countries. Those countries include the United States of America, China, India, Mr. Speaker. Many exports into the European Union with more to come with the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement being ratified by Japan, Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia, and many more countries, Mr. Speaker, that we engage, with our industries and our export-based industries here in the province of Saskatchewan, engage with on a regular basis.

And it's working, Mr. Speaker. That engagement with those countries, whether it'd be through partnerships in education, discussions with respect to freer and more open trade between our nations, or whether it be with partnerships that we form through culture and immigration, Mr. Speaker, it is working.

Over the last decade our exports to these countries and others is up some 65 per cent. Mr. Speaker, over that same decade just in agriculture alone, our agricultural exports have more than doubled in just 10 short years.

Mr. Speaker, this is our source wealth in our province, Mr. Speaker, is that 30-something billion dollars of exports that we do each and every year. This is our source point of wealth in our communities. It's our source point of careers in our communities as well. And why it is important for us to engage to attempt to grow that even further to 35 billion to 40 to 45 billion in the years ahead is, as we grow those exports or the value of those exports through value-added agriculture, through opportunities that we have to export our energy products, through opportunities that we have to support our sustainable mining products here from the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that then in turn creates careers in our communities across this great province of Saskatchewan, and it's those careers that we have the opportunity to attract people from across Canada, from across our nation in North America . . . our continent of North America, Mr. Speaker, but also as we attract people from around the world. And I think that our communities across this province are reflective of that attraction and that immigration that has occurred into our communities across this province over the last decade.

[14:30]

But just as importantly, Mr. Speaker, or possibly even more importantly than that, as we grow that economy, as we grow those careers in our communities across this province, it provides our children, it provides our children with the very great opportunity to choose a career in the community where they were raised in this province of Saskatchewan or in another community in our province, Mr. Speaker. And if we do anything over the last decade and into the years ahead, Mr. Speaker, that should be our guiding light and that should be our goal, is to ensure that we provide jobs and careers and opportunities not just for our generation but for the generations yet to come.

Mr. Speaker, that is happening in our constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook, and it is not happening due to directly the decisions of government, but government is supporting the environment on where that can occur. And I think of companies operating in the constituency that I have the honour to service.

We have Fast Genetics, Mr. Speaker, that's employing in the

neighbourhood of about 100 different people, dealing with countries such as China and the United States and a numerous number of countries in the European Union.

I think of Hannigan Honey, looking for export markets in conjunction with STEP [Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership], Mr. Speaker, and looking to Japan to export their product and to further refine it right here in a community an hour and a half north of Saskatoon.

I think of the effort our ag producers are making, Mr. Speaker, in their opportunities to export their products to additional countries all around the world. We have an organic processor employing people in the communities in Rosthern-Shellbrook. We have a dog food manufacturer, Mr. Speaker, making dog food out of pulse crops. And that is in particular surprising to me, the innovation that is occurring in that particular plant, Mr. Speaker, but again employing people in the community of Rosthern and in that surrounding area and just over the last number of years.

We have one of the largest transportation companies in the province of Saskatchewan that is centred out of that area, Mr. Speaker. And it began with a couple of brothers with a dream, with a dream to build a company that would employ people in their community and employ themselves, Mr. Speaker, so that they could do better and so that their children could do better right here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to innovation, innovation here in the province of Saskatchewan, we have some of what I'd consider the greatest innovators in the world right here. And I always say if a farmer just outside Saskatoon can build a dispenser for saran wrap, which was a particular trouble for me over the years, we can build anything in this province. And we did that, Mr. Speaker.

But I think of a friend of mine I stopped by and talked to the other day who has formed a company called SynergyAG, Mr. Speaker. And he's formed it with the specific focus to expand and enhance the opportunities to push the limits in agriculture, to push the limits around innovation and technology, and to make those opportunities available to farmers in this province, Mr. Speaker, so that we can remain to be some of the most competitive and the most highly productive producers in the world, Mr. Speaker. We are there at the moment and it's individuals like that that continue to challenge the industry, to challenge the individuals in it, that I think bode well for our future in our industries here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it was a number of months ago that the Premier released his white paper on climate change which talked about our focus and our commitment to innovation and technology, and how we can share the information and knowledge that we have here in the province of Saskatchewan to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, to increase our sequestration. Not just here in this province, Mr. Speaker, not just in our province — which is a fraction of global emissions — but we share that technology around the world on how we can further reduce emissions, capture those emissions, Mr. Speaker, or sequester those emissions.

And if we truly, truly want to address a global challenge like

climate change, Mr. Speaker, this is the effort that needs to happen in the months and years ahead. We need a global conversation around more than just emissions, Mr. Speaker, more than just something as punitive as a carbon tax which ultimately has not worked in any jurisdiction where it has been introduced in North America, to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker.

It won't work in Saskatchewan. What it will do is it will drive jobs and industry to other areas of the world, where quite frankly those industries will emit more greenhouse gas emissions in many cases than they are right here under our sustainable environmental regulations that we have available to our industries here in the province of Saskatchewan.

I think of our industries such as mining, manufacturing, energy, and in particular agriculture, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward. Some of the most sustainable mines in the world are right here in the province of Saskatchewan. And I think of what we do and we do well when we look at the suite of environmental regulations that our potash mines operate within, Mr. Speaker, our uranium mines in the North, Mr. Speaker. That suite of environmental regulations, I will put those alongside any environmental regulations around the world with respect to those industries. And it should be recognized, the good work that we do here.

We have, just north of Regina in the province of Saskatchewan, a steel manufacturer that actually uses 80 per cent less emissions, Mr. Speaker, than steel manufacturers in other areas of the world. This is significant, Mr. Speaker. This is significant, and we want product and we want steel to be made at this manufacturer because of the good greenhouse gas emissions footprint that it actually has relative to its industry colleagues around the world, Mr. Speaker. And we need to attract that type of investment and that type of effort to Saskatchewan where we have this environmental suite that we can be proud of, and the sustainable products that we manufacture, that we grow, and that we mine here, Mr. Speaker. And we export those \$30 billion worth of products to nations, to people, all around the world.

I think of the energy that we import into the nation of Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, I've travelled across this province the last number of weeks and this has come up time and time and time again, as our opportunity to export our products, Mr. Speaker, in particular our energy products through pipelines, to not just other areas of the world but also to other areas of our nation. And this is being hampered and this is being hindered, Mr. Speaker, by some of the changes that have been made recently with respect to the National Energy Board.

And it's unfortunate. It's unfortunate that our nation continues to import oil and energy resources from Saudi Arabia, from countries such as Iraq, Algeria, and Nigeria when we have a sustainable supply that is being produced right here in Western Canada that can be exported to other areas of our nation and other areas around the world, Mr. Speaker. And I would put forward that it is a much more sustainable supply when you consider the fulsome suite of environmental regulations that we have in place here, Mr. Speaker, to not only protect the people of the province of Saskatchewan, but to protect our environment and to ensure that we are continuing to take part in these sustainable exports to people across the nation and around

the world.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very passionate about the industry of agriculture. My training as a youngster was in . . . I have a Bachelor of Science in agriculture and got to know many good people at the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And as we move forward with the changes that have happened and the innovation that has been discovered and worked on here in the province of Saskatchewan, we can be very proud of what we're doing in the industry of agriculture, in particular when it comes to the conversation around climate change and sequestration and our carbon content in our atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker, we are sequestering carbon each and every day in this province. We are sequestering it through the use of zero-tillage technology. And if we back up about 20, 25 years here in the province of Saskatchewan, and I think of my grandfather that had always told me, the way that you're going to kill your couch grass out in the field is you're going to take your kid — that was me — and you're going to send him out there with a cultivator and he's going to keep it black all summer. Well it's under that type of tillage practice, Mr. Speaker, that the soils in Saskatchewan were actually net emitters of carbon.

It's since that, Mr. Speaker, and over the course of the last two decades with the implementation of zero-till agriculture, that our agricultural industry, our crop agricultural industry, has become a net equal at the very least, Mr. Speaker, and quite likely a net sequester of carbon. As the carbon that we are sequestering is in excess of 11 million tonnes here in the province of Saskatchewan through zero-till agriculture, and just over 12 million tonnes that are being emitted by that same crop agriculture.

A great story, Mr. Speaker, and an even greater story when we look at companies such as Seed Hawk, such as SeedMaster, such as Bourgault, such as CNH, such as Morris Industries, Pillar laser works, that are now taking that technology, that innovation, and they're over in Agritechnica as we speak, Mr. Speaker, marketing that zero-till technology. And that is being utilized now, Mr. Speaker, in places such as Kazakhstan and Germany, the European Union, eastern Asia, and sequestering carbon now far beyond the borders of Saskatchewan.

And I think you can start to see how the argument starts to frame, or how the position starts to frame, how you can take the knowledge and innovation and technology from this province, apply it to other areas of the world and really start to make a difference when we want to talk about climate change and carbon content in our atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker, we have grasslands, vast amounts of grasslands across this province, 17 million acres that are protected by provincial easements, each of those acres sequestering about 11 tonnes each and every year of carbon, Mr. Speaker. That's about 187 million tonnes of carbon being sequestered each and every year by provincial easement protected grasslands here in the province of Saskatchewan. We emit about 75. These are tremendous numbers, Mr. Speaker, and it's a tremendous impact that . . . The province of Saskatchewan, through provincial easements, through innovation, and through technology is making a tremendous impact in the carbon

content in our atmosphere, in the global conversation that we need to have with respect to climate change, and an impact far beyond the emissions in the borders of our province.

We have carbon capture and storage, Mr. Speaker, which has all sorts of opportunities that we've talked about many times in this House, to be exported and utilized in the 1,600 to 2,400 coal-fired power generators that are either under construction or being planned, never mind all of the coal-fired power that is even currently under use, Mr. Speaker. This is tremendous technology, not only in reducing the emissions of those plants, Mr. Speaker, but in increasing the efficiency of the uptake of our energy as well and making a more efficient system for all of those involved.

Mr. Speaker, this is the conversation that we need to be having around innovation, around technology, around knowledge, and how we share that around the world to ensure that we can have this very global and important conversation with respect to climate change, Mr. Speaker. What we don't need is to have an imposed tax on the people of the province of Saskatchewan that will drive those jobs, quite frankly will drive and increase those emissions to other areas of the world.

I know there's a couple of members that are putting their foot forward — and I commend them for putting their foot forward with respect to the leadership race of the members opposite — that have committed to taxing the people of the province of Saskatchewan based on the carbon that they use. They've committed to driving those jobs out of this province, Mr. Speaker, by committing to that tax.

And I would put forward that that commitment to that carbon tax is going to be about as popular, Mr. Speaker, as a previous leader when he made a commitment to improve the highways in the province of Saskatchewan by asking the people to grab a shovel and go out and start filling potholes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's been a tremendous amount of investment in infrastructure across this province, Mr. Speaker: \$26 billion in our highways over the past decade, Mr. Speaker, and that didn't include the people of Saskatchewan filling their own potholes. That included proper projects that were contracted out across this province. And I think of the highways that the member from Athabasca drives over on his way home, Mr. Speaker, to his constituency, as he passes through the community of Rosthern-Shellbrook, Mr. Speaker: Highway 11 which has been twinned, Mr. Speaker; Highway 12 which has been resurfaced this spring, Mr. Speaker; Highway 40, three years ago, 15 kilometres resurfaced; another 15 kilometres two years ago; this past year another 15, Mr. Speaker.

Highway 3 has been raised through the areas that were flooded out, Mr. Speaker, as well. There's about 15 kilometres of that has been resurfaced, Mr. Speaker. They needed it quite dearly. And, Mr. Speaker, all of the turning and passing lanes into the community where I live, where we lost a life just a few years ago, Mr. Speaker — it's safer now. They did the study. They invested the money, Mr. Speaker, and we have safe accesses into the community that I enter each and every week when I go home.

Mr. Speaker, we have increased, increased investment in our

health care. Not just in the facilities, Mr. Speaker, across our province but in the people that work in those facilities. Mr. Speaker, we had the 13 rural facilities, the long-term care facilities that were invested in by this government, Mr. Speaker. As well, I think of the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, I think of the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, as I see that come up just about five miles out of the Rosthern-Shellbrook constituency.

But just as important as replacing that 100-year piece of infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we're filling it up with the medical professionals that we need so that we can ensure access in my community, in your community, and in communities across this province, Mr. Speaker. Whether that be the efforts that have been made in rural communities . . . And I think of the six or seven physicians and the nurse practitioner that we have in Shellbrook, the physicians and the nurse practitioner in the community of Spiritwood, and the continued physicians that we have access to in the community of Rosthern, Mr. Speaker.

This is important. This is important effort that has been made, not just an investment in the College of Medicine, but investment in changing how we bring physicians in from around the world, Mr. Speaker, to ensure we have that access. 750 more physicians working in the province of Saskatchewan, some of them out in our rural communities, some of them lining up to move into a piece of infrastructure such as the children's hospital in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, specialists to ensure that they're there to treat all of us across the province when we need them.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, I think of the 40 new schools that have been invested in across this province. Twenty one just this past year, Mr. Speaker, opening up. But I also think of the 875 teachers that are working in communities across this province serving the families and ensuring that our next citizens of our communities, Mr. Speaker, are highly educated and have every opportunity that we have. And I think in particular of, in the community of Rosthern-Shellbrook, the planning dollars that were put forward for that so-much-needed school, Mr. Speaker, in that community. And we look forward to the construction of that.

There is no doubt over the course of the last number of months, Mr. Speaker, this government has been faced, due to a drop in our natural resource revenues, we've been faced with some difficult decisions. I've had the opportunity to travel across this province and talk to people with respect to those. Mr. Speaker, we had to make those decisions to ensure that we're able to get back to balance, this government's effort and commitment to a three-year plan to balance.

But I would say this as well, Mr. Speaker. All members on this side of the House continue to work with their constituents and people across the province so that we can continue on that three-year plan to balance to ensure that the investments in that infrastructure and in our communities is there for our children and our children's children. But we cannot shock the economy, Mr. Speaker. And that's the conversation that is happening now and continues to happen in the weeks and months ahead.

I think it's also important for us, Mr. Speaker, as we go through this process and these challenging decisions, that we recognize that through this natural resource, drop in natural resource prices, that there's some private sector industries that have had to make some very challenging decisions. And I've met a few of those individuals, Mr. Speaker.

And I think in particular of an individual I met that has owned his company for about 15 years. He is very proud of his company. He's even prouder of the team that he has assembled to work within that company. And he's been faced with some challenges. And he talks to . . . The most difficult day in those 15 years was when he had to gather his employees, his team members, his friends, and his colleagues that worked alongside him — not behind him or in front of him, but worked alongside him — and he had to ask them to take a reduction so that they can continue because the rates in that industry had just dropped that much that it wasn't working out.

And it was the very last thing that he felt . . . He ultimately had to do it, but it was the worst day in his 15-year career. And he was concerned. He was concerned he was going to lose a friend and a colleague and a member of his team that he needed when things come back.

And, Mr. Speaker, as tough as that day was, I could tell the pride that he spoke with when he said, when he asked me, he said, you know, how many, how many guys do you think I lost that day? How many team members do you think I lost? And the number was zero. Each and every one of them stayed on to work with him, Mr. Speaker, because that's true leadership, to work alongside your team members, Mr. Speaker. Each and every one of them stayed on with him and they were ready for when things start to improve, and it looks like they may. Mr. Speaker, this is leadership. This ensures that that company and those jobs and those individuals have a sustainable business that they will be able to be employed at in their community into the years ahead. Mr. Speaker, it's this same sustainability that we need to ensure as we move into the next number of months and years in the province of Saskatchewan, and I think we're going to be just fine.

In my travels, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to go to Rosthern the other day and watch the Twin Rivers municipal group sign a friendship agreement with the community of Beardy's and Okemasis. And in that friendship agreement, Mr. Speaker, they committed to working together where they have opportunities, on municipal infrastructure, on things of mutual interest, Mr. Speaker. And although it may not seem like a lot, it's a great step forward for not just municipalities that are neighbouring one another to work together very, very closely in the way of joint investments, but to work together with First Nations communities in the geographic area as well. And I commend the Beardy's and Okemasis leadership for their participation in this friendship agreement and all that it can bring both them and the communities of Twin Rivers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of the story that my colleague from Canora-Pelly told of Porter Wolkowski who raised his 4-H steer with the ambition of selling that steer, not to fill his pockets for something that he may like, but to donate to the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon. That is such an important piece of infrastructure and service for all of us across the

province of Saskatchewan.

And most notably and most recently, Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of what a great province that we are so honoured and thankful to be a part of, and why that is. And it's because of the communities that we have across this province, communities that I've had the opportunity to visit the last number of weeks, and because of the people that are in those communities.

And I think of, most recently, of a fundraiser that I had the opportunity to attend in the community of Fox Valley. Mr. Speaker, it was a fundraiser and a gathering put on by the community of about 160 people. It looked like to me there was upwards of a thousand people in the curling rink, Mr. Speaker, and it was put on to discuss and to raise funds with respect to those families that have been affected by the wildfires in southwestern Saskatchewan. And my heart goes out to the families that have had injury or loss of life: the Hargrave family, the Wedrick family, and the Riehl family, Mr. Speaker.

But what I saw happen, Mr. Speaker, was a silver lining to what was a very tragic and dark cloud. And I see a community coming together to start to heal, Mr. Speaker, and to start for the first time in a number of days just be able to sit back and relax and discuss everything that has happened to their community and the region over the last number of days, but also start to discuss how they're going to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I've seen this before and I saw it again last night, and I would just close with this, and this would give us all, I think . . . Many of us have seen this before, but it just reinvigorates and refurbishes the hope and the passion that I know is in communities across this rural Saskatchewan. And I left as the live auction started, Mr. Speaker, and the first item came up, and it was a couple of picture frames, barn wood picture frames if I remember correctly. I think they sold for about \$600, which was a fair amount more than they're worth, and when they asked for the name, Mr. Speaker, he said, "Yes, I'll pay it," he said, "but run them through the auction again and sell them one more time."

And I think that's indicative of what we do as Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. We're always willing to give back to our community. We're always willing to give back to our province, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's that type of an attitude that I saw displayed again last night in Fox Valley that will ensure that our province is always going to be the very best place for us to receive our education, to start our career, to start a business, Mr. Speaker, but most importantly, it's our communities and our province that will always be the very best place for us to raise our families.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to ensure that everyone in here is aware that I will not be supporting the amendment putting forward by the member from Saskatoon Nutana, and I will be supporting the motion put forward by my colleague from Estevan in support of the Speech from the Throne this year.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before getting into responding to the Throne Speech, I want to begin like many of my colleagues have by thanking some very special people who

have supported me and encouraged me along the way as I continue to serve and represent the people within my constituency of Lloydminster.

First, my husband, partner in life, and strongest supporter of them all. It's no doubt tough for him when I'm away, but he knows that I am committed to doing the best job I can in this role. He manages, but is definitely glad to see me when I return and is appreciative of all that I do. Knowing his love, devotion, support, encouragement is there to back me up keeps me grounded and working hard.

My children, mom, and siblings as well are very supportive and encouraging and recognize the time and commitment I give to serving the people of my constituency and the province. I know all the members of this Assembly can appreciate the strength and support of our spouses, partners, and family members who take care of responsibilities back home so that we can serve.

Secondly, I would like to recognize and thank my constituency assistant, Tracy Patterson. What an amazing person. Her constant willingness to educate herself on many topics, listen to constituent concerns, guide them in the right direction to get answers, always showing care and compassion for others, and keeping me informed, has been nothing short of amazing. Thank you, Tracy, for all that you do in support of me.

Lastly I'd like to thank my constituents for their ongoing support. They definitely keep me abreast of their concerns with numerous phone calls, letters, emails, meetings, and visits to the office. I always listen carefully to their concerns, take them seriously and address them as soon as possible. I am honoured to work for them.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to focus my reply to the Throne Speech mainly on the economy. In 2007 when we formed government, our Premier and members of caucus knew that focusing on growing the economy was imperative to creating a have province and a renewal in the excitement and investment people and businesses wanted to see for Saskatchewan.

As we all know, under the NDP Saskatchewan was a have-not province, receiving federal equalization payments in 15 of the 16 years they were in office. NDP Premier Lorne Calvert did not even believe Saskatchewan could maintain a permanent status as a have province, and would always be in and out of equalization.

Mr. Speaker, it's lucky for the people of Saskatchewan our government recognized and saw the potential of our province and our people and began working hard to put into play the Saskatchewan plan for growth, which has changed the perception and confidence the people of this province and many others, even outside this province, have today about Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, even the opposition cannot deny that growth and strength in one's economy is what drives the agenda for meeting the needs of improved health care, education, social services, infrastructure, and international engagement and recognition. But I could be wrong, as the questions they keep bringing up in question period are nothing new and that they aren't focused on what is important to people in Saskatchewan,

which is the economy.

Our population growth of over 160,000 more people in the last 10 years, and continuing to grow faster than it has since the earliest days of our province, is a clear sign of the confidence many have in what Saskatchewan has to offer. A growing population means more revenue, more start-up businesses, and more companies recognizing this is the place to invest.

We also realize that more people means there is a need for more and improved services to support that growth. So what have we done to address this? Let me share a few items with you. During a decade of growth Saskatchewan recorded the second-best job creation record in Canada of 12.6 per cent, nearly double the national average. That's 63,000 new jobs, and we had the second-highest growth in average weekly incomes. Mr. Speaker, that's what's important to people in Saskatchewan.

We led the nation in retail sales and manufacturing sales growth and our exporters set new records with agriculture leading the way. Mr. Speaker, that's what's important to people in Saskatchewan.

We took care of, and are continuing to take care of the infrastructure deficit left behind by the NDP. Our infrastructure investment in this province, which has included building new schools, hospitals, long-term care homes, and highways, has been an astounding \$11.2 billion in just 10 years. Mr. Speaker, that's what's important to people in Saskatchewan.

We have supported our municipal governments by providing them with predictability and certainty in their budgets. We introduced a formula that ties municipal revenue sharing to the province's economic growth by providing one point of the provincial sales tax. As a result, revenue sharing to municipalities has doubled since we took office, from \$127 million in 2007 to 258 million in 2017. Mr. Speaker, that's what's important to people in Saskatchewan.

Since 2007 we have recruited more than 750 new doctors and 3,400 nurses of every designation, and increased the doctor and nurse training seats in our colleges to fill the gaping retention holes in health care left by the NDP. We introduced the Saskatchewan surgical initiative, helping to reduce the surgical wait times in this province to now be among the shortest in Canada.

We have increased access to diagnostic imaging with our two-for-one approach, helping patients get care sooner. And this year we have begun a new initiative establishing accountable care units as part of an effort to once again improve service and provide better patient care. Mr. Speaker, that's what's important to people in Saskatchewan.

Twenty-one new schools accommodating more than 11,000 students, including many newcomers to our province, opened their doors for the first time. Eighteen of those schools are joint-use facilities built using a P3 model that reduced construction costs, saving taxpayers \$100 million. We also spent millions of dollars to renovate schools in this province that were neglected under the NDP. Our government's unprecedented 17 billion investment in K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education over the past decade has also paid for 875

more teachers and the creation of 6,000 new child care spaces.

We also announced in the Throne Speech a pause on curriculum development has been lifted and curriculum renewal will continue in a number of subject areas, giving our students an even higher quality of education and helping to prepare them for their future.

Even our focus on post-secondary education over the past nine years with the graduate retention program was an investment in the future of this province's economy. It provided nearly 70,000 students to receive about 345 million in tax credits, and they have chosen careers right here in our province, contributing to the growth and prosperity of our economy.

[15:00]

This year we will allocate nearly 45 million to support post-secondary programs and skills training and employment initiatives for indigenous students. This includes 9.4 million provided to the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, which has received a 114 per cent increase in funding from the province since 2007. Mr. Speaker, that's what's important to the people in Saskatchewan.

Over the past decade we have doubled support crisis prevention and outreach support services, doubled the number of group homes in the province, and have supported more than 4,000 individuals and families with respite, residential, and day programming services. There are also 96 group homes operating in Saskatchewan today that did not exist a decade ago.

In 2012 we created the personal care home benefit to support seniors residing in personal care homes. Since 2008 we have tripled the seniors' income plan benefit, from \$90 to \$270 per month. Our government will soon introduce the seniors' education property tax deferral program, giving seniors with a household income under 70,000 the option to defer the education portion of the property taxes on their home.

Mr. Speaker, because of the economic progress of the last decade, our government was in the position to invest 3.7 billion to support people with disabilities. Since creating SAID, the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program, we have increased benefits to recipients of the program four times. Mr. Speaker, that's what's important to people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, last year after the rural crime reduction committee spent time travelling around the province, listening to many groups and individuals on their concern over rural crime, our government put in place the PRT, protection and response team, and added approximately 6 million to address those concerns. Mr. Speaker, that's what's important to the people of Saskatchewan.

We have reduced expenses within government, and our operating debt is more than \$1 billion lower than it was in 2007. We have chosen to work towards continuing to focus on reducing expenses and balancing the budget in the next few years, unlike other provinces that continue to add to their debt and straddle future generations with an overwhelming burden. Mr. Speaker, that's what's important to the people of

Saskatchewan.

Over the past decade, this government has ensured we have enacted a plan that allowed for Saskatchewan to leave 16 years of a deplorable economic position as a have-not province to a force to be reckoned with in this country. Competitive taxes and sensible regulations helped build the Saskatchewan advantage, and this government will do everything it can to defend it. Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech continues to speak to our government's commitment to ensure our economy stays strong, healthy, viable on the global scene, and invested in maintaining the best possible services and lifestyle for our citizens. And as our Premier stated in the Throne Speech, "Saskatchewan's favourable business climate has played a major role in attracting investment."

We all know the oil and gas sector and even the potash sector has seen a drop in production, sales, and commodity prices over the past few years and continues to struggle to regain their positions within the markets. My constituency of Lloydminster had been the second-largest contributor to the oil and gas sector revenue in this province over the years and was hit hard when oil prices drastically dropped. Some companies closed their doors and many laid off employees. This downturn in our resource sector hit communities and people hard.

But today there is optimism as oil prices are slowly rebounding and companies are rehiring and continuing to invest in our province. Our energy sector is one of Canada's and our province's greatest strengths. Yet its economic potential is being hamstrung by our own national government, even as Canada continues to import thousands of barrels of oil every day from other countries, countries who do not treat their people well and who do not care about climate change.

Time and time again our Premier and government has stood up for the people of this province in opposing a carbon tax, which has no proven benefit to the people of this province and would do more harm than good to our economy. Whether it is the oil and gas industry, the mining industry, or our farmers, a carbon tax would be detrimental to keeping their livelihoods prosperous and viable into the future.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP has consistently opposed the Energy East pipeline, a pipeline which not only would have provided safe transportation of oil to eastern tidewaters and markets beyond Canada and the United States, but would have provided thousands of jobs to many within our province. This was a blow to many in my constituency alone, as well as the energy sector that employs thousands and has paid, on average, over the last three years, \$17 billion annually in taxes and royalties to Canadian governments. Mr. Speaker, \$17 billion is enough to pay for 680 new schools, 1.8 million knee replacements, and 4.25 million child care spaces, not to mention the many more kilometres of highways and roads that could've been fixed or more senior care homes that could've been built with some of those dollars which now seem forever lost.

Mr. Speaker, the Energy East pipeline was an opportunity to strengthen the quality of life for many in Canada. For some reason, the NDP expects us to grin and bear it and move on. Something needs to change here. The taxpayers of Saskatchewan should not have to continue sending billions of

dollars derived from our resources and labour in equalization payments to support Quebec.

A carbon tax would be detrimental to this province. Carbon taxes are attractive to some governments because they are lucrative propositions. Whether they effectively reduce GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions or actually cause consumers and business owners to alter their behaviour in ways that reduce their carbon footprints, is yet to be seen or proven. Our farmers, manufacturers, mining, agribusinesses, value-added food processing, research, and innovation industries continue to play a huge role in keeping our economy strong and competitive in foreign markets. More than 100,000 jobs in our province depend on exports. We need those jobs to stay here in Saskatchewan, and we'll continue to support them by opposing a carbon tax that we know will only do more harm than good.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan small businesses contributed almost a third of the province's gross domestic product in 2016 at 31 per cent. Small businesses are those with fewer than 50 employees and account for more than 98 per cent of all businesses in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about business and investment in our province, most of us think of larger companies. To repeat some recent comments by our Minister of Economy, and I quote:

We know that small business in Saskatchewan is actually big business. These enterprises help to grow our economy . . . [grow] jobs and encourage investment in communities across the province — contributing to the quality of life we all enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan ranks third nationally for the share of its total economic output generated by small businesses. We have 129 small businesses per 1,000 people, the highest rate in Canada and above the national average of 105. Mr. Speaker, that's why this government is committed to creating and maintaining a positive business climate and policies that enable the small business sector to thrive. And that is why the Throne Speech introduced an increased threshold of \$600,000 before business will jump to the higher corporate tax rate.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take this opportunity to join the thousands in thanking our Premier for his vision, guidance, enthusiasm for improving the life of people in this province, patience in dealing with the challenges we have faced, and above all for his strong leadership.

I'd like to quote from John Quincy Adams, the fourth president of the United States, and I quote, "If your actions inspire others to dream, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader." Mr. Speaker, this describes our Premier to a T and is why I ran for this party and want to do the best I can in serving my constituents.

Our Premier leaves behind a solid legacy of population growth, infrastructure building, a strong economy, and an advancement of the energy sector. Under our Premier's leadership the sinking ship was turned around, and this Throne Speech shows he is still at the helm and keeps us sailing under strong Saskatchewan winds and a full sail.

This Throne Speech provides an ambitious and exciting plan for

more growth and prosperity in Saskatchewan's economy. This government and the citizens of Saskatchewan want the Saskatchewan advantage and growth plan to continue. I too believe the best is yet to come.

Mr. Speaker, my children are all just starting on their way to successful careers. I'm very proud of all eight of my children, who have all attended and graduated from the University of Saskatchewan. Well two of them are still there attending, but I'm confident they will complete their degrees successfully as well.

I have three beautiful granddaughters — Pearl, four; Belle, who will be three next month; Hazel, one; and a new granddaughter on the way. I want them to see the hope, opportunities, and potential that this province offers them to be successful in their careers, raise a family here, be happy, and enjoy all that this wonderful province has to offer. That's why what this Throne Speech offers and commits to ensures that Saskatchewan is growing stronger.

Mr. Speaker, I was born and raised in Saskatchewan. I've raised all my children in Saskatchewan, and I continue to live and work in this great province. This is my Saskatchewan and I am proud of it. I am proud of the growth and prosperity we have accomplished over the past 10 years. Our government has great ideas and the enthusiasm and ambition to continue growing stronger as a province. Mr. Speaker, that is why I will be supporting this Throne Speech, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again along with my colleagues, it's a pleasure to stand in this House and talk about the positive Saskatchewan and the Throne Speech that was just delivered a week ago. The theme of the Throne Speech was "Growing Stronger," and it is very characteristic of this government to keep moving forward — not like in the past under the administration of the NDP.

Before I get going and do a lot of comments, I want to say a few thanks as is customary. First to my family, and my wife, Debbie, for all the support and assistance they provide and, you know, the late suppers, the 10 different functions as we try to be as prominent in our constituencies and promoting our communities as much as we can. I thank her for that.

Judy Hatfield and Rosalie Boots are the constituency assistants who work very diligently at the office. I'm quite firm on good office rules, and the office is open from 9 to 4 every day, and they do a great job of making sure that they're there to serve the people of Moose Jaw and Moose Jaw North with regular attendance and handling all the concerns that come in to us.

Mr. Speaker, back in 2007 my favourite number was 33 because that was the margin of victory by which we won in that election. Well the last election that number had grown to 1,908. And I will never take for granted the confidence that the people of Moose Jaw North put in me. The 4,425 people that cast their ballots in my favour at the last election, I certainly appreciate that. I will never have an opportunity to thank them

individually, but I will always be indebted for the confidence they put in me and I try every day to live up to their expectations.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Moose Jaw is a very active community. There's a lot of beauty in the city. We've got the Crescent Park that's right in the downtown heart of the city with an amphitheatre, very attractive for a city of its size and attractive for visitors and tourists that come in there. Wakamow Valley goes through the southern part of the city and again offers a lot of recreation and opportunities for camping and leisure there as well. We have a world-classed health spa and hotels, unique gift shops, and tea rooms and speciality stores, beautiful hotels, and convention facilities like the Grant hotel, the Temple Gardens, and the Heritage Inn.

Mosaic Place that was brought in just after . . . This government helped with the creation of Mosaic Place, which is home for our WHL [Western Hockey League] Warriors who are doing very good this season. The field house, likewise, along with the soccer pitch. We were able to construct a brand new hospital, complete with a helipad and a hyperbaric chamber and the first rural MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] in Saskatchewan.

[15:15]

In Moose Jaw, you could call it a car dealer heaven for all the car dealers that are represented there and the good deals that they provide and the service they provide along . . . And we don't want to underestimate the agriculture, which is the heart of agricultural area in Saskatchewan. The dealerships and the service there are second to none, along with the progress of the marketing and processing that is starting to see some real insights, insteps into Moose Jaw.

We've got new restaurants. Next month we will turn the sod for the seventh Habitat for Humanity home, which shows the progression in Moose Jaw, a live theatre company along with — we'll never take for granted — the 15 Wing and Colonel O'Reilly and what they contribute to our community as well.

Along with that we've got community service clubs and organizations. Recently I attended the Sports Hall of Fame inductee dinner. And I want to, just for the record, read some of the names into the *Hansard*. Rod Heisler was inducted for baseball and hockey, and Graeme McMaster was from the medical profession and what he provided for the teams. Brian Towriss, who is from Moose Jaw but is a retired coach from the Huskies. He was included in this year's inductees as was Steve Michaluk for lacrosse, Ryan Anholt for baseball, and the 1995 Master Relics, the ladies fastball championships. It was a great pride in having these people inducted and recognized in our community.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I'm going to take a few minutes, if I may, to mention Valley View. As you can recall, the decision not to accept admission into Valley View was introduced by the former government in 2003. In 2012 the decision was made to close down or wind down the operation of Valley View Centre and transition residents to community inclusion. Obviously when we take a step like this there was big concerns from a lot of people, especially the people that worked out there, and the families of the residents. And the public at large had some very

big concerns about the process. Well we knew that the process would take time and it's taking far more time than we expected, but that's not a problem. We face this with the certainty that we're going to do it right and time was not the issue as we went forward.

Well last week I attended a public discussion, Courageous Conversations, that was co-hosted by the Saskatchewan Association of Community Living, and in this they had some of the residents who had transitioned into some of the group homes that were established.

Mr. Speaker, it was delightful to hear the answers and the description they had of their life going into the communities. For example, they could go for coffee with their friends or they could stay up after supper and watch TV. Some of them were delighted that they could go grocery shopping because they never had an opportunity to go grocery shopping before, and even, I have my own bedroom now. And when you think about it, there's some great living experiences that these people are given by making that transition, and it's turning out to be really the right decision. There's about 52 that have been transitioned; there's a number more to go. We'll take some time and we'll make sure we'll do it right.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne takes me back to 2007 and the election when I walked up those steps for the first time. It was a new beginning. And it really was a new beginning with the pride and anticipation as I sat in my seat for the first time. That new beginning was also for Saskatchewan, that would bring about the hope and positive attitude and growth and economic expansion of our province. Our province has since emerged as a national leader in a lot of sectors, improving the lives of people who reside here. It was the beginning of the new Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

I've been always amazed at the resources that we have in this province and how, for the greater part of 73 years, this province didn't grow. It remained stagnant. And especially the previous 16 years, this amazing province was listed as have-not status under the NDP. The province then was governed by small-thinking people who didn't understand the concept of business or how business works or growth or how to create employment or how an economy is structured. We all know that without good economic policies you can't have good social programs.

I recall in 2004 when I was the president of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce wanting to talk to the premier, and the premier at that time was from my city as well, from Moose Jaw. I remember meeting with him at a function, saying, I'd like to sit down and talk to you about business, about growth, and he said absolutely. He gave me his card and said phone the office. When I phoned the office, they said well you have to send it in writing. So I sent a letter in writing requesting a meeting with the premier of the day. I hadn't heard nothing and a month later, I resent it. Still heard nothing. And, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't until several months later, when they tried to force the available hours legislation on the backs of businesses, and finally they backed off of that imposition which would have been the dart of the heart of business because they didn't understand business or how business works.

The NDP prided themselves as a social justice party, yet they do little for the social justice conscience. Just google Murdoch Carriere. Just go ahead and google that, and you can find out the values of their justice conscience — \$275,000 for ex-civil servant convicted of assault. It tells a story of their real moral judgment.

The seniors' income plan, which was mentioned before by my colleagues, the NDP had it at \$90 a month, a supplement for low-income seniors. It stayed at \$90 a month, Mr. Speaker, for 16 years under their governance — \$90 a month. When our government took over, almost immediately we doubled that benefit, and later we increased it even threefold to the amount it is today of \$270 a month, helping those seniors.

Our government introduced the seniors' drug plan. Yes, it has increased in the past budget, but under the NDP, they didn't have any such plan for seniors. A \$100 prescription would have been a cost of \$100 to our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech includes a new seniors' education property tax deferral program that will assist seniors with household incomes under \$70,000 with the option to defer the education portion of property tax on their homes.

I mentioned our abundant resources and the lack of business understanding under the NDP. I mentioned their social injustice and their seniors disregard. Mr. Speaker, they even devalued education. They closed 176 schools, 176 schools including Ross School in north central Moose Jaw, a part of my constituency. Teachers were laid off. They didn't put education first; they never have. And after all our tax dollars, all our tax dollars going into education for that many years to education for our students, our students had to leave the province because there was no opportunity. They left our province and they moved to other places where there were opportunities, and grew the economies of those provinces because there was no job creation strategy to develop the work opportunities.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in the new Saskatchewan our Saskatchewan Party government has built or is building 40 new schools. Twenty-one new schools accommodating 11,000 students opened their doors for the first time this year. Further to the construction of the 40 schools, our government has expanded and fixed dozens of schools throughout the province. I'm thinking here in Moose Jaw, the major roof repair in St. Michael's in Moose Jaw. They include improvements to Peacock and to Central Collegiate. And just very recently, within the last two weeks, Sunningdale School was excited when a new portable classroom was delivered and will be in function for their schooling very soon.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard from teachers and parents about curriculum development and proficiency in mathematics. Our government will ensure all Saskatchewan students are schooled in the basics of math and will expand math reinforcement and support, broadening access to common sense methods that have proven successful in the past, as well as other jurisdictions.

To help create an active investment atmosphere, our government created the Saskatchewan plan for growth. It's a growth plan that created a competitive tax system, a tax system that would attract investment in new ventures and create

growth.

We offered students retention incentives like the graduation retention program and the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship. With more jobs available and the best retention plan for graduates in Canada, our young people found the future here in Saskatchewan. They stayed in Saskatchewan and began contributing to our economy, building our province and growing their future in a place abundant with wealth opportunities.

In the last decade under the Saskatchewan Party government, Saskatchewan has gone from the worst job creation to the second best, attracting businesses, creating employment, providing an opportunity for our young adults to work.

In one decade, Saskatchewan's population has increased by over 160,000 people and continues to be an attractive place for investment, for opportunity for families to grow and to enjoy a better quality of life.

The Speech from the Throne continues to be mindful of the concerns of business, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan, 99 per cent of all businesses are small businesses with fewer than 50 employees. These small businesses contribute nearly one-third of the province's GDP [gross domestic product]. They employ over 30 per cent of the province's workers and paid out over \$6.2 billion in wages and salaries last year. Small business is big business in Saskatchewan. To assist small businesses, we have announced plans to raise the small-business income threshold from 500,000 to \$600,000, the highest threshold in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this year's capital investment in Saskatchewan is forecast to be \$14.5 billion. We continue to build our province for the benefit of our citizens and we are doing it in a responsible manner.

To review, the NDP showed a lack of business understanding, a lack of social program assistance, a lack of respect for seniors, and a lack of education understanding. So let's look at health. When the Saskatchewan Party took office, there was an extreme shortage of doctors and nurses, with the longest surgical wait-list time in Canada, the longest surgical wait times in the country. Fifty-two hospitals had been closed. They didn't close the Moose Jaw Union Hospital; they just abandoned it. For years and years and years, the medical staff in the community were asking for at least an addition, but the answer from the NDP government of the day was no, no, no.

This is changing under the Saskatchewan Party government. We have hired over 750 more doctors and 3,400 more nurses of every distinguished designation. Our hospital in Moose Jaw is relatively new and I'm certainly proud of it. It's got the hyperbaric chamber and the first rural MRI. And throughout the province we are pleased to improve health care with the construction of the Jim Pattison Hospital in Saskatoon and the new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, and we've constructed 13 long-term care facilities.

Before the end of this year, the government will complete the consolidation of the province's 12 regional hospital authorities into a single Saskatchewan authority. The single authority will

reduce administration costs while improving the coordination of care and enhancing the accountability of our health care system.

[15:30]

Also in this session, our government will fulfill its commitment to provide individual funding for children under the age of six diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, or ASD. The initial funding level will be \$4,000 per year for each child. All this, Mr. Speaker, and in the last 10 years we've paid down a substantial part of provincial debt.

The theme of this year's Speech from the Throne is "Growing Stronger." The province continues on that regard and growing stronger. Mr. Speaker, there's a number of other items, but I'm running a little bit short on my time. But the Speech from the Throne, the theme is to grow stronger. That's what this government has done in the last 10 years, is to keep on growing and it will continue to grow.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't tell you a few comments about our leader, the Premier of the province. I first met the province when I was managing the radio station in Swift Current where he lived, and at the time he was the economic development officer. When we combined the AM and FM radio station, we were looking for a program director at that time. And I knew there was a young gentleman that had some radio experience who was very sharp, and I actually interviewed him for a job at the radio station as the program director.

Well he didn't accept the offer and he moved on, and a few years later I had the opportunity to move to Moose Jaw to operate their radio station there. Shortly after that, I had a call from the member from Estevan who was now the leader of the opposition, and asked me if I would be interested in, would I look at the nomination for Moose Jaw North. After giving it some consideration and knowing the leadership abilities of this gentleman, I decided to do so.

Mr. Speaker, under his direction this province has certainly moved forward and grown, and I can appreciate what he has done. And he has certainly helped me in that decision, in asking me to be part of his team. And it just shows the leadership that he has and the confidence he has put in a lot of the people on this side of the House, and the reputation that he has developed for himself throughout Saskatchewan as such a capable leader, and for Western Canada and Canada as a whole throughout the nation, and even with a world influence.

Mr. Speaker, it's going to be hard to see somebody take his place, but it is an opportunity to look at new ideas and refresh the policies that we have, to move forward, and even keep going stronger.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my place, but I will not be supporting the amendment and I will support the Speech from the Throne as it was made from our members here.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. It's a real honour and a privilege to be able to reply to the Speech

from the Throne which was delivered on the occasion of the opening of the second session of the twenty-eighth legislature in Saskatchewan, our lovely province of Saskatchewan.

As we know, this will be the last Throne Speech that our Premier will be, Premier and his government will be delivering. As we can see, the Premier has not let up or taken time off, if you like, at all. The Premier's been very busy and working for the betterment of this province and the Saskatchewan people. You can only look at this Throne Speech and see how full it is and how innovative it is to continue to deal with any issues in the province. So I'd like to thank the Premier for his service and for the work he's doing now and right up to the last day that he is in that position.

I need to thank a few people, of course. I'd like to thank my wife, Cindy, who is an educational assistant in Biggar Central School 2000 — and today is her birthday, so happy birthday, Cindy — and recognize my son Marshall who works in Saskatoon, daughter Alex who is going to the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] and is going to graduate with a degree in social work this spring's convocation. My daughter Lacey who works at Nature Saskatchewan and her husband, Nick, and their two children, Surayya and Amara. Amara just turned one here back in June so she's a big joy in our household and our heart.

I'd like to thank my CA [constituency assistant] Janet Hanson, who does an excellent job in the office in Biggar, and she goes out one day to Hepburn to look after the constituents' concerns. We're always available to help wherever we can and she can with constituents' concerns and get the issue to a minister's office or help resolve the issues.

A number of other people I'd like to recognize and thank: my constituency president, Mayor Ray Sadler, the mayor of Biggar, been president for a number of years. He's a great help and we travel lots together to party functions, and I value his friendship and advice. Vice-president Lorne Cornish who is a great source of advice as well; the secretary of Biggar-Sask Valley, Desiree Hinse. Now poor Desiree has been having some problems. She has filled in part time when Janet's away in my office. She is going through some very difficult times with some medical issues. And her son Zane, who I speak about quite often, he's four years old. He lives with us, so my wife, Cindy, is having to raise a four-year-old in my absence. I look forward to seeing Zane when I get back home from the legislature.

And a thank you to James Walker who's vice-principal of Central School 2000, who is my treasurer, and Dakota Ekman who's been my long-time membership director and news director.

My constituency, Biggar-Sask Valley, of course changed after the last election. And so it includes the town of Biggar naturally, and everything north of Highway 14 which is Asquith and goes right up to Cando to the boundaries of The Battlefords, includes much of Highway 16, Ruddell and Maymont, Radisson, Borden, and Langham.

The new part of course, the Sask Valley part, is the area between Rosthern and Osler, Warman, and Martensville. So that's the communities of Dalmeny and Hague, Hepburn and

Waldheim, goes right to the Saskatchewan River. So it's a great . . . very friendly people, and constituency's made up of, is very much an agriculture constituency, great farms in the constituency.

We have more than agriculture in the constituency just in the town of Biggar: Prairie Malt, and they've been a long-standing business making malt for the brewery industry; AGI, who is a manufacturer making everything from oil tanks to the shaft that was put in at the mine at Bethune. So they're a very innovative family and do great work, employ a lot of people in Biggar. E-Kay manufacturing is a short line manufacturer making bin sweeps and augers and a number of things like that.

In Maymont it just happened to, this year the GrainsConnect terminal was just recently opened, so they're taking grain this fall. So congratulations to them and to the community of Maymont, which they are a valuable asset as well.

So I'd just like to get into some of the items in the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As our Throne Speech has outlined, Saskatchewan has enjoyed a decade of growth. The population has grown faster than it has since the earliest days of our province. During the decade, Saskatchewan has grown by 160,000 people, reversing the decline of the previous two decades, which of course most of it was under the government of the NDP.

You know, you can see it in every town and community and even in the rural areas where the population has grown, in Biggar-Sask Valley as well as in the cities and other parts of the province where people are buying homes, building homes. And you can see the number of people that now fill our schools and our churches, quite frankly. In the town of Biggar, the largest influx of immigrants are from the Philippines. And most of them are Catholic, so many of them go to church, and our Catholic church has really grown also. And a lot of them send their children to the separate school in Biggar, St. Gabriel's. But both the separate and public school has grown.

It's the same way right across the province wherever you go. So that's such a great advantage, when you have employment and you have opportunity that brings people in to the province, and there's nothing but good things come out of that growth.

Under health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a few things have to be pointed out. Since 2007 we have recruited more than 750 new doctors. In the town of Biggar, we have the only hospital that's in the constituency, and we have three doctors there with the hospital and long-term care. We've also recruited more than 3,400 nurses of every designation. In the province, we've built 13 new long-term care facilities that have opened. New hospitals built or under construction, including the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon and the new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford.

In the town of Biggar, as I mentioned, there was a new long-term care home built. It has 54 beds and the total shareable cost of the project was \$22.9 million. The province put up 18.3. So it attached the long-term care home to the hospital and renovated the hospital as well, so we have a great facility with three doctors and very good health care in Biggar and in the constituency.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's just some of the things in health care that our government has done. I mean we've shortened the surgical wait-lists. And a very innovative thing, is reduced down to one health region. That process is rolling out and I am very confident that's going to be a great improvement to health care in the province.

Our government accepted a recommendation made by an advisory board that examined the administrative structure governing health care in Saskatchewan. The panel recommended the consolidation of the province's 12 regional health authorities into a single Saskatchewan Health Authority, and it will begin operations in December. So they're very busy putting that in place right now.

We also, under our government's direction, will implement a new organ donation program, building on work undertaken by the standing committee. The program will be led by the donor physicians, who will provide education and support to fellow health care providers and champion organ donations across the province. Also, we will also expand the pool of donors by amending regulations to allow for donation after cardiocirculatory death by implementing a mandatory referral program. And also we'll continue to explore the option of moving into a presumed consent model of organ donation. I'm really keen on this. I think that's something that we should do, but we need to consult with the citizens of Saskatchewan before we move on that, of course. It's a very important step.

Of course our government also will fulfill its commitment to provide individualized funding for children under the age of six diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, or ASD. And I'd just like to put a bit more detail on the record. Our government will introduce individualized funding for pre-school children under the age of six who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, ASD, this session, as part of the next budget. The funding of \$4,000 annually per child under six years of age will begin in 2018-19. The Government of Saskatchewan currently provides nearly \$8 million in funding for ASD through the Ministry of Health, which includes \$5 million for professional medical support and consultations in health regions. ASD supports are also provided through the Ministry of Education and Social Services.

[15:45]

In 2017 and '18, to facilitate the transition towards an individualized funding model for ASD services in Saskatchewan from the current model where funding is provided to health regions to hire specialists, our government established a working group of stakeholders to review best practices in other jurisdictions and provide recommendations to government on issues involved in transitioning to the new model. And that's very exciting. My wife, as I said, is an educational assistant. She works with, pretty well, children with autism on a regular basis, and it's just one of those conditions that is, I don't know . . . It's perplexing, I guess, to see that. But you know, we are offering help to the families and individuals with those problems.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, under education this year, 21 new schools accommodating more than 11,000 students opened the doors for the first time. Eighteen of those schools are joint-use

facilities built using a P3, or public-private partnership, model that reduced construction costs by \$100 million. These schools are located on nine sites in Saskatoon, Regina, Warman, and Martensville, and they were completed in less than two years. And our government has constructed or renovated 65 schools during the last decade, including several new community schools.

And in the constituency of Biggar-Sask Valley, a couple of projects: 2008, Biggar and district daycare project was completed with an investment of \$368,000; 2010, the Borden School roof project, \$200,000. And the list goes on and on with those types of improvements in schools and daycares across the constituency and the province.

Our government had an unprecedented \$17 billion investment in kindergarten to grade 12 education over the past decade and has also provided for 875 more teachers and the creation of nearly 6,000 new child care spaces. And child care spaces are so important for families, you know, when both parents are working or single parents. It's so vital, and we have a daycare in Biggar and other communities that help families so much.

During this session, our government will introduce legislation that will protect the right to school choice by invoking the notwithstanding clause of The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. So I applaud the Premier and our government for that as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Under the area of protecting our communities, as we know, earlier this year the federal government announced its intention to legalize non-medical use of marijuana by July 2018. And despite these concerns, the federal government has not changed its timetable. Therefore our government has no choice but to prepare for this historic revision to the Criminal Code. Our government is in the midst of a review process that includes an online public consultation that received nearly 35,000 responses. This review is guided by four objectives: preventing the growth of the underground marijuana market, restricting access to minors, ensuring road and workplace safety, and protecting public health. Once the review is completed this fall, our government will introduce legislation that will govern the sale and distribution of marijuana, and online measures to protect public health and safety and enhance public education.

During the last decade, more than 600 people have been killed and more than 4,000 people injured in accidents involving drivers impaired by alcohol. And in the last year, our government has introduced a number of measures. These actions include increasing the age of which drivers are prohibited from having any drugs or alcohol in their blood system from 19 and under to 21, and I think that's a very, very good move. Introducing a three-day vehicle seizure for drivers over the age of 21 found to have blood alcohol levels between .04 and .08 for the first time. And another innovative move because even though a person will not have a criminal record, this, you know, this is a serious, serious situation. A vehicle is seized whether it's owned by an employee or a spouse or a family member. That vehicle is out of service for three days. So people need to really take a look at their habits about drinking and driving. And of course making Saskatchewan's ignition interlock law the toughest in Canada — another great, great innovation that we brought in.

We will be urging municipalities to allow ride-sharing services to protect within their jurisdiction. Our government will also introduce legislation enabling SGI to offer affordable insurance to drivers working for ride-sourcing companies like Uber and Lyft.

Also we have brought in innovation to address the concerns of rural crime in Saskatchewan. Our government appointed a committee of government MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] to consult on measures that might strengthen public safety. And I went to one meeting, and you know, crime, drugs and crime, and property theft and damage is a very serious concern in Biggar-Sask Valley in the northwest as it is in many other areas, and our government has responded to that. And I'll outline what our government is doing that has been outlined in the Throne Speech.

Our government acted on the committee's recommendation to create a new protection and response team or PRT consisting of 258 armed officers who have the authority to arrest and detain those suspected of committing crimes. The PRT is composed of 120 police officers from the RCMP and municipal police services, 40 commercial vehicle enforcement officers who have been given expanded powers, and 90 conservation officers. The protection and response team will improve response times to emergency calls and increase the visibility of uniformed officers in rural Saskatchewan. Our government has committed nearly \$6 million to support the PRT and other initiatives rising from the committee's report. Very innovative and very welcomed by the citizens of my constituency and around the province.

Under infrastructure, I've touched on a number of infrastructure areas, but during our last decade our government has invested more than \$26 billion to renew and expand Saskatchewan infrastructure. Of that total, 7.4 billion has been committed to the province's highways. And we can go through the list. This record investment resulted in the repair and improvement of 12 000 kilometres of highway and the completion of significant projects such as Saskatoon's Circle Drive South bridge, the St. Louis bridge, the twinning of Highway 11, passing lanes on Highway 7 and Highway 10. This year work continues on the Regina bypass, overpasses at Martensville and Warman, the Saskatoon north commuter parkway bridge, twinning projects on Highway 39, 16, and 7, and passing lanes on Highway 5, among many other projects.

And there's many, many more infrastructure projects that our government has invested in. As an example in my constituency: Dalmeny, a new storm water system for \$378,000; Hepburn received \$228,000 for a water distribution system; and Radisson received \$110,000 for a swimming pool reconstruction. So there's many innovations, plus the highways, that have been approved that go through the constituency.

Last session our government passed Bill No. 40, a legislation that would allow for the sale of up to 49 per cent of a Crown corporation. This legislation would have enabled a Crown corporation to enter into a partnership beneficial to the province while ensuring the government remaining the majority owner of that project. Over the last few months our government has heard many people feel very concerned about this legislation and potential sale of even a small stake in a Crown corporation. Consequently our government repealed the provision of Bill . . .

will repeal the provisions of Bill 40 that allow for the sale of partial equity position of a Crown corporation. So our government is listening to the people of Saskatchewan. There's an example of that in this Throne Speech.

Demand for electricity has grown by 25 per cent since 2007 and is expected to increase by another 13 per cent by 2025. SaskPower has responded by investing nearly \$8 billion during the last decade to meet increased demand and to restore and replace aging infrastructure. This year the company expect to allocate another \$1.1 billion in capital projects.

Since 2008 SaskTel has invested more than \$2.6 billion to improve telephone Internet service in the province. This year SaskTel will spend \$300 million to expand and enhance its network with a total of \$1.1 billion expected to be invested in the next four years. So that's very important infrastructure investment because one of the concerns we see and hear is poor cell and Internet service in many parts of the province. So this is there to address that concern.

So, Mr. Speaker, our government also recognizes that there's more than 100,000 jobs in our province that depends on exports. During our decade of growth, Saskatchewan exports to emerging markets, particularly in Asia, have grown by staggering amounts. Saskatchewan's exports to China have increased 530 per cent over the past decade to \$3 billion last year. Exports to India are up 272 per cent, \$1.5 billion. Pakistan exports are up 293 per cent to 548 million and exports to Indonesia are up 132 per cent to \$543 million.

Our government will continue to expand our export markets through further trade missions in these and other countries through the support of trade-focused organizations like the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership. So we're doing great things there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I just want to definitely touch on agriculture. In 2016 Saskatchewan shipped \$14.4 billion worth of agriculture products, more than half of all exports. In the coming year my government will continue to provide strong support to farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses. We will stand up for our agriculture sector in opposing a federal carbon tax and the federal small business tax changes that will hit farmers and ranchers hard. We will work to expand access to important markets across the globe, and we will continue to invest in research through the Agriculture Development Fund, the Global Institute for Food Security, and the livestock and forage centre of excellence at the University of Saskatchewan.

Our support extends to Saskatchewan's value-added food processing industry, which has grown tremendously through the years. There are now more than 300 food companies operating in the province, generating more than 4 billion in revenue and employing 5,000 people. And to build on this momentum, our government will launch an agriculture value-added new-growth incentive intended to attract more investment into the sector.

My time is running out, Mr. Speaker, but you know, we're doing great things on the environmental front. SaskPower is expanding its renewable power as well, doubling renewable generation in less than 15 years and of course investing \$1.3 billion in the world's first commercial power plant equipped

with a post-combustion carbon capture system. So doing great things there, and SaskPower will continue to do great things on the environmental side.

You know, under the social services, because of our economic growth in the last decade our government was in a position to invest more than \$3.7 billion to support people with disabilities and in 2009 created the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program, or SAID. And since then we have increased benefits paid to recipients of the program four times. The government supports more than 4,000 individuals and families with respite and individual day programs. And the list goes on and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

I've only touched on some of the things in the Throne Speech that our government has done and our government will continue to do in the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech and will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin. I think we're having troubles here. Greg, the mikes aren't . . .

Mr. Meili: — Is it all right if I go from this chair, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker: — Yes.

Mr. Meili: — That's okay? Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Please disregard the technical difficulties there. Now the mike seems to be working.

[16:00]

And you know, the theme for the Speech from the Throne was around gratitude, so grateful that the equipment is back on. I'm also, like the Throne Speech said, I'm grateful to be here in Saskatchewan and from Saskatchewan.

This year our family has a little bit extra to be grateful for. We have a new son who was born on September 4.

[Applause]

Mr. Meili: — Thank you very much. Our little Augustin Bleu. So some of you on the other side of the aisle will know that I have a bit of an affection for wordplay and puns. People on this side of the room would call it an affliction. So I was very pleased when my son decided that he would be born on Labour Day. Thought that was very fitting, especially since his father is from a workers' party. So I'm thankful for that arrival, and of course that everyone is doing well. Mahli's doing well, as is our son Abraham, who's very happy to be a big brother. On est aussi vraiment remerçant pour l'aide de Françoise, ma belle-mère. Sans elle on ne sera pas capable; même avec, c'est un défi.

[Translation: We are also truly thankful for the help of Françoise, my mother-in-law. Without her we would not be able to cope; even with, it's a challenge.]

I want to also, as is customary and is my first chance to get to do so, thank Jasmine Liska who is my constituency assistant. She's been doing a terrific job setting up our office in the little red house on 3rd Avenue, and being very accommodating and helpful to the constituents and to her errant MLA.

I also want to take an occasion to welcome a friend to the legislature. Seated in your gallery, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is Dave Mitchell. Dave is one of my oldest friends. We've known each other for many years, bonded over a shared love of bad jokes and good politics, and he is working on the campaign for leadership as our communications director. Thankful to him and all of the staff on that team and volunteers on that team. And also thankful to my caucus mates, even the Whip. It's a great group, very supportive and helpful as one is still learning the ropes, even after a few months here.

I'm very grateful to have Ms. . . . not saying her name. Saskatoon Fairview. See, one of these things that you're still learning. Our member from Saskatoon Fairview, who is a terrific addition to our group. You know, the former prime minister, Mr. Harper, used to caution us against practising sociology, but I actually think practising some sociology is exactly what we need. Someone who's interested and understands the academic and theoretic underpinnings of the ideas that we're discussing, but also is deeply concerned with their practical application, and the experience of people on the ground.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the summer I got a chance to travel around and learn more about what that experience on the ground is for people in Saskatchewan. We were all over the province: Maple Creek, Meadow Lake, Preeceville, Rocanville. You name it; we were there. And you know, we heard a lot from the people of Saskatchewan about their concerns.

We heard a lot about the shutdown of STC, hearing from farmers who were losing days in the field as a result of not being able to get parts, from small-business owners in larger cities and smaller centres who aren't able to get their shipments out to their customers in a timely or affordable way. Heard about elders in communities who can't keep appointments anymore, medical appointments, and are even considering moving out of small towns into larger centres because they aren't able to access those appointments. And of course hearing the stories of people having to hitchhike, having lost that lifeline to the rest of the province and how dangerous that is.

Other things that we've heard a lot about are the introduction of PST, in particular, on crop and hail insurance. That's really harming producers, as is PST on construction. That's a really good way to slow down the building economy in a time where it actually needs to be picked up.

Of course there was also a lot said about cuts to health care, cuts to things like the hearing aid program and podiatry. And I heard a lot from my constituents and my patients, because I continue to practice family medicine on occasion, about the cancellation of the special diet fund, or the limitation of the special diet fund for people with chronic illnesses like HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] and diabetes. That's a real hardship on people that are barely scraping by with a few dollars.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if the mike from the other seat is connected, if that's why they're not able to hear? Are we okay now? Thank you. Technical difficulties all along.

The other thing that I certainly heard a lot of, Mr. Speaker, as we were travelling the province in places that hadn't elected a New Democrat in a long time and from individuals who don't tend to vote New Democrat, I still heard great frustration on their part around . . . are we okay? . . . around the discussion of the sale in part of the Crown corporations. There's a very consistent disagreement with that as a possibility.

The other thing that we heard a great deal about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the injustice of, in the time of all those cuts, in the time where we're talking about selling off key pieces of infrastructure and key pieces of our system that supports us, of those Crown corporations, at the same time we're talking about cuts to corporate taxes and cuts to income taxes for the highest earner. Moving taxes from the highest earners to the lowest, it's really backwards. It's not at all a fair or a helpful way to go. And while they might not have used the term exactly, the people of Saskatchewan understand that austerity is not a functional approach, that when you cut deeply in a time of economic downturn, you don't correct the economy. In fact you make things worse. You hurt people in the short term with decreased access to health, education, other supports they truly need. You also slow down any economic recovery.

So these are the things that we heard about, the complaints that we heard. But the other thing that I heard, and perhaps most consistently, is that people didn't want just to know what we didn't like. They knew that we would stop the cuts, that we would save the Crowns. They didn't want to just hear what we're fighting against. They wanted to know what we're fighting for. And I'm sure that something similar has been heard by the leadership candidates from the Saskatchewan Party, as they've been pushed to identify the mistakes that have been referenced by the Premier and others, but also to propose their own vision and put forward some promises and platform as one of them will very soon become the new Premier. But I'm sure what they've experienced, as we have, is that people are looking to be inspired. They're looking to have a vision for the future of Saskatchewan laid out before them. And there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is where the disappointment really lies in this year's Throne Speech.

As I said, this is my first time for a Throne Speech here on the floor. And there's a lot of pomp and circumstance. There's a lot of interest in the process. But the actual content, well it left a lot to be desired. There was little hope. There was little substance. It's a backward-looking document, not just in its reliance on applauding a legacy but in ignoring current needs, current realities, and emerging understanding of what actually works to advance a province.

Now of course this wasn't my Throne Speech to give, but had it been, had it been an invitation to imagine a better Saskatchewan, it would have looked quite different. It would have started with a commitment to making health the primary goal, to using a Health in all Policies approach model in order to assure that decisions across different departments, across different ministries, kept in mind what should be our primary goal, which is improving the quality of life of the people of this

province. And improving that quality of life starts with a commitment to a healthy economy, an economy in which we keep people working, with opportunities for businesses to thrive, but also an economy that works for people.

You know, after a decade of growth, as this Speech from the Throne describes, well my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana pointed out there are a lot of things that grew in that period that we shouldn't be so proud of — for example, inequality. For each dollar that the incomes of the bottom 20 per cent of Saskatchewan earners went up in the last decade, the incomes of the top earners, the top 20 per cent, went up by \$7 — seven times as much. And in that same period you saw life expectancy decreasing for that bottom quintile, while it increased for the top. The way that inequality has grown has resulted in greater disparities in health outcomes and worse quality of life and earlier death for those who don't benefit the most.

So in order to have an economy that works for everyone, we need to make some improvements. We need a \$15-an-hour minimum wage and pay equity legislation. And instead of a passive-aggressive partial repeal of Bill 40, a repeal that appears to blame Saskatchewan people for not accepting the Newspeak of a pretend World Bank definition, we need a proper commitment, not just to keeping our Crowns, but to strengthen them by expanding the markets in which they can operate, by looking at opportunities in technology, such as leveraging the strength of SaskPower, SaskTel to actually host cloud-computing storage here in Saskatchewan. I'm looking at how do we distribute energy production, solar and wind around the province in order to provide income, much needed energy, and opportunities in small towns and reserves.

And we need a Throne Speech that recognizes the cost of poverty, that nearly \$4 billion a year is lost to our economy because of the number of people who are living in poverty in Saskatchewan. I mentioned it's my first Throne Speech down here, but it's not my first Throne Speech that I've been in the legislature for. I came in 2014 to witness the Throne Speech in which the Premier made a significant effort to focus on poverty, a word that is missing in this year's Throne Speech. And in that 2014 speech, he even singled me out and others, who had advocated for a poverty reduction strategy, and promised that such a thing would be put in place. And there was a process, nearly a year long, to come up with recommendations and a strategy, but unfortunately the recommendations were largely ignored and the strategy, such as it was, has not been enacted in any significant way.

A Throne Speech that was really focused on our future would put in place a real poverty reduction strategy, following those recommendations to institute a 50 per cent decrease in five years, because those recommendations, even after a few years, they'd still stand up. They're still there, ready to be used. A Throne Speech that would make a real difference would focus on investing upstream, on the return of investment to the economy. And we heard from the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce and the transform Saskatchewan project about the need to have an upstream economy where we recognize that investments now pay off in the long term, investments like, not just child care, but actual high-quality early childhood education, giving every child in those first 1,000 days a chance to really establish the skills, the opportunities to be able to

thrive in the long term.

We need to restore funding to schools, expanding the community schools model and making sure that children with special needs or language needs have the educational assistant support they need in the classroom.

And we need to look at the decrease, the very sudden decrease over the last decade in the number of students from lower income families who are seeking out higher education. It's plummeted in Saskatchewan compared to the rest of Western Canada, which is coincident with a significant rise in the cost of tuition. We need to move from the highest tuition in Western Canada to the lowest.

Something that wasn't mentioned in any significant way in this Throne Speech was First Nations and Métis people. The only real reference was an increase in post-secondary enrolment among that population, which is a positive thing, but does it really represent a change or is it just reflective of an increase in the numbers in that population overall?

What's clear is that we need to do much more than just see a few more people getting into post-secondary education. A Throne Speech with a real vision for our future would identify closing the gap in health, education, and economic outcomes as a primary priority by re-establishing a ministry of First Nations and Métis relations in order to meet the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that apply to Saskatchewan.

And I would like to see us consider the model done in Australia where every year they have a speech called the closing the gap speech, which is elevated to the level of a budget or Throne Speech in importance, and it examines the degree to which in the previous year that government has been successful in advancing action on the disparities that increase. We need to elevate that discussion to its rightful place of importance here in Saskatchewan.

When it comes to health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all that we saw was discussion of the amalgamation of the health regions and an indication that that would somehow save money, despite the fact that it hasn't been shown to do so in any other province. But what has been shown to happen is that when there are major changes with this government you also see changes to privatization of services, to job cuts. That's what concerns me most there.

[16:15]

We also saw crowing about the increased number of MRIs that were done through the privatized MRI system, but no actual indication of whether that is decreasing waiting lists, which isn't actually surprising because nowhere has it been demonstrated that privatizing that kind of service actually decreases waiting lists within the public system.

How much more interesting would it have been for us to see commitment to a Choosing Wisely model, where the most evidence-based and cost-effective methods are chosen within the health system; so rather than increasing the numbers of tests we don't need, actually decreasing unnecessary prescriptions,

testing, and surgical procedures.

We also are the only OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] country without a national pharmacare plan. We need to continue to advocate for that, but if we aren't able to achieve that at a national level, Saskatchewan can once again take the lead and establish such a program here on our own because by buying in bulk and covering people's medications now instead of covering their expensive treatment once they're ill, we can save significant funds.

The other thing that was not significantly mentioned — or understood, I think — was the way in which rural Saskatchewan has been taken for granted. And the cancellation of STC is not the only element. We also of course saw the introduction of PST on hail and crop insurance. We've seen very little action on the significant water drainage problems and the waste management challenges faced by smaller communities.

A real plan for the future would be recognizing that farmers are talking today about climate change. They're recognizing that that's changing growing seasons, that's changing the length of droughts and of wet periods, and that they need support in marketing and research to be able to adapt and mitigate that growing problem.

And a shocking omission to my mind, in this speech, right after the incidents in southwest Saskatchewan, is that there was no mention of disaster relief for those who had their livestock and their land affected by wildfires. That seems to me a shocking oversight.

We also saw nothing in any significant way in terms of energy leadership. We've been a laggard in that area in terms of moving, transitioning to the 21st century in energy infrastructure that is so much required. It's time for us to stop grandstanding and start showing leadership with a made-in-Saskatchewan response to the federal carbon pricing plan that introduces more jobs in energy production, in retrofitting existing buildings and building new green buildings, in protecting families and producers and trade-exposed industries and, most importantly, actually decreasing emissions rather than pretending that they will go away on their own.

We need to be leading the change to the energy infrastructure of the next century, and we need to be leading the change to a deeper democracy. That means moving away from corporate and union donations but also involving people in a citizens' assembly to find ways to increase democratic engagement, increase the level of trust that people have in the process, increase voter turnout, and make sure that we have fair representation.

I appreciate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the spirit of gratitude that this Speech from the Throne led with, and I share in that gratitude. Saskatchewan has provided so much for me, my family, and so many.

But people aren't looking for a Throne Speech that gives thanks to the Sask Party, that gives thanks to this Premier. They're looking for a vision. They're looking for a plan for a better

Saskatchewan. And this Throne Speech, while it might satisfy those in the mood for a self-congratulatory look back, for those who want a forward-thinking, far-reaching set of ideas, well this Throne Speech came up far short, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And for that reason I'll be supporting the amendment. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise in this House, Mr. Speaker, and reply to the Speech from the Throne. It truly is an honour and a privilege to serve the constituents of Saskatoon Westview.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to thank Premier Wall for his unwavering commitment to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. It not only was an honour to have his name on every piece of literature that I handed out during the 2016 election, but it was also an honour to be on billboards and to use his name when you greeted someone on the doorstep.

Those things were nice, Mr. Speaker, but they were only symbols of the truly remarkable person that he was and still is to this day. What really helped so many of us get elected was his honesty, his integrity, his hard work ethic, and his vision for our province. But probably even more important to me was his humility. When someone would congratulate him for a job well done, he rarely took credit but would pass on the praise usually right back to the people of Saskatchewan. It truly has been a humbling experience to serve under the leadership of Premier Wall. So thank you, Premier Wall, and may God bless you, Tami, and your family as you enjoy a less political life.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few thanks to some other people who truly make a difference in my life. And the person that I want to thank first is my wife, Karen. Karen is always supportive, always there to help, and usually without even being asked. And as an example, my clothing that I sometimes put in the laundry basket, but more than likely it was left on the bench at the end of the bed somehow, and I don't know how it happens, it just ends up hanging on hangers in the closet. Socks end up paired, and everything is ready to go before I even need it. Some might call it magic, but I think we all know better. I think we all call it love and the support of our spouses.

I would also like to thank my constituency assistant, Sasha Peters, for her hard work helping our constituents. Sasha is a great listener and never underestimates people's needs when they come to the office, regardless of which constituency they live in.

I also want to thank the constituents of Saskatoon Westview for their support during my last year and a half as their elected representative of the provincial government. It is an honour and a privilege to serve them.

This last year has been a challenge as we struggle with low resource revenues, as our government continues to work towards balancing the budget. This government has listened to the people and reacted to their concerns. Mr. Speaker, this is not a time to shift the shortfalls of today to the next generation, well not unless you want to go back to buying luggage for our

graduates because we are no longer a province that business wants to invest in, days like when the NDP were in power.

Mr. Speaker, recently we opened a new school in my constituency of Saskatoon Westview, a school the NDP voted against in the budget, and a school that constituents said they desperately needed. This school will educate hundreds of new students, of which many are new Canadians. The 18 new joint-use P3 schools were built on time and on budget, and in fact saved over \$100 million using that process. And I think it's important to point out that we would not have been able to build as many schools if we had used a traditional model.

These two schools, Ernest Lindner and St. Lorenzo Ruiz, were designed with input from teachers, from students, from parents, the school division, and from community members. I want to say thank you to the government of the day that made those important commitments to build 18 joint-use schools. Education is very important and one of our government's most important priorities and meets the demand of growth we have seen over the past 10 years. Another promise made and another promise kept.

Since 2007 this government has built 40 brand new or replacement schools and 25 major school renovations. This is in stark contrast to the NDP who closed 176 schools while they were in government. This government has hired over 875 teachers and 173 more student support teachers since 2007. This is also in stark contrast to the NDP who from 2001 to 2007 let go 400 teachers. The new joint-use school in Saskatoon Westview will also alleviate a lot of congestion in the neighbouring schools.

This past weekend, Mr. Speaker, I attended and brought greetings to the World Mining Competition in Saskatoon. That's right, a world mining competition right here in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This competition has university students from all over the world here to compete and put their problem solving skills together to solve complex mining questions. These groups compete in groups of four and have roughly two days to come up with solutions using new and existing technologies.

When I told them how much potential Saskatchewan has in the mining industry, they became very intrigued. Some even commented that they would like to return to Saskatchewan when they finish their respective degrees. For our province, the mining industry employs thousands of people right across this province, and in the last decade there has been 2.87 billion invested on mineral exploration in Saskatchewan. Last year alone, the value of our mineral sales was 6.4 billion. I told the students that 80 per cent of US [United States] uranium imports came from Canada in 2016, and as a result of those imports from Canada, one in 19 houses received power derived from Canadian uranium — an impressive number, Mr. Speaker.

I also explained how Saskatchewan held almost half of the world's reserves of potash and that Saskatchewan was the largest producer in the world. This year saw the first potash mine being completed in Saskatchewan in over 45 years. In 2016 Saskatchewan had sales and production of 11 million tonnes K20, the second highest in our history, and 2017 is expected to reach an all-time high.

The importance of predictability managing our resources while encouraging responsible and competitive investment is something that informs our policy and decision-making rationale at every level. In a 2016 annual survey of mining companies, the Fraser Institute ranks 104 jurisdictions around the entire world. These rankings are based on a combination of two things: geologic attractiveness for minerals and metals, and policy attractiveness. Saskatchewan ranks no. 1 on that list of 104 jurisdictions, again a very impressive number.

Mr. Speaker, one of the projects that I worked on in the last year was on organ donation in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has an organ donation rate much lower than other parts of Canada and many other countries. Last year the Standing Committee for Human Services reviewed the current organ donation program and was looking for ways to increase the rate of organ donation. During this session this government will implement a new organ donation system, building on work undertaken by the standing committee. The program will be led by donor physicians who will provide education and support to fellow health care providers and champion organ donation across this province.

We will also expand the pool of donors by amending the regulations to allow for a donation after cardio-circulatory death and by implementing a mandatory referral program. In addition we will continue to explore the option of moving to a presumed consent model of organ donation.

During this session this government will fulfill its commitment to provide individualized funding for children with autism spectrum disorder or ASD. The initial funding will be 4,000 per year for each child for a total investment of 2.8 million next fiscal year. This funding is in addition to the nearly 8 million this government already provides to support ASD within the health care system.

[16:30]

Our government has made significant investments in infrastructure to ensure that we can compete and prosper. During the last decade our government has invested more than 26 billion to renew and expand Saskatchewan's infrastructure. Of that total, 7.4 billion has been committed to the province's highway system. This record investment has resulted in the repair and improvement of 12 000 kilometres of highway and the completion of significant projects such as the Saskatoon Circle Drive bridge, the St. Louis bridge, the twinning of Highway 11, and the passing lanes on Highway 7 and 10.

This year work continues on the Regina bypass, overpasses at Martensville and Warman, the Saskatoon north commuter parkway bridge, twinning projects on Highway 39, 16, and 7, and passing lanes on Highway 5, among many other projects. In the Saskatoon region, highways have received significant funding from this government in the last 10 years.

In 2016-17 projects include 15 million for the north commuter bridge, 5.2 million to finish the twinning of Highway 16 from Saskatoon to just past Clavet, 26.6 million for the continuation of interchanges at Martensville and Warman. Other notable investments, 11.4 million for twinning Highway 7 from Saskatoon to Delisle in the 2015-16 budget. In 2009, 98.5

million was spent for the Saskatoon south Circle Drive bridge. In 2011, 150 million was spent twinning Highway 11. In 2008, 44.3 million was spent on Highway 219, south of Saskatoon; 2015, 43.5 million was spent on Highway 305; 2011, 24.4 for the Dalmeny access road.

Mr. Speaker, I worked in the trucking industry for several years, and these are all very significant investments and will help our province well into the future. These investments in highway infrastructure are vitally important as we continue to build the building blocks of a vibrant and a promising province.

Another of the important investments in Saskatoon is revenue sharing. In 2017-18 revenue sharing was over 48 million, which is up 161 per cent since 2007-2008. Investments in the Saskatoon health area are the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital at 15.5 million, the IT [information technology] system for Jim Pattison Hospital, the capital equipment funding of 3.65 million, block funding for capital maintenance of 14.65 million, and 8 million to Parkridge Centre for renovations.

Our government has worked hard to ensure prosperity and competitiveness. International engagement is a priority for our government because trade drives Saskatchewan's economy. More than 100,000 jobs in our province depend on exports. During our decade of growth, Saskatchewan exports to emergent markets, particularly in Asia, have grown by staggering amounts. Saskatchewan exports to China have increased by 530 per cent over the past decade to 3 billion last year. Exports to India are up 272 per cent to 1.5 billion, and exports to Pakistan are up 293 per cent to 548 million. Exports to Indonesia are up 132 per cent to 543 million. Our government will continue working to expand our export markets through further trade missions to these and other countries and through support for trade-focused organizations like the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, better known as STEP.

As negotiations continue on a new North American free trade agreement proceed, we will join with others in Canada in reminding our trading partners about the benefits of free trade and the dangers of protectionism. Our government will also continue to advocate for free trade within Canada. Saskatchewan stands to benefit from the new North American Free Trade Agreement which came into force July 1st. The CFTA [Canadian Free Trade Agreement] will reduce barriers to trade, investment, and the mobility of workers.

However, our government is concerned that other provincial governments do not share Saskatchewan's commitment to free trade. An impartial trade panel has ruled that Alberta's rebate program for small brewers discriminates against brewers in Saskatchewan. The panel also determined the rebate program is not in accordance with Alberta's trade obligations to other provinces. Alberta is appealing the decision. Our government is considering a range of retaliatory measures in response to Alberta's unfair trade practices.

This year capital investment in Saskatchewan is forecasted to be 14.5 billion. While this is down from a few years ago, it is still 43 per cent higher than in 2007. Saskatchewan's favourable business investment climate has played a major role in attracting investment. In the last provincial budget our

government increased and broadened the provincial sales tax base in Saskatchewan to reduce our dependency on resource revenues. But even with those changes, Saskatchewan remains the lowest of provinces that have a sales tax. We have reduced income taxes for all citizens. Saskatchewan's manufacturing and processing taxes are the lowest in Canada. Competitive taxes and sensible regulations help build the Saskatchewan advantage, and our government will do everything it can to defend the Saskatchewan advantage.

In the spring budget our government committed to keeping Saskatchewan competitive with our neighbouring provinces by moving to the lowest corporate tax rate in Canada, matching British Columbia's rate of 11 per cent. Since then, two things have changed. First, the BC [British Columbia] government has announced it will raise its corporate tax rate to 12 per cent, which will be the same as Alberta and Manitoba; and second, the federal government introduced tax changes that could negatively affect Canadian small business.

While we are pleased the federal government has backed down on most of its proposed tax changes that would have hurt small business, our government has decided to refocus its business tax reduction plan on Saskatchewan small business. Effective January 1st, 2018, we will raise the small-business income threshold from 500,000 to 600,000, the highest threshold in Canada. This is the amount of income up to which small businesses pay tax at a significantly lower 2 per cent tax rate. We will also return the corporate tax rate to 12 per cent, the same as other Western provinces.

Our government is monitoring developments in the potash industry, particularly the merger of PotashCorp and Agrium into a new company called Nutrien. Our government's priority is to ensure Nutrien's continued head office presence in Saskatoon and increased employment in Saskatchewan as the merger moves forward and market conditions improve.

Our government will continue to lead the national discussion in competitiveness in the resources sector. With multi-layered reviews and climate change initiative being advanced by the federal government, there is a high level of uncertainty in energy and mining. Our energy sector is one of Canada's greatest strengths, yet its economic potential is being hamstrung by our own national government even as Canada continues to import thousands of barrels of oil every day from other countries. In the past year energy projects worth 56 billion have been abandoned, including the Energy East pipeline which would have moved Saskatchewan oil to tidewater, enabling our province to get full value for the oil it produces.

Our government will continue to call for transparent, predictable, and timely approval processes for resource companies. This fiscal year our government will introduce a new targeted mineral development strategy. The strategy will include an incentive for mineral exploration to cover the costs associated with ground-based exploration activities.

I could go on and on about the Speech from the Throne and how it is important to keep moving forward, but it appears my time has elapsed, and so I will leave with that. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the main motion and I will not be supporting the amendments. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour to stand in my place again this year in this legislature to speak in favour of the Throne Speech, as delivered by the Lieutenant Governor, from our Premier and our government. And just for the record, I will be speaking in favour of the Throne Speech obviously, and I will be speaking against the amendment by the opposition.

As is customary quite often in this Assembly, we do recognize those that support us and got us here, Mr. Speaker. This year actually my list is quite long. Of course I want to thank my family. My wife, Leone, my daughters, Katelin and Rayanne, are very supportive and always supporting me in this job and looking after things at home when I'm not there, and I really do appreciate them. And of course, as I talked about I think last Throne Speech, maybe the one before it, how we were blessed with a new granddaughter in March, two and a half years ago. And actually we're expecting another grandchild on the way, from the same daughter, shortly, in March or April. So we're really looking forward to that, which is . . . You know, it changes your perspective as a parent. You have a bit of a different perspective change as a grandparent. You have a bit of a different perspective change.

I think a lot of the Throne Speech and what we've seen in the final budget, or the last budget, kind of reflects that. As the Premier communicated quite eloquently, you know, some difficult decisions to make, but still decisions that have to be made so that we don't have our children or our grandchildren paying the bills that we would accumulate now. But we see many, many jurisdictions, provincially and federally of course, that are racking up the tab, so to speak, and our young ones are going to have to pay that tab eventually, Mr. Speaker. So of course again, I appreciate my family, all the support and the love that they do give me and allow me to do my job here.

Of course I'd be remiss if I didn't thank the staff back in Yorkton, Laretta and Rachelle back in Yorkton who represent me very well when I'm here, and of course do the casework and address the concerns and the questions of constituents back home when I'm here as well, and of course keep me up to date with what's going on and keep my schedule quite full as well when I get back home, consulting with constituents, going to public events, and the other duties that are aligned with being an MLA, Mr. Speaker.

Of course I want to thank all of my colleagues throughout the Assembly actually, the opposition and my fellow colleagues. It's been a very interesting year. I might even touch on some of that briefly, Mr. Speaker. But I really appreciate the support and the prayers and everything that's been afforded me and my family over the last better part of the year.

And of course my colleagues on this side of the House, I obviously couldn't do what I do without them, including the staff in the Minister of Rural and Remote Health's office, you know, all the way from the chief of staff down through the MAs [ministerial assistant], the executive assistant, the administrative staff. Of course they serve the office very well. They support my job very, very, very well, but also the work ethic they have

in addressing concerns and issues that arise through the Health office that come to our attention, Mr. Speaker. I'm so appreciative of how they do work and their work ethic that they do come to work with every day, Mr. Speaker.

Of course my fellow minister, the Minister of Health, the member from Rosetown, is a great colleague. The former minister of Health from Weyburn was a great colleague as well, Mr. Speaker. But I do appreciate as well the new Minister of Health. I guess he's not new anymore. It's like a year or so; he's not a rookie anymore. He claims to be, but he's not. But just, you know, the way he's approaching some of the issues that we have to deal with right now, of course I'll touch on a little bit later, moving to one health region is something that takes a lot of attention to detail, a lot of administrative and, you know, just fact-checking and walking this process through, Mr. Speaker. So I so much appreciate his attention to detail and all that he offers that job and all that he brings to that position as well, Mr. Speaker.

And of course our Premier, we know he'll be . . . This is his last session as the Premier of our province represented in this Assembly. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I can't say enough how much I've appreciated him as a mentor and as a friend and also as a support here, Mr. Speaker. In fact over the last years I have been very publicly diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and still wanting to do my job as best that I could, and having the support of the Premier allowing me to do the best that I could through that, of course with the support of all the staff and family and my colleagues here, able to for the most part not miss too much work, even in ICU [intensive care unit] and in the hospital, Mr. Speaker, using a lot of email and texting, and not able to do some of the public events, but still able to carry on.

[16:45]

And I'm just so thankful for the confidence of the Premier and of course his friendship. And I would point to as well, Mr. Speaker, his selfless leadership style has afforded this province advancing leaps and strides over the past 10 years. In fact, Mr. Speaker, by any measure, looking at any premier in history, aside from time served in the Assembly, I think all statistics would show him as the most successful premier to sit in this seat in this legislature. And, Mr. Speaker, I think history will record that very aptly in the future.

Again, you know, over the last year I talked about it, it would have been probably about this time last year I knew something was up, and I was very public about it as well, Mr. Speaker. Denial and embarrassment probably could have cost me a lot more than my health, maybe even my life if I wouldn't have been more proactive with my health. But you know, Mr. Speaker, through the support of my family and encouragement of my family, and of course medical professionals that we do have in the province, you know, getting engaged in the medical system, seeing my family physician who referred me to a great surgeon, actually back home.

Being Minister of Rural and Remote Health, it was great to be able to get a lot of my care that was able to be accomplished back home in my hometown of Yorkton, and at the hospital there with their very skilled staff was something that I really

appreciated. And I think it supported a lot of what we're doing and it supported me in doing my job, getting a better understanding not only from a minister's point of view, from a parent's point of view, but also, you know, for the first time in a long time as a patient's point of view while actually being a minister in that very system was very useful.

In fact a few times I joked about almost feeling like I was in an episode of *Undercover Boss* because quite often when I look at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre here, they're doing their jobs every day. They're not worried about who's coming in and what their positions are, what they do out in the public life. They're worried about the patient and looking after the patient.

So it probably was about four weeks before they realized, number one, I could stay in Regina most of the time. I actually worked in Regina and eventually we got to the point of conversation where they realized I was an MLA, and about a week after they asked me if I had a position. So when I told them I was actually one of their ministers, it was very interesting because it not only opened up . . . The care was great all the way through, but it opened up some conversations where, you know, they're normally hearing from their unions or from the media certain things that we're doing, but it opened up an opportunity for conversation about things like continuous improvement and going to one health authority and operation of Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and our support for them.

So it really opened up a lot of opportunities where you can speak to the front-line providers first-hand and actually give a different perspective. And I was really, really encouraged by their openness to hearing that other perspective and maybe even changing some of their minds in maybe certain areas, Mr. Speaker. So again, thank you so much to the very many medical professionals all the way through the health care continuum that I was able to interact with and who did give such top quality care, I know, to myself and of course supports to our family.

Getting into the Throne Speech, there was a huge health focus in there and that's, I guess, for good reason because we know that about 40 per cent plus of our budget is actually focused on health and the provision of health.

So when we look at the Throne Speech, it talks about our two-for-one MRIs and the success rate that we've had there. And admittedly the federal government is, you know, maybe not really so much onside with that approach. But about a week and a half ago the Minister of Health and I were in Edmonton for the federal-provincial-territorial ministers' meetings, and we had opportunity at some of their private dinners and some of their breakout sessions to talk about some of our initiatives.

And I was quite encouraged that the minister from Quebec, the minister from New Brunswick, the minister from Manitoba were very supportive of our position. The federal minister was understanding, although you know admittedly she's quite new in her role, so she was trying to get a grasp I think of where we're coming from. But I was really encouraged by the minister from Ontario, although he would say he's not really in favour of maybe the total package and how it's delivered, but he could really understand from our net benefit to the province why we were promoting this and why we were encouraging it, and of course I think understanding of our success rate.

And I think now we're looking at about 1,800 scans through our two-for-one MRI process that have been done without the public system, that actually do again have a net benefit to the public system.

You know there's so many highlights in this Throne Speech about our numbers, and I'm very proud of our government's initiatives that we have been able to accomplish, whether it's the 750-plus physicians that we never had 10 years ago; whether it's, you know, part and parcel because of our increase in medical training seats, increase of our residency positions, many of those opportunities in rural Saskatchewan. So we see a lot of these professionals being exposed to rural health care, seeing those opportunities and actually taking advantage of those opportunities.

We're to the point now, we see previously under the former administration 60 medical seats, about 57 per cent of those stayed in the province. Now we have 100 medical training seats, 75 per cent retention rate. A lot of those local students are actually looking at those rural opportunities and taking advantage of those. So we're making steps in health care throughout the province when it comes to medical professionals, but again also in rural and remote areas, which is of course close to my heart because of my portfolio.

You know, whether we look at 3,400 nurses by different designations, whether we look at more care aids in the system, whether we look at a lot of the other supports, the numbers don't lie, Mr. Speaker. And very proud of the record, although realizing we do have more to do. But we still have to recognize where we are and of course give the appreciation to those professionals that have chosen to stay here, work, and serve the people of the province.

You know, we look at the surgery wait-lists. Although they've crept up from time to time, we do see them far shorter than they were under the previous administration, and we'll continue to work in those regards to shorten a lot of those lists, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, when we start thinking about one other portion of the Throne Speech that highlighted our move to one provincial health authority, and going back to our panel report and the suggestions coming from that panel report, three very apt experts did a very comprehensive study across the province, looked at other jurisdictions, recommending we go to one health authority.

And I've got to admit when I first heard that, I had some apprehension based on the story coming out of Alberta. But again, realizing what happened there — they basically flipped the switch overnight, they weren't prepared — warning us or giving us the insight that we needed to slow-walk this, take our time. And I believe we are, Mr. Speaker.

Realizing there may be a few challenges ahead as we move to one provincial health authority, but I have full confidence, especially after the meeting the Minister of Health and I had with the new health board and some of the key executive positions that are to lead this new health authority. Their confidence and their assurance that the work is well under way and we're well positioned to roll that out and then continue to

roll it out in different areas and reap the benefits of that system, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we look at things, I'll try and breeze through a few high-level items, but things like the accountable care unit that showed so much success in Regina, and actually because it was so successful without a whole bunch of additional funding, they rolled that out into different areas in the Pasqua Hospital. And then since then, our own initiative of rolling, expanding accountable care units in Regina, as well as having two in Saskatoon and, you know, reaping the benefits of that for the people of the province, we see 37 per cent quicker rate of being let out of the hospital. And then the supports that are in the community to help them not have to revisit the emergency of the hospital, Mr. Speaker, shows a lot of promise. And we'll continue down those roads as well.

Looking at again the Throne Speech, I talked about moving to one provincial health authority and the successes I believe we're going to see there, and that rolling out December 4th, I believe, is the date for the provincial health authority to be instigated. And then we'll just watch the progress and work along with that organization to of course deliver top-quality health care to the province.

I think a lot of our other members talked about the organ donation program. That's something again very close to my heart. Previously I was an organ donor and a blood donor, and now because of my diagnosis I think I need a period of five years of being cancer-free before I can go on that list. But be assured, Mr. Speaker, at my first available opportunity, I will be going back on that list to make sure that, you know, some of the tissues and things that I carry, that once I decess I probably won't need anymore, that it can be there to help other families to enjoy their loved ones a little bit longer.

We talked about in the Throne Speech the individualized funding for autism spectrum disorder. I think that's a great initiative, giving people that choice. And it kind of ties right into the direction we've gone even in health care where, you know, we have private providers in the public system. We also have areas again with people having choice on how they want to get their health care delivered. And I think we'll see, you know, maybe some more initiatives in the future where people will have more of a choice in their lifestyle, their health care, and their way of life.

Something that it's out of health care, but it really falls close to home, is our introduction of legislation that will protect the right of a school choice for parents. And of course that comes close to my home because of the Theodore School decision. And, Mr. Speaker, you know, I sincerely think it was just about one small school, maybe not that big of an issue. But when you look at the bigger picture, how it takes away choice specifically, firstly of people wanting to put their kids in the Catholic system, but outside of that, the Muslim school, the Huda school, the Christian schools around the province who do get a little bit less funding than the public system, but still deliver top quality education, we want to make sure that parents have that option, that choice, that they can do that — have their choice in the future, Mr. Speaker.

You know, looking at the marijuana legislation that the federal

government has put in place, and they've made no bones about it, they're going to roll that out in July although many provinces, I think in fact every province at the FPT [federal-provincial-territorial] meetings a week and a half ago, have a lot of concerns about that. So you know, we're going to look at that very closely. We're going to do our best to protect the people of the province and make sure that's rolled out properly, but also make sure that there's some accountability on the federal government side because we recognize — even the good stories you hear out of the States, whether it's Colorado or Washington — if you listen to Justice officials and health care officials, they will point out some of the ills and some of the side effects and some of the social effects and some of the costs that they're actually realizing right now.

So I'll do the best I can in my position. I'm sure I'll have the support of the Health minister in lobbying the federal government. If we can point the cost that it's costing us because of an initiative that they took on, I'm very hopeful that they'll be open to actually increasing supports in some areas to help us offset some of those costs.

You know, increasing cellular coverage in rural areas is something of course very close to my heart.

Bill 40, repealing parts of Bill 40. It hits close to home because we have a huge Crown presence in town. And although I'm not opposed to, you know, the Crowns exercising partnerships and strengthening the Crowns through partnerships and expanding their client base and their business base, we realize people have a concern with that. So regardless of our ideology or what we might think, we're willing to listen to our constituents, the people of the province, and act on their recommendations.

You know, looking at some of the tax changes we've talked about, we're still going to be rolling back the corporate tax side of our previous budget but also realizing, even at that percentage point, we're still the most competitive jurisdiction, especially when you tie that in with some of the small-business tax changes that we've talked about instigating as well, Mr. Speaker.

Looking at the other part of the Throne Speech talking about agriculture, value-added new-growth incentive to track more investment, when I look at my hometown of Yorkton, we look at some of the implications that have happened locally, whether it's expansion of Grain Millers; two canola crush plants; TA Foods, a flax processing plant; you know, manufacturing. We look at a lot of those agriculturally based . . . If we look at the job creation, the economy that it's helped create around my hometown is something that just can't be denied, Mr. Speaker.

So you know, when I look at more initiatives that we've talked about, of course encouraging pipeline development, we're in a bit of a battle right there at this point, Mr. Speaker, but of course we want to get the best net benefit for our resources as we can. And of course increasing pipeline capacity or having pipeline capacity to tidewater is something very important to us.

I could go through the list of infrastructure investment. I know my colleagues will talk about that as well, whether it's Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, the children's hospital, 18 new schools plus the renovations of other schools

— a total of 40 — highways infrastructure investments.

I know in the Throne Speech it talked about the Highway 10 twinning, which again is close to Melville-Saltcoats and Yorkton and Canora-Pelly. Looking at that project, passing lanes somewhere between Fort Qu'Appelle but specifically Melville, Yorkton to Canora, that will of course increase safety along that road as well, Mr. Speaker.

Getting back to some of our economic initiatives, the taxes, we know because of our competitiveness, we are recognized by having a AAA credit rating. It's something we enjoy and does reap benefits when it comes to debt repayment and the financial status of our province.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, we know there's more work to do. We'll always say that, but by any measure, as I've talked about our Premier's record, this government's record is something I'm very proud of and I will stand by and continue to talk about and promote, Mr. Speaker.

So again, with that my time's coming to an end — I think it's almost 20 minutes — and there is so much more to speak about. But of course more colleagues, we have a lot of colleagues on this side of the House, they're going to speak about some of those initiatives, Mr. Speaker. So again, I strongly support the Speech from the Throne, the motion moved forward by my friend the member from Estevan, and I sincerely speak against the amendment by the opposition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up here and speak to the Speech from the Throne in this wonderful building, and it's a great place to be, Mr. Speaker.

I guess first thing I want to do is I want to congratulate the new member from Saskatoon Fairview. I think that she is very eager to be here. It's a wonderful place. I could just imagine you're, the same as what I did. The first time you walk up the steps, it is really something to behold is to be in this House, which is a fantastic place. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to run out of time here right about now.

The Speaker: — It being 5 p.m., this Assembly stands recessed until 7 p.m. tonight.

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Belanger	2677
Michelson	2677
Sproule	2677
Forbes	2677
Mowat	2677
McCall	2678

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Women's History Month

Wilson	2678
--------------	------

Naturalist Wins Award for Literary Excellence

Beck	2678
------------	------

Joint-Use School Opens in Regina

Fiaz	2678
------------	------

Halloween Haunts

Rancourt	2679
----------------	------

4-H Member Makes Donation to Children's Hospital

Dennis	2679
--------------	------

HMCS *Queen* Charity Mess Dinner

Lawrence	2679
----------------	------

Girls' Anti-Bullying and Self-Esteem Workshop

Ross	2679
------------	------

QUESTION PERIOD

Global Transportation Hub

Sarauer	2680
---------------	------

Wall	2680
------------	------

Meili	2680
-------------	------

Wait Time for Young People to Receive Mental Health Services

Chartier	2681
----------------	------

Reiter	2681
--------------	------

Access to Bus Service for Northerners

Vermette	2682
----------------	------

Hargrave	2682
----------------	------

Support for Northerners and Reconciliation

Belanger	2682
----------------	------

Doke	2682
------------	------

Eyre	2683
------------	------

Northern Teacher Education Program

Beck	2683
------------	------

Cox	2683
-----------	------

Support for Education

Beck	2683
------------	------

Eyre	2683
------------	------

Women in Saskatchewan

Mowat	2684
-------------	------

Eyre	2684
------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 72 — *The Privacy Amendment Act, 2017*

Morgan	2684
--------------	------

Bill No. 73 — *The Insurance Amendment Act, 2017*

Morgan	2685
--------------	------

Bill No. 74 — *The Evidence Amendment Act, 2017/Loi modificative de 2017 sur la preuve*

Morgan	2685
--------------	------

Bill No. 75 — *The Electronic Communications Convention Implementation Act*

Loi de mise en œuvre de la Convention sur les communications électroniques

Morgan	2685
--------------	------

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Moe	2685
-----------	------

Young	2690
-------------	------

Michelson	2693
Weekes	2696
Meili	2699
Buckingham	2702
Ottenbreit	2705
Bradshaw	2708

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Steven Bonk
Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Trade

Hon. Herb Cox
Minister of Advanced Education

Hon. Larry Doke
Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs

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

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Education
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Joe Hargrave
Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Finance

Hon. Nancy Heppner
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

Hon. Gene Makowsky
Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor
and Gaming Authority

Hon. David Marit
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds

Hon. Paul Merriman
Minister of Social Services

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

Hon. Greg Ottenbreit
Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Health

Hon. Lyle Stewart
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation