



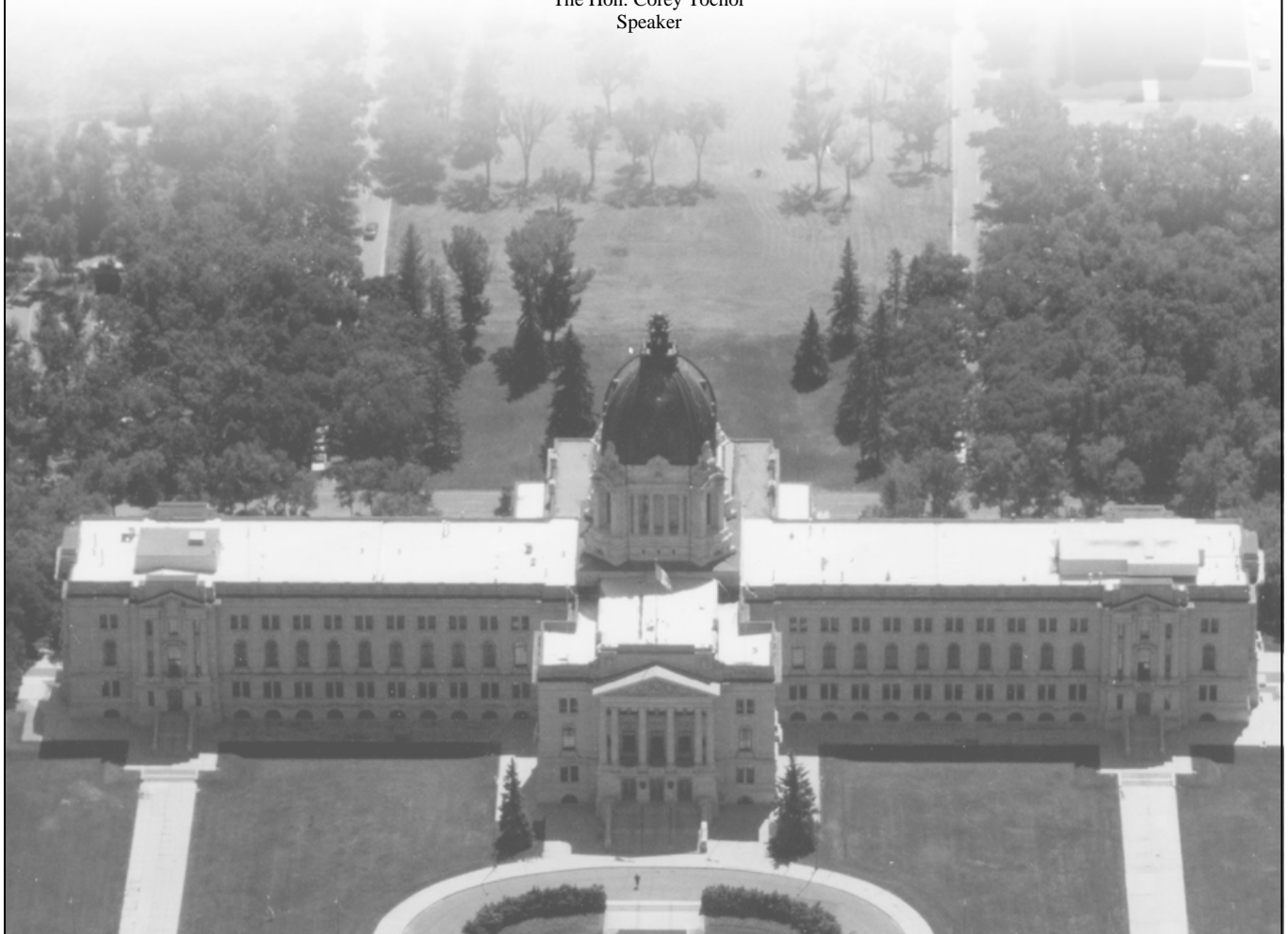
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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



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

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

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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
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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

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

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This coming Monday marks the beginning of Family Doctor Week in Saskatchewan, and so I have an honoured and special guest sitting in your gallery: Dr. Rizqi Ibrahim of Swift Current. Mr. Speaker, he's my doctor. He's my GP [general practitioner] and has attended to our family as well, Mr. Speaker.

And it's a good opportunity, I think, to highlight the importance of family doctors in the province. He's just given us a wave. We were going to also be accompanied by an official from the Saskatchewan Medical Association, but the highways prevented the individual from being here today. But we want to acknowledge the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] and their work to highlight the importance of general practitioners and family doctors in the province.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Ibrahim has been a leader in Swift Current, been a leader province-wide in the health care field. He has amazing stories. He started practising medicine in Swift Current in 1972 and he is still practising today. I had a visit with him just last week.

Mr. Speaker, he's got some amazing stories, including one he shared with me today that is from 1978, when he was called to the home of someone in Neville, some 28 miles or so south of Swift Current, who was about to deliver. And he made it out there. It took three hours to go those 28 miles through a snowstorm. He got out there and there wasn't quite time to get back to Swift Current, so he delivered the baby right there in Neville. And the daughter's name was Kelly; the little baby's name was Kelly. He still attends to people in the family today. And this is an even better part of the story, Mr. Speaker — it turns out that the woman who delivered Kelly had time to make sure there was a roast in the oven, peas, homemade sour cream, and baked potatoes. And apparently they sat down to eat first, and then the baby was delivered, and everything turned out okay.

He has been a great help to me as well, Mr. Speaker. He's been my doctor since I was in grade school. I got hit in the head with a baseball bat and he stitched me up. Insert your own joke there, Mr. Speaker. My brother squished my finger putting up a Ping-Pong table after we were done playing, and he stitched

that up. And any number of issues he's helped with. I remember one, in particular, consultation he did with one of our kids who was just having some ailments and I remember him just sitting down with her and using a whiteboard, not very long ago, and explaining everything so perfectly, as well as providing the counsel and the help that in the end helped her immensely. And so, Mr. Speaker, we all value our family doctors in the province, and I just wanted to use this occasion to thank all of them for the great work that they do.

And I do want to in particular want to acknowledge Dr. Ibrahim who has been the team doctor for the Swift Current Broncos for 30 years; a team physician for Canada's under-18 world junior hockey team, winning a gold and a silver medal in the process; a clinical lecturer to the department of family medicine, University of Saskatchewan; and an active member of the Saskatchewan Medical Association.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join me in acknowledging the work of family doctors across this province, to thank them for that work, and in particular, to welcome to his Legislative Assembly, Dr. Rizqi Ibrahim.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the Premier in welcoming the Premier's own doctor to this legislature, Dr. Ibrahim, and recognizing Family Doctor Week, Mr. Speaker.

I suspect that the doctor has many of those kinds of stories that the Premier just relayed. I know, thinking about the mother of Kelly, I can actually relate, Mr. Speaker. The morning my daughter was born, my water broke; I made muffins, and then had a baby a few hours later, Mr. Speaker. But I'm sure the doctor has many, many of those stories.

And I actually appreciate the fact that he was the doctor for the under-18 junior hockey team. My nephew Rourke Chartier was on that team, so I don't know when he was in fact in that role, but I can tell you as the auntie and the godmother of a nephew who has been a few times concussed that that doctor role is really important.

As we all know, our family doctors are huge in helping us stay well and are really a critical part of the primary health care team. So I just want to join with the Premier in welcoming Dr. Ibrahim to his legislature and to thank family doctors for all the work that they do in keeping people of Saskatchewan well. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, this afternoon it's my pleasure to introduce some special guests in the Speaker's gallery that we have here today. We have stakeholders who have participated in consultations with the ministry — my ministry, Parks, Culture and Sport — on the proposed new provincial park in the Porcupine Hills area. With us today are members from the Key First Nation who I'm very proud that they came down here today. Some drove in today on some tough highways. We have Chief Rodney Brass, councillor Glen O'Soup, councillor Angie Desjarlais, councillor Sydney Keshane, lands manager Vernon Friday, and project coordinator Randy Friday, and of course members of the ministry.

They're here to witness first reading of the new Parks bill. Consultations were undertaken, extensive consultations, and so we thank the members of the First Nation and Métis representatives and local community stakeholders whose input has shaped and will continue to influence the park vision and future management of this park. And of course we thank them for their service to their communities.

Also in the gallery, Mr. Speaker, is Les and Terri Bergan from the hamlet of Little Swan. Les is a board member from the hamlet which is a resort community directly adjacent to the proposed park and participated in the same consultation process. They support the new park as a means of protecting the area so their children and grandchildren and future generations can enjoy it.

So, Mr. Speaker, our provincial parks are important for tourism and quality of life and our economy. They're places where families visit to spend quality time together and where our natural environment is protected. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like all the members to help me welcome these local stakeholders from the Porcupine Hills area and thank them for coming down today.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery is a school group from F.W. Johnson here in Regina Gardiner Park constituency, 35 grade 10 students, and they are accompanied by their teacher Scott McKillop, and chaperones Samantha Kelly and Sarah Hewson. So, members, please help me welcome this group of fine young students.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to join with the minister opposite in welcoming these very important guests to their Legislative Assembly. I just want to say *ahneen sikwa* to Chief Rodney Brass and to the folks from Key First Nation. It comes from a very beautiful part of the world, and Key is always . . . it's one of those First Nations that really has a lot going on for it.

So it's good to see that consultations are taking place on the new provincial park. We expect that those are going satisfactorily. It's always great to see something in this regard, making sure that we're protecting mother nature. And again, Mr. Speaker, this particular part of the world is especially beautiful. So it's good to see Chief Rodney Brass and the folks

from Key First Nation here at their Legislative Assembly here on Treaty 4 territory. It's also good to see the Bergans coming forward to make their opinions clear on this new provincial park.

So in that regard, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members, on behalf of myself and on behalf of the official opposition, to welcome these very important people to their Legislative Assembly. *Gichi-miigwech*.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce an individual seated in the east gallery. Tara Jijian is here. She's the provincial leader of the provincial Liberal Party. From one female leader to another, welcome. I'm sure you'll find it's an honour to be chosen to fill the role. And although I'm sure you'll find it challenging, you'll also find it extremely rewarding. So thank you for being here. Please, I ask all members to join me in welcoming Tara to her Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, there's a saying, who's on first. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the members opposite in welcoming members of the Liberal Party. We're always glad to welcome people to the legislature and encourage them to participate in the parliamentary process. We're pleased that they're doing it from the gallery rather than on the floor, but want to wish them all the best and thank them for coming today, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce someone special seated in your gallery, someone who I had the honour of providing a member's statement about yesterday, and that is Mr. Trevor Herriot. My member's statement yesterday acknowledged Trevor's award, the Cheryl and Henry Kloppenburg Award for Literary Excellence in this province.

Trevor is here today to give a reading as part of the Saskatchewan Book Awards. And unfortunately, as we all know, the highways out there have prevented a number of people from making that trek today. We were also expecting readings from Bill Waiser and Louise Halfe.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the important voice that Trevor has in this province. I want to paraphrase, the scientist's mind and the poet's heart, and I thank him for his very important voice, literary voice, but also his voice on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio and in so many other forums around this province. He and his wife, Karen, do reside in Regina Lakeview, and it's always a great day when I get to knock on their door and have conversation. I always learn a lot.

And I also more broadly want to just thank the Legislative Library and thank the Saskatchewan Book Awards for highlighting the Sask Book Awards and the really exceptional

literary talent that we are really blessed with in this province. It is such an important part of our culture in Saskatchewan, these great authors. And I welcome Trevor to his Legislative Assembly and invite all members to thank Trevor and the Sask Book Awards and all of the authors in this province for their important contributions. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I too would like to welcome some guests to our Assembly today. I was scooped by the member from Lakeview in welcoming our guests that were here today for the awards, but I do want to thank them for the work that they do and the sharing of stories, and thank you so much for taking time out of your day to make it here as well.

Also seated in the Speaker's gallery is two individuals. First off Cherrise, if you would give us a wave. Cherrise has been working as a summer student in the Speaker's office under the former Speaker, and I was lucky enough to have her serve in that role last summer. And she's continuing her studies at the U of R [University of Regina] and still working part-time in our office, but we will be losing her after Christmas. And I just wanted to thank Cherrise for all the hard work and would ask everyone to give her a round of applause.

As much as my name's on the door and as other members have their names on the door of offices in this building, it's really the staff that make things possible and do the heavy work. I'm lucky to have Sheila Sterling, who has worked with past Speakers and continues in that role in my office.

[13:45]

And to help her out, we have found a very capable individual. If you would, please welcome a native of Moncton, someone that was born on the East Coast, raised in Coal Lake, and now resides in our province. Hayley Lucas — if you would please rise and give a wave for all the members — has agreed to join our office. She is now no longer cheering for the evil empire and we're going to be getting her some Rider gear here shortly. So please welcome Hayley Lucas to the Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Biggar and Landis. I do so present.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition today to end the unfair Sask Party tax hikes for Saskatchewan families and businesses, Mr. Speaker. The petitioners point out the Sask Party has hiked taxes on Saskatchewan families and businesses by \$1 billion a year, Mr. Speaker.

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, Mr. Speaker. Because of the Sask Party's PST increases, we're the only province in the country where people are charged PST on life and health insurance premiums.

I know in my office this summer . . . And I'm sure members opposite heard loud and clear from many people that PST on things like health and life insurance is unacceptable. I know many seniors came to speak to me about their huge concerns. They didn't know it right when the budget happened, but when they started renewing their insurance, Mr. Speaker, and saw the 6 per cent, they wanted to make sure that I was conveying this message to this government that that is not the right approach, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place to present yet another petition as it pertains to closing the main street to Highway No. 1 in the town of Balgonie. And, Mr. Speaker, the people in the town of Balgonie are very, very upset, and they have signed this petition. And the prayer, it reads as follows:

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

They 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's Main Street intersection. This gate would allow emergency services access to the eastbound lanes of Highway No. 1 at the Main Street Balgonie intersection, but would not allow the public access to cross east- and westbound lanes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people of Balgonie are fighting back. They have got signatures from all throughout the province, from all throughout our land. And the people that have signed these two pages of petitions that I am presenting today are from Regina. They're from Pilot Butte. They're from White City, and

they're also from Balgonie. And I so present.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to present a petition for a second bridge in Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, the individuals that signed this petition would like me to draw attention to the following facts: the Diefenbaker bridge in Prince Albert is the primary link that connects the southern part of the province to the North; and that the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today.

Prince Albert and communities north of Prince Albert and businesses that send people and products through Prince Albert require a solution; that local municipal governments have limited resources especially now and require a second bridge to be funded through federal and provincial governments and not a P3 [public-private partnership] model; and that the Saskatchewan Party government refuses to stand up for Prince Albert and its critical infrastructure issue. I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan ask the Sask Party government stop stalling, hiding behind rhetoric, and refusing to listen to the people calling for action, and begin immediately to plan and then quickly commence the construction of a second bridge for Prince Albert using federal and provincial funding.

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

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to reopen the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre. The citizens of Buffalo Narrows wish to bring to your attention that the closure of Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre left 15 persons out of work and had a financial impact on their families and all local business; that the closure hurt elders in our community and hurt the families of inmates; that the closure of Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre took inmates away from their families, making visitation difficult or non-existent; and that the closure took away from inmates their opportunity to get treatment and to obtain training tickets.

I would like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from Buffalo Narrows. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Honouring Attack Victims

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in the House to recognize the victims of yesterday's violent attacks in New York City. Those injured, the families of the victims, and all people of New York City are in our thoughts and our prayers during this difficult time.

Our thoughts turn to Edmonton, where a similar attack recently shocked us all. That reminder that attacks and tragic events of this nature are no longer isolated incidents leaves us both shocked and angry. This troubling trend worldwide shows us the darker side of the world we share together.

Mr. Speaker, hatred has no place in our province, our country, or our world. But it is in times of tragedy and despair that our communities can show our true strength and resilience by coming together and by standing together as one.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to observe a moment of silence in honour of yesterday's victims.

[The Assembly observed a moment of silence.]

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

November and Prostate Cancer Awareness

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I moustache you a question. What would you do to prevent men from dying too young? Being Movember, men all around the world are attempting to grow a moustache. Whether they rock the handlebar, Dali, Fu Manchu, or painter's brush, these moustaches undoubtedly spark important discussion about men's health. All the while, moustache growers raise funds for the Movember Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, once again members of our caucus will be growing mos in an effort to help change the face of men's health. Our team will be led by the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, who has so far completed treatment in his battle against colorectal cancer. He will be joined by the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Advanced Ed, the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure, and myself.

This year in response to increasing numbers of men who take their own lives around the world, the Movember Foundation is expanding its focus on mental health and suicide prevention. The foundation has set a goal of reducing male suicides by 25 per cent by 2030 through education, providing service, and fighting against the stigmas of talking about mental health. With everyone's help we can achieve this goal.

And so I ask all members to join me in supporting this important fundraising movement to encourage the men in their lives to take steps towards better health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. November is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. In recent years it's probably been better known as Movember, and I for one will be participating in growing out a moustache to raise money and awareness for men's health issues.

There is certainly more that we need to do to improve access and availability of mental health services in all parts of the province, but we also need to make sure the stigma associated with mental illness goes away and that men everywhere know that they can come forward and get the help they need.

Mr. Speaker, it's been nine and a half years since my own prostate cancer diagnosis. We all know that cancer knows no political affiliation. I think all members in this House can speak to the impact that a cancer diagnosis can have on friends and family. That's why it's so important to stay optimistic and never lose hope. I know my colleague, the member from Lumsden-Morse, is a survivor and an advocate for prostate cancer awareness. And I'd also like to offer my support to the member from Yorkton as he continues his battle with cancer.

Mr. Speaker, the physical battle is tough, but I must say the mental challenge of dealing with cancer and treatment can be just as difficult. That's why we must support each other. We must treat each other better, no matter what divides us. We are all in this together.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the month of Movember and in thanking all those involved with organizing and promoting this very important event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Habitat for Humanity Project in Nipawin

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past month I attended the celebration of the opening of the latest Habitat for Humanity project in Nipawin. This was a very special day for Laura Lofstrom and her children Dante, Mattea, and Madison, as well as all others involved in this important project.

Laura and her children played a significant role in the building of their brand new home. In order to have the opportunity to own their own home, they had to provide 500 hours of volunteer hands-on labour. I have no doubt that they are very proud of their efforts for their new home and are looking forward to creating new memories together.

The Habitat for Humanity is proof of what can be accomplished when a community comes together, realizing a dream and making that vision a reality. Not only will a family benefit from this build, but also the hard-working organizers and volunteers, as this is a life-changing project to be part of. Mr. Speaker, since 2009 Habitat for Humanity, along with a \$9.85 million investment from our province, has completed or has under construction 172 units in 13 communities across Saskatchewan. The town of Nipawin has received funding of \$165,000 for three homes.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the town of Nipawin for

providing the land for this new home for Laura and her family. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the volunteers, town of Nipawin, and Laura Lofstrom on a successful build. Thank you.

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

2017 Achievement in Business Excellence Awards

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on October 21st, I, along with the members from Saskatoon University, Saskatoon Westview, Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood, and Regina University were pleased to be able to attend this year's ABEX [Achievement in Business Excellence] Awards, presented by Conexus Credit Union and the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce.

This year's winners were: IntraGrain Technologies for Innovation; CAA [Canadian Automobile Association] Saskatchewan for Service; Vendasta for Export; S & E Trusted Online Directories for Community Involvement, Sarah Wheelwright; North Ridge Development Corporation for Priority Focus; Wally Mah, Dustin Nehring, and Taylor Lang, N.L. Construction Inc. for Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award; the Deveraux Group of Companies for Growth and Expansion, Denis Jones; Diamonds of Detroit for Marketing; and 9 Mile Legacy Brewing Company Ltd. for New Venture.

Saskatchewan's northern businesses were the big winners of the evening, with Areva Resources Canada inducted into the Saskatchewan Business Hall of Fame. Business Leader of the Year awarded to Geoff Gay; Community Leader of the Year awarded to Chief Tammy Cook-Searson. The CAA was the recipient of the Business of the Year Award, and the former CEO [chief executive officer] of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, my good friend of mine, Kent Smith-Windsor, was the recipient of the Roger Phillips Builder Award. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all the outstanding nominees, finalists, and winners on their success at the 2017 ABEX Awards.

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Couple Saves Two Lives in Rescue

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to recognize a brave couple who this past Sunday night helped save two lives. While travelling just west of Melfort, Dale Peet and his wife, Leslie, noticed a truck in the ditch with its lights still on, upside down in water. They quickly learned that the driver, along with the passenger, was trapped in the truck. Leslie called 911 while Dale waded through the water and was able to break them free from the truck by smashing the window.

Mr. Speaker, the driver of the truck had to hold the passenger's head out of the water because the passenger was unable to do so, and the driver kept the passenger alive. They were able to make it safely out of the truck and onto the dry bank where the Melfort EMS [emergency medical services] were waiting.

Mr. Speaker, Dale works as operations manager at the SaskTel office in Prince Albert. He says he's very glad to have had his survival kit with him in his vehicle, and after the events of Sunday night, he has purchased a seat belt cutter which he now carries on his key chain.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to please join me in thanking Dale Peet and his wife, Leslie, for their incredible act of bravery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

New Schools in Saskatoon Southeast

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to stand today and say that the new joint-use school in the constituency of Saskatoon Southeast has opened for this school year. Saskatoon Public École Colette Bourgonje School and Saskatoon Catholic's École St. Thérèse of Lisieux are the two new schools in the Rosewood neighbourhood. This build was made possible through hard work and collaboration that included input from students, teachers, parents, school divisions, and community members.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that this P3 build finished on time and on budget, and using this P3 model will save Saskatchewan taxpayers \$100 million. The model has been so successful that another province has copied it. Manitoba is using the Saskatchewan P3 model to build new schools across their province.

Mr. Speaker, it wasn't so long ago that instead of celebrating the opening of new schools, Saskatchewan was losing people. School enrolment was declining and the NDP [New Democratic Party] was closing schools — 176 schools throughout the province. Today our population is growing. School enrolment is growing, and our Saskatchewan Party government is opening new schools. Our record speaks for itself. We have opened a total of 40 new schools, 21 of which are opening this year, along with 25 major renovations to existing schools. For our government, these new schools are about making students, staff, and education our top priority in meeting the demands of growth in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Responses to Sexual Harassment Allegations

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, if anyone here didn't know before, they've surely seen the Me Too campaign. Sexual harassment affects all of us and exists in all kinds of institutions. In politics, our party is not immune, but we are not alone. This is an issue that we take seriously. Everyone should. And I had hoped that the Premier agreed.

But yesterday, instead of answering a simple question, the Premier dragged this place to the level of online comment sections. The Premier used survivor stories and compared their GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal to our serious, direct, and open approach to addressing sexual harassment

allegations, and making our party a safer place for everyone. To say the least, it was offensive.

If he wants to keep hiding from accountability, that's his choice and it's something we'll keep calling him out for. But comparing those two issues, it's offensive and should be beneath any of us. So I would like to give the Premier the opportunity to stand and retract his comments. New Democrats will keep working to make all spaces, including our own party, safer and more inclusive. Will the Premier, at the very least, retract his offensive statement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — No, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I indicated that the NDP had questions to answer as a result of some of the events she's just canvassed. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that when a young woman came forward and alleged to have been raped by a former NDP candidate, the Leader of the Opposition, I think quite rightly, said she believed survivors. She said that on several occasions; I give her credit for that. The individual though that was alleged to have perpetrated the rape, I believe is still a member of the party. The Leader of the Opposition, when she had the chance to say unequivocally the person shouldn't be a member of her party, deferred to some process.

Mr. Speaker, if we're wanting to send powerful signals about this issue and how unacceptable it is, we need leaders on both sides of the aisle and throughout the province to say the person that we believe, because the member said she believed the individual was raped . . . The person that perpetrated has no business being a member of any organization we lead. That would have been leadership, Mr. Speaker.

Well they're saying we should be ashamed. We also have an occasion where the same person, the same person that she said she believes as someone who is a survivor, tweeted that another individual had been harassed within the NDP and that that person went to the then leader of the NDP who said that that person should go to the police. But the individual who was accused of the harassment — and that member said she believed the survivors, the leader does — the person who was alleged to have done the harassment is still working in an NDP office.

So, Mr. Speaker, maybe these are allegations, but I think that it's important, given the discussion around the world today that are centred on allegations, that questions are answered transparently and these questions remain for members opposite.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I will not be involved in silencing a survivor, but I will also not be involved in outing a survivor as well. Shame on this Premier for using these words for cheap political points. And I have complete confidence in every single member of my caucus.

What I do not have confidence in is this Sask Party government and that Premier. If he wants to spend his final days in this place stooping this low, that's on him. And if that caucus wants to keep supporting that, that's on them as well. We're going to

keep doing our jobs over here. We're going to keep working with genuine resolve to address issues in our party and make it — this place and our province — more safe and more inclusive. And we're going to keep holding that Sask Party to account for their scandals that wasted millions and fell short of the trust Saskatchewan people have offered them.

With that, let me ask: when he was interviewed by the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], did the Premier stick with what he said, that he knew what was going on at the GTH all along, or did he back up his office's official statement that he had nothing to do with any negotiations?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, these aren't speculations on my part. These are the words of a survivor that has come forward, that the Leader of the Opposition has said she believes, she believes, Mr. Speaker. So, so, Mr. Speaker, especially when we face over there a party that had women coming forward, when it was in office, that had women coming forward alleging sexual harassment of an individual with connections to members of that party over there, and were not prepared to act until it was exposed, in part by the opposition — it was the Murdoch Carriere scandal — and in fact were prepared to pay him off. That's the history of this party. These are questions for this House. They're questions that should be asked around the province.

The individual, Mr. Speaker, the individual who brought forward the complaints in the first place tweeted this. The same young woman tweeted that her friend had been sexually assaulted by another former NDP candidate at the last year's NDP provincial convention. I think she might be referring to someone working in the offices. Here's what she tweeted. This is her tweeting, not me. Here's what she tweeted:

Three months after convention my friend met with Trent Wotherspoon [and I'm quoting] and filed a report. He told her to go to police. Three months later with no evidence and nothing really happening, so a report was filed with caucus [This is her tweet, not mine.] and now almost a year later they decided to look past all of that and hire him as a CA.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if any of the allegations are true, but given how serious they are, you bet I believe that party over there, that person that wants to be the premier of the province and lead his party, should be answering questions,

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, that survivor has specifically asked for her story not to be used for political gain, and this Premier is completely ignoring what the survivor has requested. I'm going to give the Premier one more chance to retract his offensive statements.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I'm going to give that leader of the NDP one more chance to explain to the members of this House, and more importantly the people of the province, and more

importantly survivors, how someone who she believes raped somebody within the construct of their party, how that person is allowed to be a member of their party.

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

Review of Global Transportation Hub

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that's about as disgusting and about as low as it can get in this Assembly, well beneath any one of us in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Those aren't his stories to tell.

Mr. Speaker, we've been on the floor of this Assembly since June 30th, 2016, every day during every session, fighting for accountability on that Premier and that Sask Party's GTH scandal. You know, now the Premier wants to suggest, as he did yesterday, "I think the government's track record in this particular instance has been to fully answer all the questions." Mr. Speaker, honestly, how can the Premier of Saskatchewan say that with a straight face? I don't think the Premier's given a fulsome answer to a single question in this Assembly, let alone answering to this scandal.

And, of course, you have the member from Meadow Lake. Well I don't even have to get started, Mr. Speaker. But now we know, of course, what the member from Meadow Lake really thinks about the Sask Party's GTH scandal. So my question to the Premier: does he agree now with the member from Meadow Lake? Why didn't he fire Bill Boyd, the minister that was plagued with scandals a long time ago, or that Sask Party operator that's working for government?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to this question around the Global Transportation Hub, the government, in terms of being accountable, in terms of co-operating fully with the Provincial Auditor, in terms of co-operating fully with all authorities, have done the right thing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been canvassed, has provided cabinet documents to all authorities that are looking into this matter, Mr. Speaker. That's the way that this government operates on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. We are working and cooperating with everybody to be fully transparent and fully accountable, Mr. Speaker, and we will stand on our record on this side of the House, as opposed to the members opposite.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I expect better from that member. I don't expect any better from the Premier anymore, though. You know, of course we know this went to the auditor. And of course we know as well that the RCMP are investigating this and that the RCMP have questioned that very Premier — the sitting Premier of Saskatchewan — on this matter. We know that it's over at the prosecutor's here right now.

Yesterday of course we have the Premier suggesting that somehow there was some level of accountability at the Public Accounts Committee. Well, Mr. Speaker, every single MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] with the Sask Party voted against having witnesses like Laurie Pushor before that Public Accounts Committee. Every single member within that committee — Sask Party member — voted against allowing more questions despite the fact that there were many more.

So my question is to the Premier, not to the new minister that's there to block and deflect: if he thinks so highly of Bill Boyd, the former minister that was plagued by scandal, if he trusts so much in Laurie Pushor, why won't he insist that they come before committee as soon as possible?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Global Transportation Hub.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest that we not take very highly who that member is going to point out in terms of who we should be . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . yes, questioning the conduct on, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in terms of whose judgment we should be trusting.

And, Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has indicated that the government is not closing doors in terms of a further review and further transparency and accountability on this measure, Mr. Speaker, we have co-operated fully. We have worked closely with an independent officer of this legislature, Mr. Speaker, and so again, as the Premier has indicated, we will not be closing doors to further ways to ensure that the people of Saskatchewan have full knowledge of the Global Transportation Hub.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier doesn't like our questions. I get that. But even the Sask Party leadership candidates have raised questions and undermined the Premier's position.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Willowgrove has said that he would "immediately begin action to sell the GTH to the private sector." He goes on, Mr. Speaker: "The revenue to the government can be used for more critical areas such as health care, education, and social services."

Mr. Speaker, this has been our point all along. The Sask Party have been losing millions through waste caused by mismanagement and scandal at the GTH and they've been making the people of Saskatchewan pay the price with cuts to education, health care, and the services we all rely on every day.

So, Mr. Speaker, does the Premier agree with the member from Saskatoon Willowgrove, possible future premier of this province? Should the GTH be sold so that we can reverse the Sask Party's heartless cuts, unfair tax hikes, and desperate sell-offs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Global Transportation Hub.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we certainly can say that the government, working in conjunction with the board of directors, the management and staff of the Global Transportation Hub, are doing everything that we can to ensure that this is a successful generational project for the people of Saskatchewan. I would quote Peter Wallis, the past president of the Van Horne Institute, who says, "The development of the GTH opens up Saskatchewan companies to benefits of an efficient connection to world trade, particularly with the Asia-Pacific region."

I would go on to quote another individual, who said . . . And this is actually the member from Athabasca, March 4, 2013:

. . . this opportunity that the NDP envisioned in 2006 [interesting], that it would be absolutely phenomenal for the city to work in concert with these companies to encourage job creation [862 full-time employees and 1,804 construction jobs], to encourage investment [\$485 million in private investment], and to encourage profit for these companies.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to work hard to see that this project is a success on an ongoing basis.

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

SaskEnergy Rate Increase

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, no matter how they spin it, their mismanagement, their scandal, and their waste is costing Saskatchewan people. Today for instance, it's not just the first day of Movember, but because of the PST hike, it's also the first day of the newly raised rates for SaskEnergy customers. Saskatchewan people, ratepayers, and their homes and businesses will be paying 3.6 per cent more, and that's even higher than the 2.95 per cent hike recommended by the experts at the Saskatchewan rate review panel on October 4th.

That 3.6 per cent hike means \$9 million more out of the pockets of Saskatchewan people. Now in committee the minister admitted that their PST hike would mean higher rates, but he never said anything about the new PST pushing the rates even higher than recommended by that expert panel. Now why did that minister support and vote for a PST hike that costs our Crowns and ultimately all Saskatchewan people so much?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], SaskTel, and SaskEnergy.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the 3.6 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker, by SaskEnergy provides additional revenue in the amount of \$9 million. The member opposite was right. And this is to support capital spending on our system for safety and system expansion, Mr. Speaker, as due to the growing demand, Mr. Speaker.

This amounts, Mr. Speaker, to approximately \$20 annually. And, Mr. Speaker, the difference between 2.95 and the 3.6 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker, equates to 23 cents per month, Mr. Speaker. And this will go into safety features at SaskEnergy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Access to Bus Service for Northerners

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the minister to stop laughing off real concerns and the needs of northern people in Saskatchewan. He said he wasn't laughing, and then he told a joke. Mr. Speaker, I say joke, but no one was laughing but him.

Mr. Speaker, how can the minister expect people to trust that he has considered their needs when he's willing to joke about people who die hitchhiking after they closed STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company]?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my deepest sympathies go out to the family of the person involved in that incident, Mr. Speaker. I do take these matters very, very seriously, Mr. Speaker, and I do sincerely apologize for the comment that I made in the House yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, since we made the difficult decision to close STC, many private companies have taken over routes to provide transportation to the people of our province. These companies are providing options to the people of this province and will continue to do so.

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

Delivery Services Within Health Care System

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, the minister and the Premier keep spinning lines about STC, but the minister knows very well that there's much more to STC than those lines. STC was a vital service for Saskatchewan people who were passengers and for businesses and workers who relied on it for freight, but it was also essential to the delivery of vital government programs, vital programs like health care, Mr. Speaker. But the Minister of Health sat there and clapped along and did nothing to defend Saskatchewan health care.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister fail in his duties as minister so badly, and why didn't he stand up to ensure the best delivery of services? Will the minister provide the House with a full list of the health programs and services that were hurt by the scrapping of STC?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the minister had said, we took the issue of STC very seriously. Mr. Speaker, we need to put this in context. Let's remember, first of all, as far as the delivery of health care, Mr. Speaker, half the communities in the province didn't have STC in their community to begin with, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's just a simple matter of the members

opposite are trying to use scare tactics. They talk about how it will be difficult for services to be provided; people can't get to medical appointments. Mr. Speaker, less than 1 per cent of the people in the North, for example, used STC to go to medical appointments.

Mr. Speaker, other arrangements have been made. Courier services are used to provide delivery for necessary items. Mr. Speaker, the rest of the country operates their health care system without using a government-owned bus line, Mr. Speaker. We can do the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Perhaps the minister should look at his own briefing note to see all the things that were impacted in health by the cuts to STC, Mr. Speaker. That answer misses so much of what Saskatchewan people lost, so I'll help him out a little bit.

Cancer patients relied on STC for travel and shipment of drugs. Saskatchewan Disease Control used it for the shipment of specimens, chemotherapy, and blood products. Pharmacies shipped drugs to rural customers. Immunizations and HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] post-exposure prophylaxis kits were also shipped. Oxygen supplies were sent to communities across the province, and STC provided access for northerners to dental programs.

Mr. Speaker, STC also shipped traps and supplies for the West Nile virus program, water samples for public health inspections, and even baby books to help support parenting programs in the North. And that is just a start, Mr. Speaker. So why did the minister not consider any of these vital services before he voted to scrap STC?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member's point, just for an example, I think in that long list she read, I believe she mentioned blood services. Mr. Speaker, STC was used for less than a year to deliver blood and blood products. Mr. Speaker, prior to that, private couriers were used. Private couriers are being used now.

Mr. Speaker, again I mention that half the communities in the province weren't served by STC. Mr. Speaker, it's just, in my view, just a strange line of questioning to go down, Mr. Speaker. We're going to ensure that services continue to be provided, that proper medical supplies are received when necessary, Mr. Speaker. That's been the case and that'll continue to be the case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, that minister sits in cabinet where these decisions are made, and he voted with his colleagues and he endorsed this cut that created these problems within his own ministry. Not knowing or understanding what the consequences would be is not an excuse. It was his job to know, to know how many health services relied on STC, how

much extra money it would cost, and how people would get these essential health services once they shut down STC.

The Premier claimed, "We've looked carefully at this issue." Well obviously not. The information we have shows they were scrambling after they scrapped STC. Again, why did the minister not do anything to save STC and prevent these devastating impacts on health services?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, that member's right. I did sit in cabinet when that decision was made and I fully support that decision, Mr. Speaker, because the fact of the matter is, in the health care budget every dollar is valuable. Mr. Speaker, we were subsidizing STC to the tune of over a million dollars a month, \$15 million a year — money that could far better be used on the front lines of health care, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday reporters asked the Education minister to simply justify her claim that the Sask Party hike in education property tax was somehow for our kids. It should have been easy, Mr. Speaker, but she refused to answer the question. She refused to answer because she knows that education property taxes went up, but funding for education went down.

People are paying more, Mr. Speaker, but our kids are getting less. This is a fact, and this is why, even though the reporters gave her a number of chances to try to answer the question, yesterday she failed. Still, I want to give her one more try. Since they hiked taxes by \$67 million, did education funding also go up by \$67 million?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I refused to answer nothing. That is new math at work. The member opposite is back on this tired old trope of the windfall that somehow wasn't, except that it is and it was.

Mr. Speaker, when you have \$1.9 billion budget and you collect 750 million in education property tax, of course it goes back into education. Every dollar goes back into education — 100 per cent. In fact we're actually spending two and a half per cent more than we are collecting. Mr. Speaker, arguing that less than 100 per cent is spent on education is arguing that less than 750 million is spent on education, which is simply factually wrong. There is in excess of 1.8 billion spent on education.

In the dying days of the NDP, there were tax revolts on the steps of this building against through-the-roof education property tax — this as they were closing schools, 176 of them. That is some feat.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, it's a shell game with this minister, but the math is simple. People across this province paid an additional \$67 million in education property tax, and this government saw it fit to take \$54 million out of educational funding from classrooms in every corner of this province.

Mr. Speaker, she's more than happy to attend the ribbon cuttings of new schools and take the credit, but when it comes to taking responsibility for funding those schools in those classrooms, she goes back to her lines and throws school divisions under the bus.

But, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people can do math, and even if that minister refuses to. It was the Sask Party that raised education property taxes, and it was the Sask Party that made the decision to cut millions out of our classrooms.

So will the minister finally take some responsibility and admit that her government took money from Saskatchewan families and took money out of our classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past budget year we reduced the government grant to 60 per cent, which we committed to in '08-09. The increase in property tax collected this year due to the property tax reassessment led to an increase from 35 per cent to 40 per cent of school divisions' budgets coming from property tax. Even with this small reduction in the government grant, this was the first year that we reduced school divisions' funding on the government fiscal year.

In '07, I will repeat, the NDP provided 700 million for the government grant for education funding in the province. This year we provided over 1.2 billion in government grant funding for school divisions, period.

[14:30]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 76 — *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 76, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport that Bill No. 76 be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

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

Bill No. 77 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 77, the miscellaneous status (superannuation plans) amendment Act, 2017 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 77 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 minister.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 78 — *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 78, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 78 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 minister.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 79 — *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 79, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 79 be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 80 — *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 80, *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 80 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 this bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

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 Saskatoon Willowgrove.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a privilege to take my opportunity to reply to the Speech from the Throne on behalf of the constituents of Saskatoon Willowgrove. I can indicate at the outset that I indeed will be voting in favour of the Speech from the Throne and certainly against the amendment put forward by members of the opposition.

Saskatoon Willowgrove is an exciting constituency. It's one that has seen a lot of changes over the years and the creation of the brand new constituency of Saskatoon Willowgrove. It's indicative of what has been happening across Saskatchewan. The growth and the vibrancy of the area has taken place as communities have grown.

New schools have appeared, Mr. Speaker, in the communities of Willowgrove, two new schools last year and just very recently, in the last month or so, two new schools in the brand new community of Evergreen. I had the opportunity to participate in the opening and the ribbon cutting of one of them. And I must say I was very, very proud as the elected member of the legislature for that area to be there on behalf of all the constituents, but to be there with parents and children and students and community leaders to welcome what is an important part of our community, a new school.

Willowgrove has been growing and welcoming people from across the country and around the world as new residents come to Saskatchewan and make their livelihood here. They enjoy Saskatchewan. They enjoy Saskatoon. They enjoy the quality of life that they're able to experience here. And I must say many of those new residents are very entrepreneurial. They want to make their contribution to the people of Saskatchewan and to their community as well. And they do so in a very invigorating way as they own businesses and work in businesses and make so many contributions to people in the communities.

I have a brand new community — again the growth that continues to take place — the community of Brighton. It just began operation in the last few months, but again, every week when I return home on the weekends and see a few more houses springing up and new families and the excitement that comes with that . . . So that growth continues, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very proud to see it happening in the constituency that I have the honour to represent.

As members do, we always have the opportunity during the speech to talk about the many people that help us in so many ways to do our job. And I want to begin by thanking those that work in my constituency office, Jenny and Barb and Jacque, and those that help in less formal ways as well. The job of an MLA is a busy one, and we have the opportunity to serve, and if we can have people helping us do that, it makes that job that much more efficient. So again I want to thank my constituency assistants and those that help me in volunteer capacities as well because they certainly do help us, as members of the legislature,

do our work.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, at this busy time of year of politics for members in the House, to thank our families, and I want to do that. My wife, Trish, she owns her own business and is very busy in her own professional career but certainly I think she's closer to politics now than ever before for things happening in my life. And that's to be said for my son and daughter as well.

Carter, our son, is in third year university at the University of Saskatchewan and he's getting a first-hand look at what a fine, quality institution that we have in the University of Saskatchewan. He's in third year, Mr. Speaker, third year finance at the Edwards School of Business so he's a busy, busy person as third year finance is a real challenge for students and I know he's working very hard at that. Carter is also a member of the University of Saskatchewan Huskies in their track and field team and he had the honour this summer of representing Saskatchewan at the Canada Summer Games in Winnipeg. And that is indeed a real honour for anyone who is able to do that. We had among 400 athletes from Saskatchewan that were able to do that.

My daughter Paige is in grade 12 at St. Joseph High School in Saskatoon, and grade 12 is always a special year. And you know, I remember it like it was yesterday but it certainly wasn't. It wasn't yesterday but I tell her to make sure that she takes advantage of that year. And she's also involved in athletics, in the Goldfins and in her swimming career and, you know, she's a person that like . . . Carter wants to stay at the University of Saskatchewan. Paige I think is going to venture out. She's looking at McGill or Western or some other university. And I'm okay with that as a parent but I certainly want to encourage her to come back to Saskatchewan when her studies are done. That's why we work so hard as MLAs to give our children and children across the province the opportunity to do that.

I want to talk specifically about the Speech from the Throne and the special time that it was here in this Chamber. And it was a special time for me because my good friend, the Premier, the member for Swift Current, you know, it was what he has indicated would be his last Speech from the Throne. And it was very special. I had his parents sitting right behind me, and family members, and an opportunity to just recall his career and his contribution to the people of Saskatchewan.

I've had an opportunity to know the Premier for many, many years. We actually are the same age and we bug each other about that a little bit. And we had the opportunity to go to school together . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, he's a little bit younger. He says a little bit younger, a little bit wiser. I don't know. That's maybe debatable but in fact I welcome him to the new club every year as we get older.

But we had the opportunity to be in the very same class in university on many occasions and had that opportunity, and some of those early discussions that we had together, I've been reflecting on them. And I know he said it in early time to me, he said, wouldn't it be a wonderful opportunity if we had an opportunity to serve our province in an elected capacity, whether it's in municipal or provincial or federal or whatever capacity or in a volunteer way, but just to serve? Mr. Speaker,

I'm so proud to be able to say that I've had the opportunity to serve with a friend of mine, the Premier and the member from Swift Current who I've known since high school age, through university, and through our professional careers.

Through my time in this legislature I've had a chance to serve as an MLA, yes, and also as a cabinet minister in five different portfolios and I want to thank the Premier for that confidence in me. And certainly I've also served as a government House leader in that capacity. I've learned so much from him and his dedication and I want to thank him and his family for all that they've done for Saskatchewan, for 10 wonderful years of growth in our province. And I know, Mr. Speaker, that this Premier will be looked at by history, will certainly go down in history as one of the best premiers ever in the history of Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — Hear, hear.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Yes, absolutely. Hear, hear. You know, an opportunity to look back in history. And I'm a student of history. I've studied Saskatchewan politics and I've known that we've had many premiers that have made a difference but, Mr. Speaker, I'd submit to you, none more so than the one that sits in this Chamber here today. And I'm proud to say that he's a colleague and a friend and a mentor and I wish him very, very well into the future, as I know he will do many exciting things as he leaves this Chamber as well.

Mr. Speaker, I think this Speech from the Throne, it really focuses on business as well. And I want to talk about . . . You know, Small Business Week just took place here in Saskatchewan. I had the opportunity to participate in the North Saskatoon Business Association as they had their kickoff to Small Business Week in the province. And it was a great opportunity to, you know, talk to people, small-business people from around Saskatchewan and talk to them about their excitement about what lies ahead for Saskatchewan.

We've had 10 years of growth in our province. When we became government in 2007, we were teetering around a million people. Now we're almost 1.2 million people in our province, so that growth that has taken place is indisputable. And I know it's been led by small business and entrepreneurs from across Saskatchewan. As a government we've tried to set the stage for that growth to happen and I think we've been successful in listening to those individuals. They've said that we've had 10 great years, and now we've got to look forward to another 10 years of growth because that's what they're seeing happening.

I had an opportunity to recently tour some technology firms in Saskatchewan. And one of them, Solido Design, it was an amazing, amazing tour because half the offices that are located in their space are empty right now because they just built them because they know that they're going to be hiring dozens of more people. So to me that's such a sign of confidence in our economy and in our future and that certainly excites me when I think about the next 10 years and the bright future that we have in front of us, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the 43,000 small businesses that we have in Saskatchewan are something to be proud of. And you know, 99

per cent of them are indeed small businesses — people, mom and pops and those that hire a few people or hire a dozen people and continue to grow. They're the basis of the future of the province, and that's certainly why in this Throne Speech the government has indicated their support for small business in our province. Taking the small-business threshold from 500,000 to 600,000, the highest threshold in the country, that's a signal that this government has confidence in the small business and entrepreneurs of our province, Mr. Speaker. That enables small businesses to have more disposable income, and it allows them, it allows them to grow and to expand and to reinvest that money into their businesses.

[14:45]

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, there was such concern when the federal government indicated that they were going to tinker with the rates of taxation regarding corporations in our province, and small businesses and doctors and others. We took great exception. Small business took great exception to that because indeed, Mr. Speaker, it was not the way to grow an economy. People that own businesses, they put all of their wealth back into those businesses. It's their RESP [registered education savings plan]. It's their RRSP [registered retirement savings plan]. It's their savings. It's their future. It's their family. And that's why we worked so hard to ensure that the federal government heard that that was not indeed the right way to go.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about business and we talk about growth and what happens in the province, but you know, we never talk enough about the 114,000 low-income people that have been taken off the tax rolls by this government, Mr. Speaker. And that indeed is an important part of growth and financial success that that happens because those that have the lowest incomes, that need every cent of that income for their own purposes, are able to do that. And I think that speaks very highly of this government, of this Throne Speech, and the future of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my time is somewhat limited here, and I want to talk on various topics and, you know, one area that I want to touch on is education. I talked about the new schools in my constituency, but it's more than that. It's more than just in Saskatoon Willowgrove. When I go across Saskatoon and across Saskatchewan, 21 new schools opened for the first time this year. Eleven thousand students this year entering those new schools for the first time, and being very, very, very proud of their schools. And we all know that they were a P3 model, something to be proud of, that costs were justified very carefully as we saved \$100 million in education by having the designs that were the most efficient.

And I can tell you that each and every student is very, very proud of the innovation and ingenuity that has gone into each of those schools. Seventeen billion dollars in the last decade given to education and to, you know, the areas of construction, but also 875 more teachers in our province than when we began, 6,000 new child care spaces, operational funding up some 31 per cent. And I'm very proud of our record when it comes to education.

Later today I'm going to be meeting with some members of the

Saskatoon Teachers' Association. There's a lot of teachers in my constituency, and I love interacting with them and talking about the very good record that this government has when it comes to education. Earlier this day I met with some School Boards Association people and talked about the Theodore case and talked about the rights of parents and students to choose what school and education that they go to. And certainly not everyone agrees with our position, but I think that we are right on the mark when we come to that choice. When I talk to constituents in Saskatoon Willowgrove, they believe that we are doing the right thing. We continue to listen to people on all sides of the issue, but certainly I believe we are moving in the right direction.

I want to speak on a couple of other things: carbon tax, for example. I think that's on the minds of people in Saskatchewan, and they're somewhat worried about where we may go in this direction and what may be forced upon us as a province.

And I know, I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't be more against the carbon tax that is being proposed by the federal government. But I have always been taught that you can't be just against something. You have to be in favour of something that's better and that replaces it as well, and that's certainly what I want to talk about. And I know members opposite are very interested, I know, in what I have to say because there is a better alternative, and we are open to it, absolutely. It's called innovation. It's called food science, and we have the experts that deal with it right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I know members opposite think that there's only one way to do it — tax, tax, tax — but, Mr. Speaker, that's not good enough. That's not good enough today, 2017 in Saskatchewan. That's not good enough for this Legislative Assembly.

I've had the opportunity to talk to food scientists, to people like Dr. Maurice Moloney and study his work and the work that he's done, and I've talked about it across the province, about food science, about the ability to accomplish the same goal as the carbon tax is trying to do, but to do it in a way that involves food science and innovation. And you now, I've talked about photosynthesis and the ability to take photosynthesis from 6 per cent, as it happens in plants right now, to 8 per cent, and we'd have that ability to reduce the carbon footprint in the province by the same way.

You know, I've done a lot of research as well on the work of professional engineer Miles Haukeness. He lives in Estevan, and he has quantified and certainly demonstrated on a scientific perspective that agriculture is not the problem when it comes to carbon in our province. It is indeed the solution, Mr. Speaker. It's the way that we get around the problems of carbon emissions that we have in our province, and he's quantified it.

And you know, we talked about, in this House, that we've agreed that the emissions in the province are around 75 million tonnes of greenhouse gases. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a number that is out there and is accepted, but it doesn't take into account what agriculture and forestry does regarding greenhouse gases in our province. And Mr. Haukeness has quantified that, and he says that 48 million tonnes of greenhouse gases are absorbed through agriculture and forestry in Saskatchewan, leaving a net amount of 27 million tonnes of greenhouse gases.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's a wonderful story. It's a story that is the other side to imposing a carbon tax on our province. It's a story that we as government and industry as well . . . And I've talked to industry people who say we have to do a better job of ensuring that we tell that story — across Saskatchewan, yes, Mr. Speaker, but across the country as well — because it is a great story to tell. And it is why we are so opposed to a carbon tax and why we have a better way of doing things, Mr. Speaker.

You know, as we talk about growth and we talk about agriculture and agri-food, we have to be very, very proud of our strength in this area — 300 food companies in Saskatchewan, \$4 billion in revenues, employing 5,000 people. Our goal is \$6 billion by 2020 and, as you know, Mr. Speaker, this government is never afraid to put a goal in place and then move heaven and earth to try to reach it, especially when it's something as important as that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the ability of our province to grow in these exports as well. You know, I mentioned earlier the wonderful new people that have moved to our province from around the world. And they come from countries, India, and you know, across the world, and they come with a special knowledge of their home continent and their home country and talk about the need.

And you know, we have a great example with Murad Al-Katib and the work that he's done and his Turkish heritage and his ability to go back and do that. But the same thing can be done in many, many different respects as people talk about the appetites of their home country and how we can take food processed in Saskatchewan and change it in such a way that it becomes a real delicacy in the countries that we export to. So there's so much to do and so much excitement and, you know, as we talk about that growth, we have to work on the areas of strength in our province, and that's indeed what we're able to do.

And food science goes beyond exports though, and I've talked about it and it's something that's personal to me. I think in northern Saskatchewan we have such an opportunity to use that food and innovation to enhance the lives of people in northern Saskatchewan. And I was up in Pinehouse last week and talking about the need for greenhouses and community gardens and the ability to have fresh food in those communities, and to try to make those communities self-sufficient in a real way that is indeed efficient when it comes to all aspects of it. And that's something that I've been working on as well.

Mr. Speaker, I very quickly want to touch on some other areas. Autism, to fulfill our commitment for individualized funding to children under six with autism spectrum disorder. I've had the opportunity to meet with families and talk one-on-one with them about their special child and about their ability to do that, and the unique needs. And nothing was more important to them than servicing those unique needs of people.

I know I don't have time to listen to exactly what the members opposite are talking about because this is too important, Mr. Speaker. But when I talk about autism and I talk about families and I talk about looking in the eyes of the moms and dads and talking about their special children and then I see what's delivered in the Throne Speech, that makes me very proud. That makes me wanting to go back to those people and say, yes

there's more work to do, but we indeed are moving in the right directions.

When I talk to seniors about the ability to stay in their homes, and if their income's under \$70,000 to defer the education portion of property tax on their home, it provides security for them. It provides the knowledge that they will be able to stay in their homes and have that quality of life and have a choice. It offers them another choice as well. And everyone knows that this government has worked very hard to keep property taxes as low as possible for all residents of Saskatchewan but, you know, it's very important to seniors who are on fixed incomes and now they have another opportunity.

Regarding organ donations, to improve the rate of organ donations in the province through a new program led by donor physicians, this hits close to home for me, Mr. Speaker. I have a cousin that was a recipient of an organ donation, and she had had the opportunity to come to many budgets and to speeches from the throne and other opportunities to come here and listen to us debate. But you know, to me she is an example of exactly what the benefits of having the improved organ donations are in the province and I'm very proud of her. And I want to be able to say that we're able to help more people like her into the future, and that's specifically what this Speech from the Throne does.

In general, you know, I think what I've seen over here and when I look through the Speech from the Throne, it was a heavy speech. It involved a lot of different areas, a lot of different ideas. But what I see here is some good ideas, some passion, and some enthusiasm for the future of our province. And I see those ideas coming from this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. I hear a lot of complaints from the other side, but I don't hear a lot of that innovation and that vision and those ideas for the future.

And I hope maybe they'll surprise us and maybe we'll see some of that this session. But up until now, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that the passion and the ideas and the innovation have been coming from this side of the House. And that encourages me about the future of this party and this government as we continue to listen very closely to the people of Saskatchewan and listen to what their concerns are, what their priorities are. And government doesn't have all the answers, but we're trying to be innovative whenever we can, and I think we're having some success in that area, Mr. Speaker.

So you know, it's all about the people we serve. When we come to this Legislative Assembly, that's what we do it for. We look at the people that we have the ability to represent here directly as MLAs, and then we look at the wider community — in my area it's Saskatoon — and then we go on to look at the entire province. And I think that's indeed what members on this side of the House are doing, both rural and urban, looking for ways to increase the quality of life for Saskatchewan people and to welcome more people into our province from across the country and around the world. We've had the opportunity to do that.

And Saskatchewan is a special place. And we all know that and every once in a while we're reminded of it time and time again. And I had an opportunity to be reminded of it just this last Saturday night. I went to an event that's called Lows in Motion. Travis Low is an individual that worked as a CA [constituency

assistant] of mine years ago. And he has been very dedicated to Parkinson's and the fight against Parkinson's in Saskatchewan. His grandfather has Parkinson's. His father has Parkinson's, and the likelihood of him receiving it is certainly quite high and quite strong, but he's not worried about that. He's worried about making a difference.

On Saturday night Travis, for the ninth year in a row, the ninth year for Lows in Motion, welcomed 750 people into a room for a comedy night to talk about . . . to have a little fun, but to talk about Parkinson's in Saskatchewan. So this is one person making a wonderful difference in our province. And, you know, I'm so proud to have that relationship where he worked in my office and now seeing what he's doing. And indeed he, in his way, is trying to make our province a better place. And next year he will be celebrating his 10th year of Lows in Motion, and I just want to say how proud I am of him because in his way he's making Saskatchewan a better place.

That's what we're trying to do, each and every one of us here, on the government side and on the opposition side as well, is make Saskatchewan a better place. And I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, as my time draws to a close, that I'm just very, very fortunate and blessed to be able to be in almost my 14th year as a member of the Legislative Assembly. I believe it was November the 4th, 2003 that the member from Batoche and myself and others in the legislature were, had that opportunity to come here.

And when you think of our province, only 112 years old, and we've had the opportunity, and myself, and some longer, some shorter than me that have the opportunity, and for me 14 of those 112 years I've been able to sit in this legislature, to drive up to this wonderful building, to look at its majesty, and have the opportunity to say that, you know, I come here to go to work, to work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

[15:00]

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, this is an important time of year as we have our fall session, as we very, very shortly look forward to the Remembrance Day celebrations, and we wear the poppy today. It is a special time to look forward to what we have coming in the future of Saskatchewan and to look back and to say, to celebrate what has happened in our province.

We know politically that many things are happening on both sides of the House as individuals such as myself have an opportunity to talk about our background and our vision and our passion for the future of this province. And that's a special opportunity that indeed I'm going to take advantage of each and every day. And it brings me closer to my colleagues. It brings me closer to the party that I represent. And it brings me closer to the reason why that I'm here in the Saskatchewan legislature trying to make Saskatchewan a better place, not only for myself, but for my children and for others who move to Saskatchewan to call Saskatchewan home.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm humbled and blessed to live in this great province. And again I want to say that I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne. I will certainly . . . I didn't see anything within the amendment that's worth voting for, so I will be proudly taking my place when that vote is called.

But again thank you to you, to legislative staff, to staff that enable us to have this opportunity to put democracy in action and really, opportunity to put this speech forward. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Throne Speech sets out an ambitious vision for the upcoming session. Its theme, thank goodness where I am is Saskatchewan, resonates with us all. Its broad, deep content is driven and inspired by our Premier, whose last session this sadly is.

I thought I would go into some of the content and context of the Throne Speech as it relates to education, being a bit biased that way. For one, invoking the notwithstanding clause, the status quo will be protected to ensure that non-Catholic students can continue to access Catholic schools and that our funding model takes into account the number of students in a division, not their religious affiliation, which surely makes sense in 2017.

One can imagine the upheaval if as of June 30 next year, students and teachers were forced to upheave their lives by the fall. Friends separated, staff reallocated, parents completely unsure of their children's short-term future.

The interim Leader of the Opposition seems perfectly okay with that, despite the former interim leader's gracious support of the notwithstanding clause in this case. Last week she said, we need to let the appeal happen first, before falling back on that old metaphor about using all the tools in the tool box. Why? Why court such uncertainty? The problem is that the appeal, which is also ongoing, will take 6 to 18 months. So there's a very good chance that any decision delivered beyond June 30 next year, when the original decision was set to come into force, would result in non-Catholic students being forced out of the Catholic system. Full stop.

I suppose we can surmise where the interim leader's loyalties lie.

Meanwhile in the areas of curriculum development, Mr. Speaker, in math we know that at least one-quarter of Canadian children, which of course includes Saskatchewan children, are now relying on private tutors or learning centres outside school to get the basics. So parents who can afford it are looking outside the system because students aren't getting the support they need in school, and that's largely of course for math reinforcement.

We don't have cross-provincial numeracy assessment here as other provinces do such as Ontario. And it was through such assessments that Ontario recently came to terms with the fact that only half of its grade 6 students met the provincial standard for math, whereupon Premier Wynne quickly announced some changes. We, on the other hand, have to rely on national and international testing to see where we're at and our scores in recent PISA [programme for international student assessment] tests, as we all know, were disappointingly low.

We will begin to set things right. Math reinforcement and supports in school will be expanded and we will look first, of course, at what is working right here. There are teachers already

accomplishing very good things, and we can't wait to talk to them.

We also believe that every student having access to a textbook, which believe it or not currently varies widely across divisions, would be a good practical step. Students could take it home if they wanted to study, which would help them and their parents, in some cases, get a sense of the overall context of the curriculum. Call it an additional resource.

We will also look at what other jurisdictions are doing, best practices in other provinces of course, but international models as well. The French, for example, are top leaders in math partly because elementary and high school students are exposed to continual reinforcement and review. The Mastering Maths model, which the UK [United Kingdom] has recently adopted, is also reinforcement- and workbook-based.

I was interested to read the comments by the president of the Mathematics Teachers' Society last week responding to the Throne Speech. She said she rejected common sense models, saying the traditional way of teaching is successful for only a certain portion of the population, although she failed to elaborate on what works for everyone else or even whether the current way and for whom . . . [inaudible] . . . the current system is really working.

It was interesting too that she admonished parents not to use flash cards to drill equations with their kids but instead to treat math as a conversation about numbers, values, and counting, which is one thing at pre-levels, Mr. Speaker, quite another when you get into the vagaries of geo-trig or algebra or, as my son is doing right now, long, long lists of dividing fractions which the teacher assigns. That's where the so-called conversation gets trickier. And if we're going to encourage our children to go into STEM [science, technology, engineering, and math] subjects, which we want to instil in them, we want to instil that math of course can be fun but it also requires a lot of long lists and a lot of reinforcement.

As a U of S [University of Saskatchewan] physics prof once said to me, there has to be some rote in math so you can call up numbers and patterns instantly in your head. That's how it works. He also said, you can dream about being, let's say, an astronaut as long as you realize you'll have to master physics, and physics isn't very abstract or quantum physics — a little less conversation, more concrete.

On computer coding, Mr. Speaker, BC [British Columbia], Ireland, the UK, Finland are doing it. We too must take our place and prepare students for the new tech economy. There will be challenges particularly because, as things stand, there are only 70 teachers across the province qualified to teach computer science 20 and 30. This is partly down to the fact that the colleges of education, which haven't made specialized computational methods part of their teacher curriculum until now . . . Still, the will and the engagement are there, as it is out in the tech field. I understand there's a committed group of teachers and experts who are passionate about this and raring to go. So we will get there.

On French, Mr. Speaker, back in the summer I met with Quebec's minister for intergovernmental affairs and la

Francophonie, Jean-Marc Fournier. We discussed the challenge that school divisions face in non-francophone provinces attracting and retaining French teachers from francophone provinces. There are no two ways about it; we face a shortage. A shortage of high-quality French teachers who know the difference from between “tu as simplifié” with an e accent and “il faut simplifier” with an -er. Teachers who teach students articles because French doesn’t have a “the.” It’s “le” or “la.” And grammar, fundamentally communicating in French, depends on knowing that.

This year is Canada 150, a great symbol, finally, of bilingualism in this country because French has become cool. And across the country and here in Saskatchewan, parents are enrolling their children in French immersion programs in growing numbers. And we think there is more we could do as a province to reduce the hoops that new teachers who come here have to go through to get right into the classroom to teach our students, and more provinces could do to break down administrative barriers, whether for young entrepreneurs or teachers, to come closer together. Because we, for one, would love it if young Quebecers could come here and teach here and fall in love and start a family and teach our children, strengthening the francophone community right here in Saskatchewan.

We have arrived at an important crossroads in education. And when it comes to a broader discussion about curriculum, and that is our intention in the coming months, I would submit that there has come to be at once too much wholesale infusion into the curriculum, and at the same time, too many attempts to mandate material into it both from the inside and by outside groups.

The intention is always good to provide resources to teachers, websites, professional development, access to material on this issue or that issue. But what has ended up happening, to my mind, is that the broader curriculum has become watered down. Teachers, it seems, are being put upon to infuse certain material into every subject area, and students are becoming guinea pigs in some cases for whatever is being tried out by the system.

In an October 30 column in *The Globe and Mail*, Debra Soh, who holds a Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] in neuroscience at York University, said:

Most of us would agree that it’s inappropriate to use children as pawns in order to fulfill . . . ideas [by adults] of what the world should look like, both in the implementation of policy and criticism of it.

It might be preferable to go the other way around, to start from broad bases of classical education — history, geography, basic grammar and writing skills — and then cautiously perhaps infuse from there. Because bottom line, you’re not going to be able to change the world on any social issue if you can’t write properly. If you don’t know how to use a possessive, or can’t identify a preposition, or the famous ones — mix up who and whom; two, too, and to; effect and affect — someone is going to call your bluff.

Or for that matter, Mr. Speaker, if you don’t know what happened in 1789 or 1066 or 1917 . . . Because history shows us patterns. It shows us context. And if you don’t know that 230

years ago French revolutionaries called their movement Citizenship, or that later Maoists were very partial to school children singing indoctrination songs, or that a key tenet of cultural Bolshevism was prominently displaying ideological slogans in schools, how do you know what rights, responsibility, and respect are, which are currently being called the new three Rs by the way, especially when they’re demanded, being demanded, right here, right now as “intentional, explicit mandating.” How can you analyze them in their fullest, most critical context?

My grade 8 son brought a homework sheet home the other day — they’re always sheets — in which he was asked to outline nothing less than his vision of his collective past, his country, and his world. As background, however, he’d copied from the board the following facts which were presented as fact: that European and European settlers were colonialists, pillagers of the land who knew only buying and selling and didn’t respect mother earth. He asked me if it was okay if he could write that he associated with his pioneer great- and great-great-grandparents because no one was writing down their vision of the world. And I said yes, of course, and that after all, they had known poverty in Norway or Ukraine, or war in Germany, that they had come here and tilled the land that produced food for everybody and loved their families and tried to create whole, stable communities in this province, and had loved it here.

My two grandmothers went off to school speaking only Norwegian and Ukrainian respectively, to one-room schoolhouses. The amazing patchwork of supports we know today would have been completely unknown to them. And yet one of my grannies became a business owner, what’s known today as a female entrepreneur. The other was brilliant in math. And we all know the studies. In many, seniors perform better in math than our young people do.

So where do we go from here, Mr. Speaker? I know what they would say about this Throne Speech, its vision, and the vision of our Premier. They would say thank goodness where I am is Saskatchewan. What our families came for and came here for led to a vision like this, which is why I will not be supporting the amendment, Mr. Speaker, and will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

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

[15:15]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s my honour to enter into the Throne Speech again here this year. And I do so through the lens of the people I serve, the good people of Regina Rosemont, as I look to this Throne Speech that’s put before us, and I thank them for the privilege of serving them and being their voice in this Assembly.

I also want to recognize, just as many members have, family and the role of family in our role and in serving. And in my case, I want to say hello and thanks and I love you to Stephanie, a grade 6 school teacher here in Regina, who I think might have something to say about the speech she just heard from the Education minister. I think some of her colleagues might have a

few things to say about that one as well. But to Stephanie, I just appreciate all the support within our home and within our lives. And to my little guy, William, I say hello. We were out last night. He was dressed up as a wolf, so he's William the wolf as we went around trick or treating, and that was a pretty big deal. He ran from door to door; he got me a pretty good loot. I stayed up too late eating a lot of it, Mr. Speaker.

But I enter into this Throne Speech at a time in our province where people are worried, where needs are not being met, at a time where people need some action. They need a vision and a plan that reflects their hopes and their dreams. And we have a government that's grown awfully out of touch with the people that they pretend to serve, Mr. Speaker.

Of course we're, I guess, in the late stages of this Premier's tenure, and in many ways you see a Throne Speech and many of the speeches opposite that are there to sort of curry favour with the Premier as he goes out the door, to prop up his legacy. It's something that it's worthy, as we look at these periods of time, to realize that this really was a Premier that failed to get the job done for Saskatchewan people when times were good, failed to put away a dollar, failed to balance a budget, mismanaged opportunity, and squandered a tremendous opportunity for the people of the province.

And you know we see . . . I need to almost go back and review the tape of the speech I just heard from the Minister of Education. But it seemed to me to not be resembling the kind of Saskatchewan we need to build and understanding our treaties, understanding our history, and standing strong to work as active partners towards reconciliation, Mr. Speaker.

And this comes from a government and certainly a minister here now that, you know, that are presiding over an attack on our classrooms, an attack on our local school boards, and placing our students, the next generation, in a very challenged position. Failing to recognize that education is the foundation of our future. Failing to recognize that we will only be as strong as we can be as a province when every last person in Saskatchewan is as strong as they can be and recognizing how powerful and how transformational education is on that front, Mr. Speaker.

We're here at a time within our province where we've got, you know, the sitting government with their big majority that have forgotten who they're working for, that betrayed Saskatchewan people on front after front. Whether it's the billion dollar tax hike, whether it's the sell-off attempts at our Crown corporations, the sell-off of STC, Mr. Speaker, the attack on our classrooms, the pulling apart the supports that are important to people and the very most vulnerable. Clearly what we're witnessing within our province is an unprecedented betrayal of the people that government was supposed to serve, Mr. Speaker.

Now heartening in all of this is not that government's recognizing error in their way or changing course because they're not, Mr. Speaker. They seem to be doubling down and digging deeper on most of these fronts. But what's heartening is that Saskatchewan people have risen up and have become alive at a time where stakes are high in our province, stakes are high in their communities, stakes are high in the lives of their

families. It's been heartening to see people in rural and urban and First Nations Saskatchewan, all of Saskatchewan, rise up against this damaging agenda of this government.

And we see a Premier and a cabinet that's in disarray, Mr. Speaker, a Premier that defended scandal like the GTH, trying to brush it off as no big deal as millions were wasted, as friends of government filled their pockets, Mr. Speaker, only to learn now that we aren't alone in having very serious concern on this matter. We're not alone. The RCMP have serious concern on this matter with an investigation that now, I understand, has files over at prosecutors. And we're not alone even in the sense of a few of the new . . . those vying to serve as the next premier of Saskatchewan.

We have an Attorney General, Mr. Speaker, a former attorney general, Mr. Speaker, who stood beside the Premier day after day defending the nonsense that we heard from that Premier, the dismissal of the scandal and the wasted dollars, who now suggests during his leadership run that he believes that there should be a public inquiry into the matter. We have a . . . He was at that table. He had every chance to do the right thing day after day, month after month, as we grilled government on this front and held them to account. But he failed to step up when it mattered most, and now we're supposed to trust that he has the best interests of Saskatchewan people in mind.

We see the same with other candidates. I believe the member that's seated in the back corner here is calling for a full judicial inquiry. Well yes, people deserve that. I think we've been saying that for two years, Mr. Speaker. So certainly, without a doubt we need actions. We need independence to a commission that would get to the bottom of the Sask Party's scandal, their mismanagement, and their waste. And in many ways I think that the GTH, as ugly as it is and as much as that's been wasted, it's really just the tip of the iceberg when you look at the scope and the mismanagement of the bypass and what went sideways there, or if you look, of course, at the so-called clean coal project, Mr. Speaker.

So we have a government that continues to provide no accountability to Saskatchewan people and certainly not act on the hopes and dreams of Saskatchewan people. We had a Throne Speech here and I was awfully surprised. We have a government that's presiding over tough economic conditions for which they've been a full part of creating, Mr. Speaker, and instead of making things better and creating jobs and supporting investment and strengthening our economy, we have a government taking deliberate actions that are hampering our economic recovery, that are hurting job conditions for people all across this province in rural, urban, and First Nation Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

This would have been a time within a Throne Speech to be active on job creation, to lay out an agenda for an economic recovery, to create opportunity for people. Instead we just see more of the same. The relentless push towards a low-wage, precarious and part-time work, privatized, and out-sourced economy. That sort of an economy and that push of the Sask Party must be stopped, Mr. Speaker. And as New Democrats along with Saskatchewan people in every corner of this province, we're going to work to do just that.

This would have been a time to have been creating jobs and acting on our environmental responsibilities by creating renewable power and distributing that generation in communities and locations all across our province. Creating jobs, creating investment, reducing our emissions, but nary a mention in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

This would be an ideal time to be acting on the environment and reducing emissions with energy-efficiency retrofits, an ambitious program to reduce emissions, and along the way create jobs and opportunity across our province, but we don't see any of that. Instead we see a government going full steam ahead when it comes to matters of selling off things like our Crown lands, Mr. Speaker, and pretending, pretending that they had seen the light on their failed attempt to sell off our Crown corporations but leaving the door wide open for the deceitful . . . I'll pull that statement back, Mr. Speaker . . . but the sell-off of STC, Mr. Speaker.

And if that government would recognize the error in their way and would actually do the right thing right now, what they would do is stop the sell-off of their assets of STC. They'd stop the sell-off of the buses. They'd stop the sell-off of the depots, and they would listen to Saskatchewan people, recognizing at the very least that these are assets that are owned by the people of Saskatchewan. And that's why as New Democrats we are going to do all we can to stop that sell-off and to stop sell-offs into the future.

And Saskatchewan people will not forget, Mr. Speaker, because I have great faith in Saskatchewan people. They will not be tricked. They will not forget when the next group of conservatives show up, Mr. Speaker, maybe with a new name, maybe with a new name and claim they're not going to sell off our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. And recognizing that, we're going to do all we can in the coming weeks, months, and years to fight to save our Crown corporations, but then to protect them and strengthen them, Mr. Speaker. To lock them down into protection that forces a government — if they're going to play the kind of games that this one has — forces a government to take it to Saskatchewan people, to have the courage and to have the backbone to give a vote to the people of Saskatchewan, the owners of those Crown corporations.

And when we look at those Crown corporations, of course, these are built by and for Saskatchewan people. And they're not just important to our past, they're so relevant into our future. They can be utilized in so many ways to help create jobs and build a stronger economy. They can help us live up to our environmental obligations. And they can help us do things like build a thriving tech sector in Saskatchewan, a growing industry that allows diversity to this province.

You know, and the minister has referenced that they have some new inclusion of technology into the school system, Mr. Speaker, into the curriculum here today, as part of the Throne Speech here. And this potentially is a positive step. I would be supportive of making sure that we have modern classrooms that are teaching computational thinking and preparing students for the jobs of today and tomorrow and supporting the growth of that tech sector.

But you can't just keep piling on more onto the backs of

teachers, Mr. Speaker. You can't keep piling on more that needs to be done. You have to thoughtfully go at this, resource it and decide how we're going to support the implementation of a curriculum. You just can't keep adding more and more to those that are being asked to do more and more with less, Mr. Speaker.

And I think if we're going to look at growing that vibrant, strong tech sector, we also need to make sure that we're supporting it with access, which is so critical to a Crown corporation like SaskTel, which is an incredible tool for us to be able to go out and extend access to an entire province, on the high-speed Internet side, on cellular service side, Mr. Speaker, making sure that we're supporting the development of that industry and of jobs all across this province. But of course this is a government that wants to put all of that at risk. And to truly build that tech sector, there's an important discussion around how do you support capital, how do you make sure that the dollars are there to be invested for those startups, and certainly we don't see anything innovative or creative on those fronts.

Mr. Speaker, on front after front Saskatchewan people deserve better than what they're getting from this government. They do, from our perspective, deserve, you know, a province that works for everyone, Mr. Speaker.

We see, you know, we see a government that brings forward a measure in this budget here around ride sharing, Mr. Speaker, without any consultation with the people who are directly involved in this and addressing the lack of safety within this industry right now. Not any consultation, Mr. Speaker, with those that are dealing with assault, abuse, harassment, racism, Mr. Speaker, just going ahead with a plan with no consultation, something that we've come to see far too often from this government.

We see a government that's even been slow to respond to spaces that they should have been on top of right away. We have wildfire down the west side of the province and a government sitting idle in working with producers who have been devastated by way of loss of cattle, a government that's been sitting on their hands. And a government that's been sitting on their hands and sort of green lighting process when it comes to matters like the Quill Lakes, something that should have been a priority for this government a long period ago, a matter where this government showed some leadership and brought together experts and communities and RMs [rural municipality] and people and businesses and First Nations, producers, and found a solution.

Instead they have sat on their hands, Mr. Speaker, and now we hear that they're pushing ahead a process and not even subjecting it to an environmental assessment that would divert waters through a system with fish-killing salinity levels into a world class spawning grounds, into an incredible system, Last Mountain Lake, in the Qu'Appelle Valley watershed. We should all be expecting a lot more of our government. It's past time that this government stepped up to the plate and worked with the people of this province, the good people in through the Quills who faced devastation, to find an adequate solution that doesn't include, that doesn't include compromising an incredible fishery, an incredible system, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

We have a time in this province where people are feeling betrayed, and for good reason, where jobs are few and hard to come by, Mr. Speaker, and because of the precarious nature of that work, don't cover the cost of living. And it is particularly intensified by the incredible increases to their taxes, things like the education portion of property tax which, you know, took an extra \$57 million from Saskatchewan people but failed to put those dollars, or \$67 million, but failed to put those dollars back into classrooms — classrooms that are undersupported, classrooms with growing class size, classes with incredible complexity to the needs of those learners, teachers that are under-resourced, educational assistants that are being cut, Mr. Speaker. These are not conditions that set this province up to thrive or the people within it.

We have a lot of strength in this province when we lean on the people of this province. What we've seen under this government in their late stages of their government is a government that's really wanted to consolidate all power in the Premier's office to serve sort of a political legacy and a partisan interest as opposed to the public's interest or the province's best interests. And you know, my vision is for a province that works for everyone, a province that's filled with hope, opportunity, and reconciliation. And we have a government that's failing to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people.

There is no reason that we should not be able to be extending mental health and addiction services to every last person in this province that needs them. How many more young people do we have to observe losing their lives? How many more young people and families do we have to observe being torn apart? The fact is far too many people are suffering in silence. Far too many others that indicate they need help have services delayed and that window of opportunity to intervene in a meaningful way closes. You know, I think we can all think about what that means for a child, a 12-year-old that's in despair or darkness, and we can also relate to what that might look like for a parent that's struggling with depression or a parent that's struggling with addiction. The costs of not responding to the needs of people with mental health and addictions services they deserve and need in a timely, urgent way with wraparound services is something that we can't afford to act on and it's an area that we need vision. It's an area that we need leadership.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when we look at our classrooms, of course we're going to do all we can, and we see the member, our critic, the member for Lakeview, fight back in a spirited way day after day as a champion for students, as a champion for education. And we're going to do all we can as New Democrats to not just stop that damage, but to build the most enriched and engaging classrooms possible, to make sure that this province can be as strong as it can be, knowing that that is only accomplished when every last young person has all the opportunity they deserve and is as strong as they can be, making sure that we're reducing class size and making sure we have the supports in place that they deserve, making sure that we give control back to our school boards who know best, democratically elected and making the decisions within this province. Instead we see a government consolidating that power, taking control, thinking that they know best. And building a culture back in education where we trust in the

professionals, where we trust in the teachers, where we give them the respect, the support, and the autonomy that they deserve, Mr. Speaker, where we recognize that they're the experts in their classrooms, in their communities, and in the best position to respond to the needs of learners within their classroom, Mr. Speaker.

And quite contrary I believe . . . I will need to review the remarks of the Education minister here today, but we have to do so much better in supporting students, in supporting teachers when it comes to the teachings of the treaties, making sure that that education is supported so that it lives up to the spirit and intent of those treaties and that we're also teaching, all through the school system, understandings of the residential school system and the injustice that exists.

And speaking of injustice, Mr. Speaker, we have a time within our province that we preside over an injustice that no one should ever tolerate, not one of us should tolerate, no party should tolerate, and that's the injustice of underfunding of on-reserve education within our province, Mr. Speaker. It's the kind of scenario that I picture 20, 30 years down the road that all politicians of all stripes will be offering apologies for starving the education of young people in a way that's based in systemic racism and injustice to all. But it's on us right now to be acting, Mr. Speaker, and it's my belief we need to be acting now to make sure that we have equitable funding for every last student in Saskatchewan and that includes, very importantly, students on reserves, Mr. Speaker.

We have a lot within this province to be thankful for. I have a lot to be thankful for. I suspect a lot of members have a lot of privilege in this Assembly and a lot to be thankful for. Many have a lot of struggles within our province, Mr. Speaker. And for us not to recognize the action and supports that we need to bring when it comes to mental health and addictions, for us to not recognize, Mr. Speaker, the supports that need to be extended by way of housing or food security, by way of acting on poverty, is really failing those that need us most.

We have a government, Mr. Speaker, a Sask Party government that as they've tried to push millions of dollars towards the wealthiest within our province, that they've taken away from those with the least, Mr. Speaker. Taken away programs like the hearing aid program. Taken away programs for students with intensive needs. Attacking and trying to sell off the public seniors' housing across rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, housing that's been built that serves communities today and that's important to the future, Mr. Speaker. Failing to act on the areas that have a lot of promise in responding to this, like Housing First, Mr. Speaker, as a broad-based initiative across our province.

We clearly have a government that's failing to live up to its responsibility to serve every last person in this province. And we certainly have a government, a Sask Party government that is failing to ensure this province is as strong as it can be, a government that's focused more I think on what sort of legacy it wants to leave the outgoing Premier, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to what kind of legacy they want to leave the people of this province, what kind of action they want to bring to the people of this province in the areas that truly, truly count.

You know, we need to build an economy in this province that's not for the select few, as we see a government that has really failed to provide an economy that works for the people of this province. We need to build a strong and an inclusive economy, and that's what we're committed to.

You know, we have a government that doesn't even give attention at a time where they could be acting around making sure that we improve the performance of our rail transportation system in this province, important to all exporters, important to agricultural producers in this province. And they turn an eye on matters of things like the illegal foreign acquisition of farm land in our province, almost pretend as if they think it's not happening, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to investigating and acting on something that's clearly not in line with the spirit and intent of the laws that we have within Saskatchewan, and clearly not in line with the best interests of rural Saskatchewan or agriculture as we move forward.

And we have opportunities within our province that we need to be acting on. We need to build a comprehensive water management strategy province wide, including the good people of this province and all stakeholders. That needs to include water monitoring. It needs to include monitoring of the adequacy of supply. It needs to be dealing with matters of illegal drainage, Mr. Speaker. It needs to work to re-establish and protect wetlands for the people of this province, something that's important to us from a water management perspective, but also something that's important from an environmental perspective, sequestering carbon. You know, the wetlands, they're not just great for a duck hunter like me; they're also great to work as part of our water management strategy and to sequester carbon.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we see is clearly a government that's really fallen out of line with the values of Saskatchewan people: compassion and common sense, co-operation and community. But what I see in Saskatchewan is I see those values on display all across our province. I see the motto of our province, "from many peoples, strength," on display all throughout this province. I see it on school boards. I see it in classrooms. I see it in cultural communities. I see it with entrepreneurs across this province. I see it with workers. I see it with municipal leaders. I see it with those that are ready to act on the environment in a meaningful way. But I certainly don't see it within this government.

But I'm heartened. As we rally as a province, as we come together to address the big challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow, I'm heartened that Saskatchewan people are rising to the occasion.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech was, you know, a great disappointment to the people of the province. This is a government not being accountable to the people of this province, a government that has failed from a fiscal perspective with incredible financial mismanagement and debt loading through good years, Mr. Speaker. A government that's presided over mismanagement of projects, that's wasted hard-earned dollars and stolen them from places like education where they are needed, and a government that hasn't been straight with the people of Saskatchewan on front after front.

My message to Saskatchewan people is that we're in it together. We're stronger together. And as we embark as the official opposition, as Saskatchewan New Democrats, we're going to have our sleeves rolled up. We're going to be reaching out, continue to reach out province wide as we have, and to the people of this province who are engaging in such a good constructive way, I say thank you. We're going to continue to listen and build, and ultimately what we're aiming to is to build a province that works for everyone, a Saskatchewan that's filled with hope, opportunity, and reconciliation, and to lay out a vision that connects with the realities and hopes and dreams of the good people of this province.

So I certainly won't be supporting the lack of accountability of this government. I won't be supporting a Throne Speech that's unambitious and tired and more about propping up a partisan legacy of an outgoing Premier than what we deserve, which are actions, plans, vision that builds a brighter future for all within Saskatchewan. So I'll be supporting the amendment brought forward by the member of Nutana and I won't be supporting that Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course I rise to give my remarks in response to the Speech from the Throne 2017. And as is customary, I'm going to take this opportunity while I'm on my feet to thank the Speaker . . . who has requested such, and we do. And I thank all members and all staff here who make sure that we have this important opportunity to bring the hopes and the dreams and the thoughts of our constituents here to this place. And it really is an honour still every day to serve in this place.

I think I also should thank my husband, Guy. Some will know that we celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary very recently, and I've spent more than half my life with him at this point. And it might shock some to know, but I can be really difficult to live with sometimes — only occasionally — but he puts up with me and he challenges me and he supports me, Mr. Speaker, and for that I am very grateful. And I look forward to the next 20 years and hopefully beyond, but I don't take anything for granted.

I also want to talk a little bit about my kids. I think I avoid that a little bit because I feel rather verklempt when I talk about them but, Mr. Speaker, Guy and I have three children, Hannah, Nolan, and Maya.

Hannah will be a legal adult this year, at the end of this year, and I can't quite believe that that is the case. She's in grade 12 at Campbell. She is quite a good student, a dancer, and has been really involved, particularly this year, at the school with clubs like the QSA [Queer Straight Alliance] and the truth and reconciliation club at school. And I am immensely proud of her. I give her probably more of a hard time than I should as a first-born daughter, but I hope she understands how proud we both are of her.

My son Nolan is in grade 10 at Sheldon-Williams Collegiate. He is making the transition from the football field to the basketball court and the ice as we speak, and I think he's having

quite a good time there at that school.

And my youngest, as is often referred to, Mr. Speaker, attends École Connaught Community School in grade 6. And she is delighted with that school and with that school community that surrounds her, the teaching staff. And I just am very thankful, both in my own life and all the way through my children's life, for the support and mentorship that they have had from adults in their lives, certainly including and perhaps especially those teachers and support staff in the schools. And I am truly thankful for that and for that experience for our children.

[15:45]

Of course I am always thankful for the love and support of my parents, and I know that I would not be standing here without their guidance. And I'd also just like to take a quick minute to say happy birthday to my grandma. It was her birthday yesterday, my grandma Olive — we call her Nanny — in Moose Jaw. And I know that she does occasionally check in on or follow very closely perhaps the proceedings here in this Assembly, so I wanted to wish her a very happy birthday.

But, Mr. Speaker, I should also thank my constituency assistant Chris, and I often forget to do so in the way that she ought to be thanked. She is hard working. She is organized. I occasionally can be . . . lack some organization, and certainly she keeps me where I need to be and provides service to those people in our constituency and from around the province. And it has been the case that our office has been fairly busy over the last year and a half, and we've both learned together through emails around Bill 63 and around libraries for sure. But it's been a good learning experience, and I really do sincerely thank her for all of her hard work.

Mr. Speaker, that brings me into my remarks specifically about the Throne Speech. An overall remark about this Throne Speech would be that it is, you know, maybe less, a little less about looking forward and a little more about looking back over the Premier's legacy over the last decade or so. And I suppose I understand that, Mr. Speaker, that there is a tendency to do that, and I certainly acknowledge the hard work of the Premier. I know none of us . . . This is not an easy job, and I understand that it does not come without sacrifice. So I do thank him for his service, and I thank you for that hard work. And I thank his family, because we all know that our families experience a great deal of sacrifice so that we can stand here in this place and do the work that we do. So I am sincere in that, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to just read into the record a little bit of a quote, and I'll come back to this a few times in my remarks, Mr. Speaker, but this is . . . We had Trevor Herriot here today, and I want to read a quote that's in his book *Towards a Prairie Atonement*. And this is a quote by Cynthia Chambers and the late Narcisse Blood. It's from their work *Love Thy Neighbour: Repatriating Precarious Blackfoot Sites*. And this is quite a lovely quote, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's very important for all of us here in this place, and when we talk about looking forward:

Whether we are indigenous or newcomer, today our teepees are held down by the same peg. Neither is going anywhere. The knowledge and the will needed to protect and save these places no longer belongs to one people or

one tradition.

Mr. Speaker, this is going to be a theme throughout my remarks, and that is that this province belongs to no one tradition or one people. I've been very concerned about some of the remarks around "real" people in this province by members opposite. The suggestion that there are somehow real people, and then there are, I guess, not real people. I assume by real people we mean — maybe I shouldn't assume — but supporters of one government, and not supporters of the other, Mr. Speaker.

And another theme in my remarks is going to be around leadership, because I think leadership . . . There's one thing to be the leader of a political party. To be sure, this Premier has presided over a very powerful political brand, enjoyed popularity. It's a powerful political machine, Mr. Speaker. But there's also leadership, and that is around governing, and that is governing for all people. And those are people that voted for you, and those are people who did not vote for you, Mr. Speaker, and all are real people in this province. People who were here long before us, people who are newly here, people who just arrived yesterday. People who built sod huts on the prairie and people who have long and proud traditions — with good reason — as settlers in this province.

We are all real people, and this is the type of leader . . . Leadership requires that we lead for all people in this province. We don't always agree, Mr. Speaker, but we have to respect that these are all people, and real leadership means leading for all people, Mr. Speaker. So the type of . . . Part of the reason that I'm so hurt, I think, and concerned by those remarks is because it dehumanizes people in this province, and it makes the "other." It makes it easy when we dehumanize — we speak as if they're not real people — to do things like make a joke about someone dying on the side of the highway, Mr. Speaker. And I will acknowledge the member from Prince Albert. It showed leadership to apologize for that, and I do thank him for that.

Mr. Speaker, I need to call this out as well in terms of leadership, when I saw as a lack of leadership today around the actions of the Premier and calling out, calling into question the intentions of our interim leader here today, Mr. Speaker. And that was very troubling. Our leader is someone who is a long-time volunteer at the sexual assault line, who is a noted and committed feminist, someone who lives and breathes ensuring that women have access to the legal system, and ensuring that survivors are believed and supported and that we make this, and all spaces in this province, our party, this party, the party that was here earlier today, safe places for women. All places in this province.

It was a pronounced lack of leadership that would call that into question. And I'm here to say that I am so proud of the type of leadership that our leader has presented through this. This is a hard thing to meet head on, Mr. Speaker, as you can imagine. For any leader, this is a hard thing to lead head on. For a young woman who is standing here as the first female leader of our party, those tiny shoulders are strong and broad, Mr. Speaker. And I'm very proud of the work that she has done here and we will continue.

We are not there. No one is there, and no one should be throwing stones from glass houses around this issue. If we work together, that's when we get our best work done, Mr. Speaker. And we can work together to make sure that this is a safe place for all people, all women. And I think a real opportunity was missed here today with that regard, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say there was not a lot in the Throne Speech that I think . . . As I said, it was a lot of rear-view mirror. Not a lot of windshields, a lot of looking forward. And again, to a certain degree I understand that; the Premier is on his way out. But, Mr. Speaker, I think when you're looking back you are responsible for the good times, you are responsible for the good that has happened, but you also have to take responsibility for the things for maybe you have missed the mark a little bit.

On the top of that, I'm going to talk about education. I got involved in politics in about 2009, when I was first elected to the public school board for this reason, because of concerns about education. I got involved in provincial politics because of very real concerns that I was seeing at that school board table, Mr. Speaker. And the fact that the only items that we're addressing in this Throne Speech, the only items that were addressed in this Throne Speech were around the math curriculum and the notwithstanding clause really, really, really, really give me pause, Mr. Speaker.

There are a lot of challenges in our education system right now. There is certainly the fact that we had \$67 million in additional education property tax that was paid by people across this province this year, and \$54 million taken out of the front line. We heard about French teachers, Mr. Speaker, but the reality is that teachers in this province . . . We lose 50 per cent of teachers within the first five years of teaching, and that is appalling. That is for French teachers, that is for all teachers, Mr. Speaker. Last year we lost — I understand there's some dispute about the numbers — we lost almost 200 teachers in this province at a time when we have thousands of children entering our school system.

We have an education sector plan that has a number of goals, and boards across this province, parents, educators are expressing significant concerns about our ability to maintain any gains that have been made and express concerns that we actually might backtrack. In case anyone wanted to know what some of those goals are: that 80 per cent of students achieve grade level in reading, writing, and math.

Mr. Speaker, there were some significant gains. There were gains made around the province around reading. There was good consultation with teachers. There was money and effort put into curriculum development and professional development, and that did see some gains. We've seen less with reading or with writing rather, and now we're hearing this late in the game we're going to start talking about math scores.

The minister noted, you know, that there is a need to ensure that our students are prepared for, well a whole host of the future really, including STEM jobs. And I certainly agree with that. I have a daughter who intends to be an engineer, Mr. Speaker. But I know that I can't extrapolate my child's experience to the whole province, so I have to make sure that I understand what's going on in other places around this province. And it is really

concerning, Mr. Speaker.

We have a huge gap between indigenous and non-indigenous students in this province. Certainly that includes the 60 per cent funding for those children who attend school on-reserve, but that also includes a huge educational attainment gap and graduation gap for indigenous and non-indigenous students across the province, Mr. Speaker. It is in the education sector plan goal, and it is something that we have made very little progress towards. Individual school divisions have made some progress, and I commend them for it. They have also told us that these cuts are going to call into question their ability to continue with those gains, Mr. Speaker.

We have a Throne Speech that does not mention the North once, that did not mention the shortage of teachers in the North. It certainly didn't mention the fact that NORTEP [northern teacher education program] and NORPAC [Northern Professional Access College], the withdrawal of funding for those programs, will further call into question our ability to recruit and retain teachers in the North. And that is the opposite direction that we need to be going in, Mr. Speaker. I heard my colleague this morning on the radio, the member for Riversdale, note that indigenous girls in this province are 26 times more likely to take their lives than their non-indigenous peers.

Mr. Speaker, there are, I'm sure, highlights over the last 10 years. The condition of children in this province, and particularly indigenous children, is not something to be proud of. In fact it's a disgrace.

We have a province that, after one decade-long resource boom, we maintained through and actually grew the number of children and seniors using the food bank. We have the highest rates of domestic violence in the country, double the national average. We have HIV rates that are at an epidemic level, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

So I understand the need to look back and want to talk about a legacy, but understand — to the Premier and that government — that you own this legacy too. You made decisions to spend everything in the good times, to blow through a rainy day fund, and the least amongst us have seen their plight not only not increase, but be reduced, Mr. Speaker. And so you own both sides of that legacy.

I note the Premier stated in his address, or rather the Speech from the Throne, during our decade of growth we've recorded the second-highest job-creation record and the second-highest growth in weekly incomes.

Mr. Speaker, the funny thing about averages is this. You can have a few people doing very, very well and you can have a lot of people doing really poorly, and it increases your average. And I'm afraid that that's what we've seen in this province, and that is a gap between the haves and have-nots, Mr. Speaker. And that is a concern. It's a concern morally but is also a concern economically. It is a concern with regard to justice. It is a concern with regard to crime. It is a concern with regard to things like HIV rates. It's a concern with regard to things like addiction rates, Mr. Speaker.

There was a recent report, very influential report out of the University of Saskatchewan, the Howe report, that noted that every year that we allow the educational attainment gap to exist in this province between indigenous students and non-indigenous students, we lose a billion dollars. Mr. Speaker, this is not only a moral imperative; this is an economic imperative.

The overall cost to this province — and if you don't believe me, go talk to the chamber of commerce — the overall cost of that gap between educational attainment between First Nations and non-First Nations students in this province is \$90 billion. I'll say that again — \$90 billion.

Mr. Speaker, we are failing to do the right thing and we are failing those children and we are failing economically. And I don't know how when you're looking back, you can be blind to that fact. So by all means, celebrate successes but do not turn a blind eye to this because this is also part of your legacy, Mr. Speaker. This is part of the legacy of the last 10 years. We had an opportunity to do something about this.

We have the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations standing in front of us right now. We have a list. We have a list with very little progress towards them, and after that last budget, Mr. Speaker, we've actually seen regression on that progress. We have a promise for the Sixties Scoop that has gone, not only has gone unfulfilled, the blame has gone back on the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] for scheduling. Mr. Speaker, when some people want to get a meeting done, I see it happens very quickly; other times, it's left to languish. So we wait on that, we wait on that promise, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll say this about obviously the very big education item in this Throne Speech around the notwithstanding clause. Mr. Speaker, last spring we had consensus around this province around Bill 63, around the cuts to education. We had school boards: public, Catholic school boards. We had rural folks. We had urban folks. We had folks in the North and folks in the South all concerned about that bill, Mr. Speaker. We had an opportunity in education and that goodwill with relationship to build something.

And I don't disagree, Mr. Speaker, that the Theodore ruling provides a very real and significant challenge to us in this province. We have an opportunity through relationship, through thought to find a real solution for the future in this province with regard to education, and the Premier instead has decided to grandstand and look at tearing apart relationships rather than looking at actually fixing the problem, Mr. Speaker. And I find that frankly reprehensible.

And we see it time and time again in the vacuum of leadership, we would rather see short-term wedge-issue politics to be played that punts the problem down the line to someone else. And, Mr. Speaker, that is also part of this legacy. Shake your fist and threaten to sue. Threaten legal action, but don't sit down with people and look them in the eye and try to come up with a solution. And, Mr. Speaker, that is also part of the legacy.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I probably am near my time. There's

more that I can say, but understand, you don't just own the shiny objects. You don't just own the things that you want to put in the letterhead, Mr. Speaker. You also own things like the gap between First Nations and non-First Nations education in this province. And I would suggest with the rest of your term that you put your minds and your hearts towards fixing that problem. Mr. Speaker, that is a challenge for all leadership candidates in this Assembly.

With that, I will be serving notice that I will not be voting in favour of the Throne Speech, but I will be voting in favour of the amendment as proposed by my colleague. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to be provided an opportunity to respond to the 2017 Speech from the Throne. Before I begin, I'd like to thank, take this time to acknowledge some important people in my life. First of all I'd like to thank my wife, Phyllis, for all the time and support she has offered for me to be here, and for the patience she has shown recently with the time I've spent on the road. Whether I'm here in the legislature or visiting constituents across my riding, I'm incredibly grateful that at the end I can always return home with her.

I'd like to thank my children, Nicole, a teacher that lives in Grand Coulee and her husband, Eric. Also I'd like to acknowledge my son, Burton, and his wife, Audrey, both RCMP officers that are posted in White City, just outside of Regina here. Burton, my son, is on the emergency response team and Audrey works out of "F" Division in Regina. Also I'd like to acknowledge my daughter, Brittany, and her friend, Dale, who is an RN [Registered Nurse] in Lethbridge. I've been blessed to have two beautiful grandsons: Kohen, six, and Hudson, two.

One of the reasons I decided to run as an MLA was to ensure the bright future for my grandchildren. And I'm ensuring a bright future by proud and committed . . . this government has shown to education, health care, infrastructure, parks, social services, and the safety to ensure that my grandchildren can enjoy a prosperous province as we go forward.

I'd like to take the time to thank my constituents of the Cypress Hills. It's been my pleasure to represent the people of my constituency every day as part of this legislature. I'd like to thank the Cypress Hills constituency association for everything that they do to ensure that I can properly represent the people of my constituency.

And finally, I'd like to thank my constituency assistant, Twila Wedrick, for all her hard work and dedication. Twila, as my CA, is the heart of my office. Any who call our office or walk through the doors can be assured that they are receiving some of the best help our government has to offer. She is kind, respectful, and I appreciate everything she does for our office.

Mr. Speaker, I was able to make a member statement about this last week, but I'd like to take a brief moment to touch on this again. Twila's husband, Ron, and her son, Evan, on October the 17th were caught in the wildfires down home in the Southwest

and were severely burnt in amongst the grassfires. Twila's husband, Ron, and Evan are in the Calgary Foothills Medical Centre where they are receiving treatment. Her son, Evan, received 80 per cent third degree burns, and her husband, also similar. Over \$100,000 has been raised for Twila's family through a GoFundMe page so far.

I want to thank the communities for rushing in to help the Wedrick family and the people from all over the province that have stepped up to support this family. This is what Saskatchewan's all about — volunteerism. Volunteerism and giving seems to be embedded in the Saskatchewan culture, especially when the chips are down. I would express that my thoughts and prayers are with Twila and her family again today as I deliver this presentation.

I'd also like to acknowledge James Hargrave, a young man on the Saskatchewan-Alberta border that lost his life in the fire. James leaves at home four small children and his wife, which he will be greatly missed.

An older rancher from the area, Eddie Riehl, 74 years old, is in intensive care in a Calgary hospital also. Eddie was caught in the fire and lost his direction and wandered down the road and was found laying in the grass a few miles from the intersection.

I must say too, my CA Twila, as big a heart as she has, is working with his wife and helping her in her time of stress. She is 69 and she needs lots of care also. The Fox Valley and community fire department in the last few days had a fundraiser to support the four families directly affected by the fire physically. I was proud to be there the other night on Monday when I wasn't here at the legislature. They raised 150,000 in a silent auction and supper. What an amazing feat. And all this money goes to each one . . . is contributed and divided up between the families themselves. It was an amazing night and evening.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin my response by acknowledging some of the . . . from the Speech to the Throne that means a great deal to me, and that is this government's plan to address rural crime. Rural crime prevention has been a significant concern for many of our constituents and constituents across the province.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, I was proud to be proud to be part of the caucus committee on crime along with the Minister of Advanced Education and the member from Canora-Pelly and the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford and the member from Estevan and the member from Regina Coronation Park and the member from Saskatoon Fairview . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . How do you like that? The committee met with around 58 stakeholders in 10 communities over 12 days to consult with the Saskatchewan citizens on how we can make our rural communities safer. After significant consultation, we put together a list of eight recommendations.

Our government responded with the creation of the protection and response team, PRT, and a total of 5.9 million will be invested and support this new group of recommendations in the report. The PRT will consist of 258 armed officers who will have the power to arrest and detain. One hundred and twenty of these officers will be from the RCMP and municipal services,

including 30 new policing positions. Forty are Ministry of Highways commercial vehicle enforcement officers with expanded powers, and the final 98 are Ministry of Environment conservation officers. By adding the PRT to the rural police force, the government will be able to improve policing response times, enhance the presence of uniformed officers, and ensure increased enforcement of all types of crime.

Mr. Speaker, during my time with the caucus committee on crime, I heard too many stories about officers having to drive for hours to respond to a call. Many stakeholders rightfully pointed out that an increase in police visibility may help to address these concerns. Well the government has listened. The \$5.9 million investment into the PRT is a positive step to address one of many major concerns my constituents expressed to me, and I am proud to have been part of this process.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons this government is so easy for me to support is because they listened to the people of this province. This is true for my previous example on rural crime prevention, and it is true with the next topic I would like to touch on.

[16:15]

Saskatchewan has the highest rate of impaired driving among many of the provinces in Canada. More than 600 people have been killed and 4,000 injured in the last decade. This problem is particularly relevant in, and it also . . . such as concerns with impaired driving where it conveys my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, our government has taken steps to try to curb the type and number of impaired driving instances by increasing the age at which drivers are prohibited from driving, from having any drugs or alcohol in their bloodstream, from 19 and under to 21 and under; introducing a three-day vehicle seizure for drivers over the age of 21 having found to have blood alcohol levels between .04 and .08 for the first time; and making Saskatchewan's ignition interlock laws the toughest in Canada.

But more can be done. The announcement that the government will be urging municipalities to allow ride-sharing services is another positive step in reducing counts of impaired driving.

Companies such as Uber and Lyft will fill a significant void in rural Saskatchewan and enable SGI to offer these companies affordable insurance and another step in ensuring that all the people in this province have access to a safe ride home.

This is a future profit, Mr. Speaker . . . This is future proof, Mr. Speaker, that this government is willing to listen to the people of rural Saskatchewan. And the citizens across the entire province will be able to drive on better quality highways than any they had experienced before this province took power.

Mr. Speaker, I'm always proud to say I'm a member of the Sask Party because rural, urban, and both or either, our party will not leave anyone behind. We're always working towards making Saskatchewan the best province it can be for everyone, and this Throne Speech does exactly that.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion the member of Estevan put forward and I will not be supporting the

amendment.

The Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready . . . I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good to take my place, join the debate. Getting a lot of encouragement from Coronation Park. Much appreciated. It's also good to follow the member from Cypress Hills in this debate. I can attest first-hand as to the beauty of that individual's constituency. I was out there last Thursday for a funeral and saying goodbye to a neighbour of mine that . . . buried him out on Nekaneet First Nation. But a beautiful part of the world and it was a hard time saying goodbye to a good friend there, Mr. Speaker, but interesting to join the debate at this point in time.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start where we all should, of course, thanking your good self for presiding in this Chamber, being the guardian of our rights and privileges in this Assembly. I thank my colleague from Lakeview for reminding me of that just so folks realize that it wasn't you setting that hook, Mr. Speaker. But thank you for the work that you do, and indeed all the people in this beautiful building that we get to work at, the work that they do in support of the people's business.

And you know, it's always a bit of a thrill. Earlier in the season around the time of Treaty 4 signing anniversary time in September, Mr. Speaker, the city of Regina had the Treaty 4 flag flying strong from the Albert Street bridge. How beautiful that looked. The Canadian flags are out there right now against the snow. You sit there driving along and you think, you know, I'm going to work where? What a privilege it is.

So, Mr. Speaker, to all the people that make this building go, we say thank you very much. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, this is the first session where we're here without the folks that were fired by the government as part of the government — the cleaners. And I've heard it said, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, it's always a measure of an organization or a society or of a person as to how they treat the hardest working and the humblest amongst us, Mr. Speaker, and again I'm reminded that there's a hard-working group of men and women that should have been treated better by this government, and weren't. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, that's where I'll go with my remarks in the main.

Of course I want to say thank you to the folks that keep the constituency office going: Tim, Don, and Jeff. They do a heck of a job serving the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre. I want to say thank you very much to the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre for continuing to entrust me with this work, Mr. Speaker. And of course I want to thank my friends, my neighbours, and my family. And yesterday was my dear departed mother's birthday, Mr. Speaker, and it's always sort of a poignant time of the year for us in the McCall family in remembering a woman who had a tremendous impact on all of us, and we love her and miss her still. But, Mr. Speaker, I'm thankful that my father is still among the quick and certainly always able to provide some keen political insight at a moment's notice. And of course my brother and his family, my sister, sister-in-law, and certainly my darling Theresa, for whom I am no end of thankful for the love and support that she gives me, not just on the clock for days like today and the work that

we do, but as has been noted repeatedly, this isn't a nine-to-five kind of pursuit. It's kind of all consuming, and everybody's along for the ride whether they like it or not. And I guess I'm just so thankful and so lucky that she brings so much to it, including no end of patience. So I'm thankful for that, Mr. Speaker.

I guess it's been interesting listening to various of the speeches in this debate, Mr. Speaker, and certainly the speech that actually started the day of the Throne Speech being delivered, and that was the prorogation speech that was given, as ever in a fine style by the Lieutenant Governor. But the prorogation speech had a number of passages in it that were pretty interesting, Mr. Speaker. And I guess I think about, you know, having stood in this place, you know, for a good long time, but for this past year in particular, Mr. Speaker, back to the Throne Speech before and then the budget that followed and how many things have changed in that circumstance, Mr. Speaker.

But still and all, there's some things that go on that make you feel like you're being gaslit by the government, Mr. Speaker, or sort of like you have to go outside to breathe some fresh air to figure out, you know, what end is really up. Or to put it another way, Mr. Speaker, reminds me of a saying from Marx, and I'm sure that my colleague, the member from Coronation Park, will be familiar with this particular saying of Marx. Of course, I'm referring to Chico Marx from the movie *Duck Soup*, back in the '30s, where he said something along the lines of, you know, who are you going to believe, me or your lying eyes?

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the disconnect that is there between reality and the way that things are actually happening on the ground versus some of the speeches that have gone in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, it's something else. It's really something else. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, in terms of that chasm between, you know, actual facts and different of the speeches that get delivered here, it's been a while, Mr. Speaker, but I still can't quite get over just how big that gap is, Mr. Speaker. And again we'd seen it, you know. Look no further than the prorogation speech where the speech went as follows:

While some other governments have chosen to continue running deficits indefinitely, my government chose to take a different approach.

To secure Saskatchewan's future, difficult decisions had to be made to ensure economic growth and reduce the province's dependence on resource revenues while ensuring important services and programs are sustainable in the long run.

My government set a goal to return the budget to balance in three years, and we are on track to meet that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, that's where the cognitive dissonance sort of goes into overtime in terms of again what this government is preaching and what is the practice out in reality, Mr. Speaker. And we need to look no further than the fact of the leadership season that is upon us on both sides of this House, and fair enough. And you know, it's interesting, Mr. Speaker. There's another dynamic where . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I think I hear my friend, the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy. I can

hear him but I can't quite make out what he's saying. He's maybe going back to Marx or something . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He's going to Marx. There we go. Okay.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I guess the thing is, I've said this in different ways over the years. It's funny. There are members on both sides of this House that I have quite a high opinion of personally and that I can be . . . Very happy to see the member from Yorkton, when he's come back from cancer treatment, and be very glad for him, Mr. Speaker. You know, I can run into the Premier's mother and father on Throne Speech day and sincerely congratulate them on the contribution that their family has made in service to the province, and I can do the same for the Premier, Mr. Speaker. And this is a point where I'll say, you know, thank you very much for the service. There are aspects of that legacy, there are aspects of the decisions that have been made that I disagree with, and the record is very clear on that, but certainly, Mr. Speaker, we're not beyond our own humanity here where we can't recognize that in each other. Or I hope not, Mr. Speaker.

So in terms of those who have served and are going on to another chapter in their life, I say, good luck with that. I say, thank you for the service. And in that regard as well, Mr. Speaker, I include the member from Northeast who has moved out of cabinet, but of course had been tasked with putting a budget together after the last election, had been tasked by that government with presiding over the magic act that was a transformational change, and trying to square the circle of what they had said in the election about keeping Saskatchewan strong and what had been kept from the people in terms of not presenting a budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, again we've heard different things from members opposite about the debt situation in this province. But you know, maybe a little vision 2020 in, you know, from page 47 of the budget, Mr. Speaker, where it says in the year 2020, net debt for the province will be \$21.8 billion. To give you an idea of what that means, Mr. Speaker, in 1991 when Romanow and the New Democrats took over from Devine and the Progressive Conservatives, net debt I believe was on the order of \$14 billion, \$28 billion in today's dollars, Mr. Speaker. But we had the congratulations roll on the part of members opposite about how they've done such a great job on the debt. I mean like I don't know if they read their own documents, Mr. Speaker. And I hope that they do.

So in terms of just the budget and what had gone before the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and looking at the Throne Speech which, you know, throne speeches tend to be high-level, sort of a broad bold strokes approach to what the agenda of the government's going to be for the year to come, and that you await for the detail, the hard detail that comes with the budget, Mr. Speaker, where the rubber literally hits the road.

I guess when they came to bring another Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, I was half wondering if they wouldn't come in and provide another budget, Mr. Speaker. Because in terms of the boast that was in that prorogation speech . . . And again no debit nor fault to the Lieutenant Governor for that section of the speech, Mr. Speaker. It's the government's words; it's the government's boast. The idea that their three-year plan to eliminate the deficit is on track would be laughable if it wasn't

so sad, Mr. Speaker, would be laughable if it wasn't part of the work of a government that kept the books from the people of Saskatchewan in the last provincial election, that didn't have the guts to show what the situation really was, and then have engaged in this exercise where, well now it's into this three-year plan.

[16:30]

And of course, Mr. Speaker, we see the different leadership candidates up on that side, Mr. Speaker. Some are saying, well no, maybe not a three-year plan; maybe a four-year plan, maybe that's what it takes. Or maybe instead of, you know, dictating a 3.5 per cent, \$250 million cut to the public service, maybe it's more like, well you should take an extra 70 million out of the Crowns' employees and the public service. Or, you know, I think one of the members was saying that they should take the funding out of the provincial park system, Mr. Speaker — today when we see the legislation brought forward for a new provincial park. You know, there are different sort of tilts that go on on the part of that government where you wonder like, has it really come to this? Are they in that much disarray, Mr. Speaker? And apparently they are.

But when they come out and say with a straight face that their budget from last spring means anything, Mr. Speaker, they've flip-flopped on so many aspects of that budget, and I might add, Mr. Speaker, deservedly so because the shoot-first, aim-second way that this government approaches so many different files . . . And again we'd seen that in a hard piece of work brought forward by the member from Riversdale and the member from Cumberland on the way that this government shut down STC and then tried to figure out how to reckon with the damage after.

On front after front, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the expansion of the PST, Mr. Speaker, where some things were on for budget day and then depending on who was . . . You know, and again my colleague from Lakeview was talking about the real people as posited by the member from Carlton, P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton, where on Bill 40 they finally heard from the real people, Mr. Speaker. Whereas, you know, their own sort of campaign promises, that apparently wasn't enough. Where, you know, people across this province coming out and saying, you didn't promise this; you don't have a mandate for it; we value these things that we built together over generations; don't you dare touch them.

It took them a year to get the message, Mr. Speaker. It took them a year and two by-elections where people sent them a message. And so, great, they finally got the message and they moved to, you know, the Premier in a move that was kind of Trumpian in terms of Facebook Live and one-way communication out there to the followers. Time to say, Saskatchewan, we've heard the message.

But of course repealing Bill 40 as the Premier promised to do on Facebook, you know, you get out into reality, that's not quite what's happened. In terms of the different provisions of Bill 40, Mr. Speaker, when that bill was introduced a year and a day ago, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Northwest, then the Justice minister and the guy that was tasked with carrying the can on Bill 40 — and of course who's had some very

interesting things to say when it comes to the different moves of that government — what he said on October 31st, page 974 of Saskatchewan *Hansard*, he had said as regards Bill No. 40: “Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will not include a winding up and dissolution of a Crown corporation or other restructuring of the Crown corporation.”

Whereas, you know, in the past few days, Mr. Speaker, where the Premier said that they need to hold on to different aspects of Bill 40, and the changes that they made to the regime governing our Crown corporations is . . . Well, why do they need to only partially repeal instead of fully repeal, like they said they would, Mr. Speaker? Well, it’s because they need to wind up different aspects of the Crowns. And again, you know, but there it is, the words of the Justice minister. And again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of that individual, I see where he’s calling for a whole public inquiry into the GTH. Great idea, great idea. We certainly support that, Mr. Speaker, and have for the past — what is it? — three years now, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of different of the candidates over there saying that putting the PST onto insurance was a wrong-headed move, you know, we agree with that too, Mr. Speaker. That was one of the reasons why we voted against that budget. But all the members over there, of course, you know, walked right up to that line and said yup, we support the budget. You know, pick your measure in that budget, Mr. Speaker, where there’s been the flip-flopping go on.

There’s some, like, incredibly wrong-headed things in that budget, Mr. Speaker. I think of the moves they tried to make around libraries, Mr. Speaker, where it was plain that they didn’t understand the balance sheets that went with the different regional libraries, Mr. Speaker, and the way that they thought they were going to get assets out of those entities, Mr. Speaker. You know, again they got the memo earlier on that one. That’s good.

But you’d think that they’d do some consultation on these things. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? They do. Treasury board is meeting right now, Mr. Speaker, treasury board’s meeting right now. And we’ve got another Finance minister that’s come in the wake of the last Finance minister that saw his political future go up in flames on the pyre of this budget, Mr. Speaker.

And we’ll see what comes now. But I guess it’s refreshing to hear some more details, or a more complete accounting of what things really mean in terms of the leadership race that’s going on over there, and the choices that are really there as opposed to this, you know, we’re going to keep Saskatchewan strong, and we’re going to promise five things and we’re going to sort of renege on half of them. And then, you know, some of them are back on.

And again, Mr. Speaker, this comes out of the budget so you’ll forgive me if I’m a little reticent in terms of my interest in the Throne Speech itself. There is some good things in there for certain. There’s some wrong-headed things in there for certain. But the thing is, Mr. Speaker, they’re compounding the confusion and the mismanagement and the scandal and the waste that comes with their budget, and they’re not fixing that before they’re moving on to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

So if past is indeed prologue, or the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour, as some might say in this place, Mr. Speaker, well I think they’ve got some fixing to do before they move on to the next thing.

So again, you know, the possibilities for disappointment in this work are darn near endless, Mr. Speaker, but I was half expecting them to come forward with a budget, or at least a financial update to let people know where things were really at, let them know what the books really mean, what services they had cut, what cuts they were reversing, what tax increases they had proposed they were going forward with, which ones they haven’t.

You know there’s a reckoning that’s coming for that, Mr. Speaker, and it’s come in places and in moments on a few different doorsteps around this province. But it’s still to come apparently, Mr. Speaker.

You know, it’s sometimes said that even a broken watch — and I’m speaking of course of a dial watch — is right at least twice a day. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, there are some fine measures in this . . . Or the sands through the hourglass, as the case may be, Mr. Speaker, so are the funny decisions of this Throne Speech, so are the way that this government is moving forward with different measures that just make you scratch your head, that make you question their ability to run a three-car parade.

And despite all that, Mr. Speaker, there’s some good things that have happened. You know, I’ve been through the length and breadth of the *mâdawêyatîtan* centre, the new Scott Collegiate, and the kids there and the teachers and the community are so very happy about it. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? That’s been a long time coming. That’s been a long time coming.

You know, I’ve seen Ken Krawetz in here last night and of course he’s returned to the building as the chief of staff for the Premier, and welcome back, Ken Krawetz. I’m sure he’s still sort of trying to figure out how to get bracket creep fixed for the budget to come or, you know, different files like that. But we wish him all the luck with that.

But of course, he was the guy that . . . We’d put up the money for planning in February 2007 for Scott Collegiate. It was announced in the budget when that member was the Education minister, and then the wait was on, and were the feds in or not, and the feds were not. Was the health region going to be a full partner in it? And you know, ultimately that government directed them out of it. But Scott Collegiate is finally there and those kids have a first-class institution to go to, and I’m so very happy about that, Mr. Speaker. I think education’s a great leveller in our society and I’m so excited that they’ve got that opportunity.

Just as I’m excited as for the kids at Sacred Heart, kitty-corner, in the Regina Catholic School Board where innovative, important things have been done in education, in public education, at that institution for many, many years, Mr. Speaker. And they carry that tradition forward, and again, they’ve got a first-class institution to pursue that work.

So there are some great things happening, Mr. Speaker, and I’d never deny that, but when you take it in its totality, Mr.

Speaker, the way that this government has approached the public service, the way that this government approaches the public purse, the way that this government approaches the Saskatchewan public, Mr. Speaker, you know, they have a hard enough time supporting their own budget themselves, let alone bring forward a new Throne Speech to talk about all these other things that they want to do. So you'll forgive us if we're a bit skeptical in terms of their planning going ahead, Mr. Speaker.

And that of course is why I'm proud to stand in my place today to say that I will be supporting the amendment that was put forward by the member from Nutana, and it's a fine indictment of the work of this government, and I'll not be supporting the Throne Speech. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues for the opportunity to speak to this year's Throne Speech. Just to make it short, I will be voting in favour to the Speech from the Throne and against the amendment.

There's some thank yous I'd like to say. I'd like to say thank you definitely to our Speaker. I would also like to say thank you to team Telfer. That's the team that runs my home office. Mary Anne, my CA for the past 14 years, and her husband Don have been there for me. And she was CA for Arlene Julé for eight years before that, so she's got a vast amount of experience and knowledge. Over the years she has become more than just a CA. Mary Anne and Don have become close friends. To Mary Anne and Don, thank you very much.

Before I begin there's one more very important thank you that I must do, and that is to my dear wife, Valerie. Today is our 42nd wedding anniversary.

[Applause]

Mr. Kirsch: — Yes, I was very young when I got married. She has been by my side through the thick and thin, and I am very grateful for her support.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate several of my fellow members, who along with me were elected, I believe, November 3rd or 4th. There were 10 members elected that day, five from each side of the House. That side of the House, they're all gone; this side, three are left, and that would be the member from Saskatoon Southeast, the member from Saskatoon Willowgrove, and myself. And I thank them for their friendship.

[16:45]

I would like to begin by looking at some of the great resources that our province has. There are things that other provinces have, but they don't have them in the quantity or maybe the quality that we have. Forty-five per cent of all of Canada's crop land — that is from Vancouver Island to Cape Spear, Newfoundland — 45 per cent of this nation's crop land is here in Saskatchewan. It is what's built this province. It is the backbone of this province. It is what sustains this province and it is our future. With that fact in mind we must guard and protect all things agriculture. The land and the people who toil

on it are very precious and a very special commodity.

Also 35 per cent of all the world's uranium is in Saskatchewan. It is also the purest and richest in the world. We are now manufacturing medical isotopes using Saskatchewan uranium, and we're doing it here in Saskatchewan. Now that is a jewel in the Saskatchewan crown. Medical isotopes, of course, are used for X-rays, MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging], CT [computerized tomography] scans, and we're doing that here in Saskatchewan.

We also have more than 54 per cent of all the world's potash. As feeding the world becomes more and more demanding, potash as fertilizer becomes more and more necessary in the production of food. I had the privilege to tour a potash mine. I was very, very impressed with what I saw, and I would like to acknowledge the men and women who work in these mines. I would like to say to them, thank you.

Oil is the precious black pearl of Saskatchewan. It is a resource that we hadn't been pursuing to its full potential under the previous NDP government. I have a map in my office that shows oil activity in Western Canada and it is an '02 production. The development almost stops at the Saskatchewan border and it looks like Alberta has all the oil. The truth is, Saskatchewan has more oil than Alberta.

We had a government that did not build on that resource and did not create a viable business environment that encouraged companies to come here and drill. In fact, they discouraged development. Now over the last 10 years that has all changed. This year Saskatchewan will have more than twice as many wells drilled than Alberta. In fact, the Fraser Institute lists Saskatchewan as the number one place in all of North America — all of North America — to drill for oil. I believe second is Montana and third is Texas. Way down in 43rd place is Alberta. How times have changed. Alberta has moved into a government like we had, and we have moved into a forward-thinking Saskatchewan Party government. Is that a coincidence? Governments switch and oil switches. Now is that a coincidence or not? Hmm.

Another great resource, and I believe the most important, is our people. They have persevered through the hard times and stayed here in Saskatchewan. Now we are building a better Saskatchewan, from a have-not province to becoming an economic giant in Canada in just 10 years. Now that is something we can all be proud of. Saskatchewan is growing in leaps and bounds and taking its rightful place in the Dominion of Canada.

I have just mentioned a few of the big jewels in our province. There are many, many more, some of them not as big but just as important to the lifeblood of the thriving economy here in Saskatchewan. Each one of our resources not only provides products to export and sell, they provide jobs. And of course the economic impact is unending.

For 70 years the NDP sat on resources and did nothing but lead us on a downward spiral. As a result, we became a have-not province. Our only export was our children leaving to find jobs in other provinces. We were a province with a declining population, and we were a province with no future, a province in economic decline. So what has changed in just 10 years? And

what has changed has been real change.

Now I'd like to look at the numbers, the real numbers from Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada says for the last 10 years, ag exports have increased by 185 per cent, 185 per cent, Mr. Speaker, in 10 years. Exports in total have increased by 61 per cent. Manufacturing and sales have increased by 44 per cent. The GDP [gross domestic product] increased by 24 per cent. Capital investment has increased by 90 per cent. Retail trade increased by 61 per cent. Average weekly earnings increased by 39 per cent. These are the facts. These are the true numbers. This is where we stand today.

Our government opened the doors to business. Our government has given our people a chance to grow their companies or start new companies. Our government has undertaken huge infrastructure projects to enable our people to challenge the world. In the past 10 years, we have spent 26 billion on infrastructure for schools, hospitals, and highways. Highways alone have received 7 billion.

The NDP are criticizing us about surgical wait times getting longer, and in some cases they are right. That does happen when you have a growing population. Of course, that is something the NDP never had to deal with. They were dealing with a declining population, and yet they had the longest waiting list in all of Canada. We have recruited more than 800 new doctors and more than 3,000 new nurses. We have built hospitals, schools; not closing them like the NDP did.

The NDP were and are against private MRIs. To date, 900 people have purchased MRIs, and the private MRI companies have done 900 free MRIs. Mr. Speaker, that's 1,800 MRIs that cost the taxpayer nothing, zero, not a cent. I think it's obvious that that is a tremendous success for our taxpayers here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I was in the House when we were questioning the then government NDP on the tremendous loss of people from our province. The reply that is now infamous came from former NDP MLA, Eldon Lautermilch, and it was, that leaves more for the rest of us. What it amounted to was more taxes for the rest of us. He was also the man that said it was ridiculous and laughable to think we could grow this province. Eldon, where are you now? I heard he's selling real estate in a growing province — Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to move to issues that are critical to our future. The first one is the pipeline, specifically the Energy East pipeline. This pipeline is over half built. It runs from Alberta, through Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and halfway through Quebec. The project has been cancelled because Quebec is citing environmental concerns. This from a Quebec City mayor who sanctioned the dumping of millions of gallons of raw sewage into our river system.

The major reason for building the pipeline is because the refinery it was to end up at, in New Brunswick, is refining oil from Saudi Arabia and Iran. This results that we are using gas and oil from other countries while our oil is being sold at a discount because we only have one customer. We need to get Canadian oil to Canadian refineries, and also to tidewater so we can sell it to other countries. That would mean that the United

States, who is our only customer, would no longer be able to dictate the price they pay for our oil.

I was told that a barrel of oil from the same oil field that straddles the Canadian-American border is \$17 a barrel cheaper on the Canadian side than the American side. This problem could be addressed if we could reach world markets. This means that we could be able to demand world prices.

Our opponents from Ontario and Quebec say that the pipelines aren't safe. Yes, there's a risk, but accident records show there is a much, much greater risk by hauling the oil by rail. It is far deadlier and environmentally more dangerous than moving oil by pipelines.

We hear that the new federal NDP leader, that he and his fellow candidates that ran for the leadership are against pipelines. I'm wondering where do the Saskatchewan NDP and their candidates stand on the Energy East pipeline, with the Saskatchewan economy, or with their far-left partners in the East.

The time has come for them to take a public stand and let the people of Saskatchewan know their true colours. The time is now. The people of Saskatchewan need to know either you are with us or you against us. Stand up and be counted.

The next big issue I would like to address is the carbon tax and that the federal government is ramming down our throat. Ralph Goodale says it's revenue neutral. If it is truly revenue neutral, why would we do it? It borders on the ridiculous. BC instituted a carbon tax several years ago with the belief that it would reduce carbon output. Instead there has been a huge increase in carbon output. This proves that the carbon tax is just a tax grab.

Also the federal carbon tax only looks at how much carbon is produced. It does not take into account how much carbon we sequester. Saskatchewan, with our immense forest and our vast cropland, actually sequesters more carbon than we produce. That is because our forest and crops use carbon as a food source. Our Boundary dam 3 plant sequesters the amount of carbon equal to 400,000 cars off the road. Saskatchewan doesn't get any credit for this. Once again, it's just a tax grab by the feds.

The question must also be asked, where did the NDP stand on the carbon tax? With the damage it could do to the provincial economy, how can they support the Trudeau carbon tax? Tell the people of Saskatchewan where you stand. If you can't stand up for Saskatchewan, what are you here for? Don't just follow your federal members. Stand up for Saskatchewan.

In closing, I would like to thank our Premier, but what do you say? You've set a new standard for Saskatchewan. You've lead us from a have-not province to new heights. I think of John F. Kennedy's quote, ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country. And you have done so much. Thank you. It has been quite a ride, this tremendous journey. Thank you for all you have done for Saskatchewan. We will continue on the course you've set for us. May the good Lord be with you and abide with you and your family.

Mr. Speaker, for all these reasons, for all the situations that are

happening in Saskatchewan, I will definitely, definitely be voting for the Throne Speech and I will be voting against the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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

Hon. Herb Cox
Minister of Advanced Education

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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

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Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

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Minister of Crown Investments
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