



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

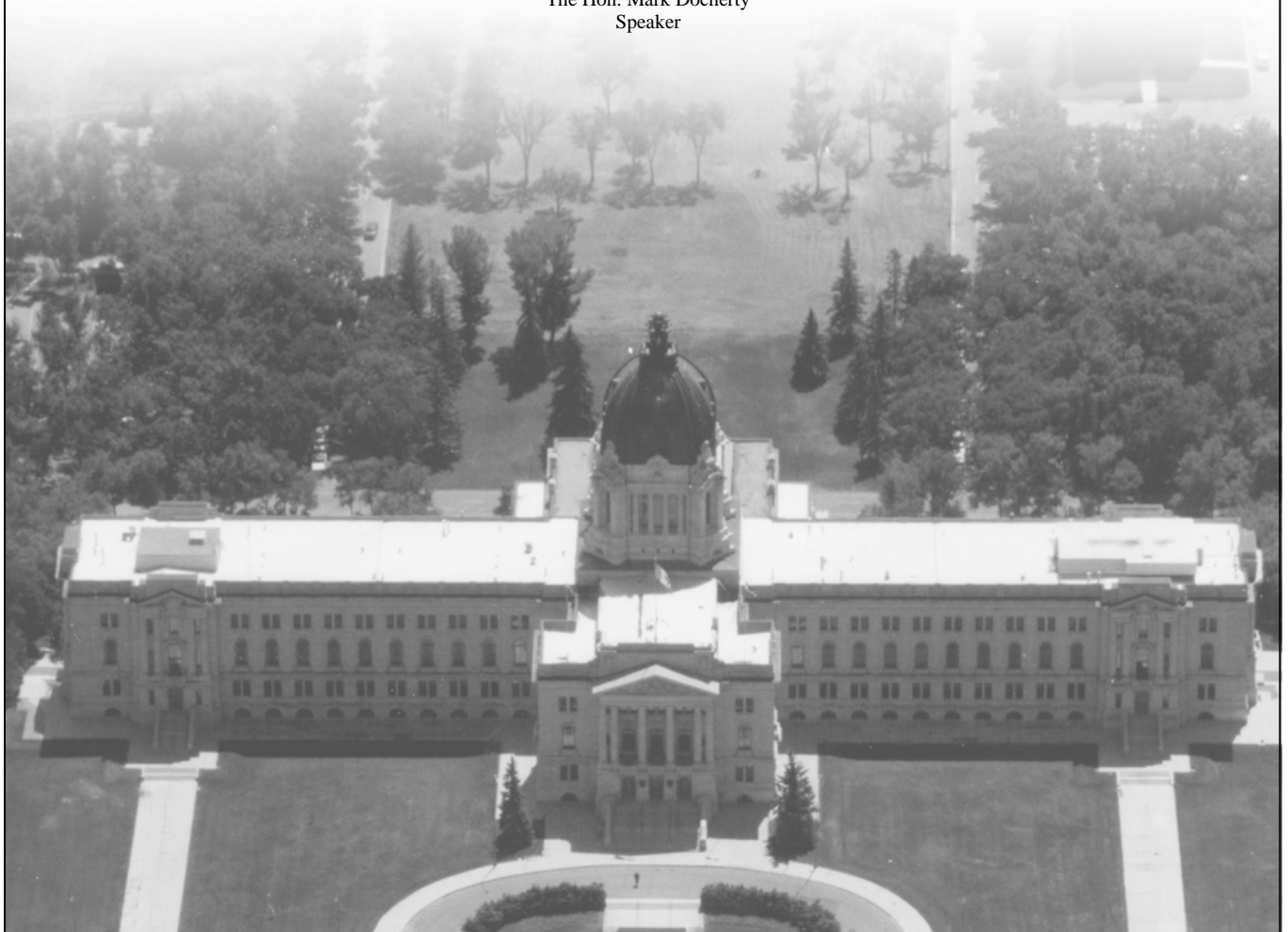
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)  
Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Mark Docherty  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**3rd Session — 28th Legislature**

**Speaker** — Hon. Mark Docherty  
**Premier** — Hon. Scott Moe  
**Leader of the Opposition** — Ryan Meili

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<b>Lawrence</b> , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13

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**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

**Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel** — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

**EVENING SITTING**

**The Speaker:** — It now being 7 p.m., I now call the Assembly back to order. I recognize the member for Melfort.

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

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

**Mr. Goudy:** — So this year's Throne Speech started off with a story of a community in our province that showed love for a local family that had lost their father just at the start of harvest. When the mayor of Milestone put out the call for help to harvest the section of wheat for them, 20 combines, 4 grain carts, and a hundred volunteers showed up.

It was good to set the tone for what the government is doing and plans to do on behalf of the people with the importance of what we as the people are able to do for ourselves.

What they saw in Milestone and what we witnessed in Humboldt this year, that's what makes this province a great place to live in. Sure we have a land rich of resources, but without character we just have a million-plus people complaining and waiting for the government to look after us.

I lived in Albania for about three years and could see the effects of that kind of thinking. I'll never forget one day they'd sent a sea container of aid for the villagers, and every home in the village was going to get a banana box of stuff. So we handed it out, and I'll never forget the day. It was like the people just said to me, it's about time, you know, like where have you been? There was no thankfulness. There was no appreciation. And it really drove the thinking home when somebody showed up at my apartment in the city later on and told me if I didn't give them the right size shoes, he was going to burn my house down.

So we need to see not just about what the government does for the people, but what we can do for ourselves. We need to take our life into our own hands. So some of the things that this government has accomplished over the past year for this province and what we endeavour to do as we move forward, to me, one of the foundational jewels of this speech was the commitment to balancing the budget. If we don't keep a strong financial position as a province, we won't be able to afford the needed infrastructure and services for future generations.

One of the main requests from parents and employers and stakeholders in education over the last number of years is that kids be taught to be financially literate before they hit grade 12. We want our kids to learn fiscal wisdom and responsibility. And how can we teach our kids through our schools to do something we aren't committed to do ourselves? With credit these days it

doesn't take any resolve or character at all to spend money that you don't have. But it does take character and self-control to show some fiscal restraint through difficult times, Mr. Speaker.

I had the opportunity to travel around the province quite a bit this summer, and along the way I noticed some billboards on display. It was interesting. In Yorkton I saw a big billboard with the Legislative Building on there. In big bold print it said, MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] of Yorkton, where's the money gone? And I looked at that and I was a little jealous because I thought, wow, he's an important guy there. They're asking him where the money went. And then I was in Prince Albert of all things, and same deal. It was, you know, MLA of P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton, where's the money gone? And I thought, wow.

And when I was young . . . I looked, there was an acronym on there. And I realized who had done the sign. Wasn't sure if they were friendly. But when I was in high school playing on a fastball team, if somebody threw you a pitch really slow right down the middle of the plate, we called that a peach. And you know, it normally went over the fence. And so I thought, what a great billboard for an opportunity to say where has the money gone.

And so, on behalf of those people who put that billboard up, I can understand their frustration. Because to relate a story of my life, I had a debit card that I lost. And you know, I was kind of using that account as a bit of a savings account, until one day I got a letter in the mail and it says, you're overdrawn.

And I'm thinking wow, some scoundrel stole my card, got my PIN [personal identification number] and he drained me dry. And so I phoned the bank, and I got them to send me a card, and went on to the internet banking and had a check on who that was. And I was going to track the guy down.

And so then, boy you know, it was very telling when I opened that screen and I started reading. You know, groceries, clothes. The scoundrel was my wife. You know, she had been spending money, and it was all for my children. So here I thought, where's the money gone, you know, and it turns out all this money was spent on people I love.

So, Mr. Speaker, where did the money go? And you know, everybody else has already shared and I only have a few minutes, but you know, money has gone to good things. You know, we've got \$8 billion, 8-plus billion dollars for Highways, which we're at 13 000 kilometres built or improved, 275 new bridges. We all like to complain. It's not nice to go through the ditch, but there's a lot of new bridges. We need to appreciate the Highways minister for all the work she's doing.

We have 3,400 more nurses in the last 11 years, almost 900 more doctors practising in our province. And all of us have seen the effects of that. You know, just like I wondered where did the money go, we're all seeing this spent in our own constituencies: 40 new school buildings, 25 major renovations, \$1.6 billion over the last decade. Mr. Speaker, \$1.5 billion on health care infrastructure over the past 10 years. You know, that's where the money's gone. The money's gone into spending it on behalf of people that we love.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just about where we spent our money in the past, but about finishing our projects we've already started. And it's also about new initiatives. We've all asked ourselves and others in the past about some injustice we could see in our society. And we've asked ourselves, well why doesn't somebody do something about this?

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice . . . I'm just going to skip through some things, but I was so impressed with Clare's Law. You know, I'm tired of being just a person in this country that just wonders sometimes, where is this world going? And why doesn't somebody stand up and do something for people? Why are we protecting the criminals and meanwhile people are suffering?

You know, I want to commend our Minister of Justice because when he came up with this Clare's Law . . . You know, I got a text from a lady who's all about looking after women who've been abused, Louise Schweitzer. She texted me this today about Clare's Law:

We at the North East Outreach and Support Services are very pleased with the move to implement Clare's Law, to give our clients and their families the opportunity to garner information from the RCMP regarding possible violence in their past partners. We're also very pleased with the initiatives of the interpersonal violence leave being extended to include sexual assault; once again, another tool for victims and clients to move through the process to a safer and better lifestyle.

I've just got to say I was just so thankful to see the kind of boldness that the government has taken. And we know we've been encouraged to do these kinds of things from across the floor. This is what we need to do, is stand up for people.

What excites me about being a part of the government today is that we can do things and that we did do things and we're going to continue to do things together for the people.

You know, I'm going to skip through the rest of this. I went for a run last night. I got into town late and ran around the lake. And then I stopped out at the . . . Don't run at night around the lake. It's kind of spooky. Need more lights there. But anyways, finished up in front of the Legislative Building and had an opportunity to just stand and look at the building. You know, it's a beautiful place.

What were the people who built this building thinking when they built it? You know, if they were to be alive today, to walk through these halls, to sit in on our meetings and watch over our shoulder what we're doing . . . You know, I think we're on the right track because last night I was standing just looking at the building, praying actually for all of us in here, that we'd be good leaders.

And here was a couple, they pulled up in their car. They got out of their vehicle and they began to talk to each other in a different language, and then they took a selfie. And I said hey, would you want me to take a picture for you? They said oh, that would be great. And I said, where are you from? And the guy said, we're from Bangladesh. I said really, that's wonderful. And how long have you been here? He says, I've been here three years and my wife just arrived.

And you know, I just thought, what brought them here? What would a man leave his wife at home? You could see the love they had for each other. What would cause a guy to leave your wife at home for three years to go and work in a country so that you could just be able to bring her one day? This kind of place, this kind of government, these kinds of laws, this kind of people, the kind of people that when the mayor of Milestone phones and says hey, you know, somebody passed away and it's harvest time. We need to all pitch in and do what we can do. That's what makes this country great. The kind of things like our Minister of the Environment standing up against the rest of . . . craziness about this carbon tax. Just makes no sense. The Minister of Justice standing up.

I'm just proud to be a part of this government, and I am proud to have watched that Throne Speech. And I'm just glad to be able to say that I'm fully supportive of that Throne Speech . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What am I supposed to be supportive of? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I am not supporting the amendment. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Batoche.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the privilege to stand up and comment on this Throne Speech.

Before I begin, as usual I thank my CA [constituency assistant], Mary Anne Telfer. She's been a CA for 23 years, and for her friendship, her knowledge and ability, I am very grateful. And I say it every time I speak because it is truly from the heart. Thank you, Mary Anne.

Mary Anne's husband, Don, and Mary Anne together, they hold the office down. And they're my political advisers; when I've got political questions, I can bounce it off the two of them. And I much appreciate their input.

Mr. Speaker, we're just about November 1st. And 43 years ago, November 1st, I stood at the front of a church and this beautiful blond walked down and became my bride. So 43 years and three beautiful children, and now the best reward of all. We have four beautiful, smart grandchildren. So Carter, Lincoln, Zaylee, and Tychus, Grandpa loves you. Take care.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address several issues in my reply to the Throne Speech. The first issue I would like to address is the Regina bypass and the GTH, Global Transportation Hub. I have talked to some people that don't realize that is two separate projects, yet linked to each other.

The Regina bypass is the new network of highways to accommodate the GTH, and the GTH is the location where all the freight is processed. This includes the freight that arrives in sea cans from the West Coast.

I was recently on a tour of the Regina bypass and was very, very impressed with what I saw. But I have heard, and would like verification, that several key members of the press gallery are commenting on the Regina bypass in their articles but have not toured this megaproject for themselves. How can you comment on what you haven't seen?

If you tour the project with your eyes to the future and look at the

possibilities, you can't help but be impressed. Mr. Speaker, I heard heckling from the other side. Somebody said, hold on to your wallet. You and I both know how your side held on to the wallet. I can pull out Yogi's list of billions of dollars that your party lost. So maybe I'll listen to your speech, and you listen to my speech for a change.

It's not only big for Regina. It's big for Saskatchewan. Projects like this do not happen overnight. Build it and they will come. So first we had to build it. It is a project that will take years to reach its full potential. The project is not yet complete, but already they are coming.

This megaproject, which is the largest project in Saskatchewan history, is nearing completion, and here's what already is happening. Private sector investment in the GTH has topped 485 million. Employment during construction created over 1,800 jobs.

[19:15]

But, Mr. Speaker, the big one in my mind — full-time jobs on site. Full-time jobs on site are already at 860. That full-time employment results in 15.2 million in provincial personal income tax per year. This megaproject already sees 4,800 trucks moving in and out of the inland port per week. This is just a small start, 4,800 trucks per week. This generates \$17 million in diesel fuel tax annually.

The Loblaw warehouse on site is over a million square feet and is a sight to behold. There are 12 new clients signed on, and this project is not yet complete. All this is happening, and like the seed, it is growing. It is just barely out of the ground and already utterly impressive. Just give it 10 years and you will say, I can't imagine Regina without the GTH. And now for a term the former government might not be familiar with: on time and on budget.

I would now like to address the issue of oil. Canada ranks third in the world, third in the world for oil resources. First is USA [United States of America] and second is Saudi Arabia. In Canada, Saskatchewan has more oil reserves than our neighbouring province, the oil kings, Alberta. Plus this we have 60 per cent of the oil sands.

The difference between us and Alberta is they drilled for oil; we sat on ours. The hottest oil play Canada is the Bakken play in southern Saskatchewan, Weyburn-Estevan area and extending down into Montana and North Dakota. The big problem is we not only didn't drill for oil, we have only, only one customer to sell our oil to and that is the USA. Because we have no other customers, we sell it to the USA and they dictate the price.

The other week when oil was at the low 70's per barrel, Saskatchewan was getting \$20 per barrel for our oil. The only solution, the only solution for us to get world price is to get our oil to tidewater. In order to do this we need pipelines, three of them for a start: the Kinder Morgan, the Keystone XL, and the Energy East pipeline.

To understand the present situation, let's look at what we have today. The Canadian refinery is in New Brunswick. Ships are arriving with crude oil from Saudi Arabia and Iran. The ship unloads the crude oil and then for the return trip, in order to

maintain ballast, the oil tanks are filled with sea water. Remember oil floats on water, so when the ships arrive at their home port, they pump out the sea water along with any oil that was left in the tank. Is that not polluting our oceans?

A great alternative and the best solution is to finish the Energy East pipeline that already runs from Alberta through Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and halfway through Quebec. Then we can refine Canadian oil for Canadians. We do not need Arab oil. We do need Canadian oil in our refineries. The Kinder Morgan pipeline would get Western Canadian oil to world markets. It would run from Saskatchewan through Alberta and to the coast of British Columbia. We could then access world markets and get world price for our crude.

Not having these outlets for oil is costing Saskatchewan jobs. It is also costing Saskatchewan in lost royalties — not millions, but billions of dollars. We need to get these pipelines built in order to build our future. It is a big part of what Saskatchewan can be.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to turn to agriculture. Agriculture is the backbone of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has, depending on the crop year, from 44 to 47 per cent of all of Canada's crop land. In the 1800s, Mr. Speaker — and you know I'm a history lover — the federal government sent John Palliser to look at the possibilities of settling in the prairies. His report came back saying that the place wasn't fit for human habitation. It couldn't grow trees. The mosquitoes were intolerable and the winters were unendurable. The prairies were not fit for settlement.

Mr. Speaker, our ancestors came anyway. These brave, hardy people came and endured unbelievable hardships. They survived. They beat the odds, and with prayer and determination they built this province. We are the offspring of those amazing people. Agriculture still remains the foundation of this province. Ag is second only to oil in the provincial income.

Mr. Speaker, I am old enough to remember non-ag people using the term "dumb farmer." Many farmers didn't have much, but they raised their families and paid their own way. They raised sons and daughters that have changed the industry. The farmers of today are using cutting-edge technologies such as GPS [global positioning system] and drones. The farmers of today are very, very market savvy when they sell their crops. They're also using the most advanced farm equipment in the world, and the farm equipment manufacturers of Saskatchewan are marketing that equipment all over the world.

Our University of Saskatchewan agriculture department has raised standards and quality to unbelievable heights. When I was a young man and started farming, if you could raise an oats crop of 80 bushels to the acre it was unbelievable and it was rare. Now we're raising oat crops of 150 bushels to the acre.

I was at a presentation in the USA where one of the head guys from the Quaker Oats Company stated that 80 per cent of the oats that Quaker Oats markets come from Saskatchewan.

We are raising crops that weren't possible in the past such as lentils, soybeans, corn, and of course the crop created here in Saskatchewan, canola. Yes, Mr. Speaker, agriculture is indeed the foundation and backbone of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, it would be a great idea, when you meet a farmer on the street

sometime, to stop him and say thank you for feeding the world and especially for feeding me.

Mr. Speaker, now I'd like to move to health care. Health care in Saskatchewan has come a long way in the past 10 years. Our province was the father or mother of health care, depending on how you see it. But during the previous government's tenure, we had the longest wait times in all of Canada. We were closing hospitals and we were short, terribly short of doctors and desperately short of nurses.

Today under the Saskatchewan Party government, we are near the top of the list for wait times. We have added more than 3,700 nurses and almost 900 more doctors, and are building hospitals. The Jim Pattison Children's Hospital is 92 per cent complete and expected to open in 2019. At last the dream of every parent in Saskatchewan will come to fruition. We will have a children's hospital. It was high time and the right thing to do.

Our province's innovative two-for-one MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] policy has enabled 1,400 additional MRI scans to the province at no additional cost to the taxpayer. Mr. Speaker, that's fantastic — 1,400 at no additional cost to the taxpayer. This definitely was the right thing to do.

Another huge step forward in health care is the nearly complete 284-bed, state-of-the-art hospital in North Battleford for those with significant mental health needs.

On highways, the major concern of every rural constituent or the lack thereof, since 2007, more than 13 000 kilometres have been built or improved and 275 bridges have been repaired and replaced. Mr. Speaker, a lot of our members have mentioned this, and that is because it is very key and very important to Saskatchewan's future. Without these highways and bridges, we cannot make it. And this is just a great start. In my constituency I see the progress we are making, and we know we need to continue. As our economy can afford it, it will keep on building and we will keep on repairing more roads.

Mr. Speaker, the key to all of this is the economy. When you take a serious look at all that happens in Saskatchewan, you soon realize that it is the economy that pays the bills. Without people working at jobs, the economy falters. If companies are willing to come to Saskatchewan and start a business which creates jobs, our economy flourishes. That is the key to our future.

The Fraser Institute 2017 survey of mining investments ranked Saskatchewan as second out of 91 jurisdictions in the world — in the world — for mining investment attractiveness. That brings in companies who in turn create jobs, and that is how the wheel turns. That is the whole story in one line. That is what will build a better tomorrow.

Our population continues to grow and now reaching 1,162,000 people as of July 1st. Mr. Speaker, that just thrills me — an increase of more than 11,000 in the past year and 160,000 in the past 11 years. Not bad for the wheat province that a previous NDP [New Democratic Party] premier referred to us as.

Now people in companies around the world are checking out this new Saskatchewan. Let us go forward with the same determination that our ancestors had. And let's dream big and

let's build even bigger. The members on this side of the House under the leadership of our Premier, the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook, are looking forward to continuing to build a bigger and better Saskatchewan. To quote a 1970s hit song, "We've Only Just Begun."

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support the Throne Speech and will not support the amendment. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well how to follow that, how to follow that. I'll just do my best. I'll do my best. I'm already getting the encouragement from Weyburn-Big Muddy off the top. That's good.

**An Hon. Member:** — Always here to help.

**Mr. McCall:** — Always there to help, you know, in times of need, sometimes not in times of need. But anyway, good to take my place in this Assembly tonight, Mr. Speaker, enjoying the debate on the Throne Speech that was delivered in this House last Wednesday.

I'd want to say right off, Lieutenant Governor Thomas Molloy, fine job. You know, been around for a few different Throne Speeches, but anyway, it was . . . You know, he did a lot with what he had to work. And I don't want to reflect on it any further, Mr. Speaker, for fear of, you know, involving him in the partisan debates of this place. But again, always good to see the Lieutenant Governor doing his thing, someone who's contributed a tremendous amount to the public policy life of not just Saskatchewan but of Canada, Mr. Speaker. And again, that contribution that he is making to our affairs is just getting going.

[19:30]

And again, I also want to say it was good to see that Elder Betty McKenna was here. To Elder Betty I say, chi-miigwech. Thank you for helping us out in a good way, getting us started off with a good prayer.

And also I want to say, thanks very much to the Speaker for having the great idea to bring in an imam to help us with some good thoughts and good words and good prayer to help us in this work that we do here on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, all of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, of course.

So again, I think there was a proverb to the effect — and I'd welcome Melfort correcting me if I'm getting this wrong — but a proverb to the effect that if the tools are not blessed, the labour is in vain. And, Mr. Speaker, it's good that we get these things started like that.

So to the content of the Throne Speech itself again, Mr. Speaker, this is a momentous time in the life of an Assembly, of a government where they get to lay out that course forward. And again, Mr. Speaker, there's some interesting characteristics that are starting to come to the fore with this government. And I don't know if it's a symptom of, you know, tired, old government-itis or what. But certainly, Mr. Speaker, any time that the vision for what's to come in this province, Mr. Speaker, has more to do with

looking in the rear-view mirror than it does with that forward vision, Mr. Speaker, then, you know, you're frankly dealing with a government that's old and tired.

And again my colleague, the member from Silver Springs, talking about if you don't know where you come from, you don't know where you're going. And again that's certainly true and I certainly subscribe to that principle, Mr. Speaker, as someone very interested in history, not just of this province but of Canada and of the world.

But again, Mr. Speaker, if that is all there is, you know, there's another proverb that says that where there is no vision, the people shall perish. And in terms of what you're going to do to make life better here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, I would submit that has been well canvassed by members on this side in terms of their critique of the Speech from the Throne.

The fact that the amount of recycling that went on, the amount of reusing that went on, the amount of re-announcing that went on, Mr. Speaker, it was kind of a tour de force. But again, you've got to say something apparently, and they certainly did that at length, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of that course forward, you know, it's getting a little skinny over there in terms of what's passing for vision.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to, you know, I wouldn't want members opposite to misinterpret what I'm saying. And I'm sure they'd never do that, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure they're not that ungenerous, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of, you know, there's some good things, good measures identified in the speech, Mr. Speaker. And again, we'd heard a fine sort of description of the motivation around Clare's Law, which I think is a good public policy initiative.

We'd like to see them go further, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what is there to take on the fact that Saskatchewan leads the country in terms of domestic abuse, Mr. Speaker, the way that that needs to be taken on by all members in this Assembly. And again Clare's Law is a good step forward in that regard. But, Mr. Speaker, there's a broader situation that needs to be confronted. And again, one step is good, but there are many more that need be taken.

Oh, even today, Mr. Speaker, there was some mention in the speech around collaborative care and primary care, and the current member from Regina Walsh Acres gave a nice statement about a primary care initiative here in the city of Regina. And again, you know, that's a good thing. But, Mr. Speaker, we will be watching with great interest because when it comes to talking about health care, the talking is always pretty thick. The action is, you know, you've got to see how it actually plays out, and does it meet up to the promises stated.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that once talked about how they were going to eliminate wait times in the emergency room altogether. They're going to . . . You know, gone; they were going to be all over and out. And then of course they retrenched from that, Mr. Speaker, and now it's more a matter of . . . Yes, it's hard to say which regime that occurred in, the scaling back of the ambition. But you know, I'll await my colleague from Rosemont's description of that in his remarks.

But again, Mr. Speaker, there wasn't much reckoning with the

fact that we've got an ongoing crisis in long-term care in this province, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that I know those members hear about on a weekly if not daily basis. And certainly we hear that in our offices as well.

We didn't hear enough about what's happening with the emergency rooms, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what's happening in those circumstances, Mr. Speaker. But again I think it's because they promised the moon and then couldn't deliver the stars. And so now it's just sort of off the playlist for them, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of what's happening around — and again was well-addressed, was well-raised today in the Assembly — around the problem that is only getting worse in every corner of this province, Mr. Speaker, around crystal meth, around the opioid crisis, the way that we hear not enough about what is being done on the part of the government in terms of meeting not just the enforcement side of the equation but the treatment side of the equation, Mr. Speaker, and the way that that plays out into mental health and into crime and again, Mr. Speaker, playing into the hands of the gangs, there is not enough that this government is doing to take that challenge on, Mr. Speaker. And the price that we pay as a province gets exacted in some pretty terrible ways.

In getting ready for this tonight, Mr. Speaker, I thought of two deaths that have recently occurred. And in my constituency there was a young woman, who should have had her whole life in front of her, was violently murdered. And you know, should have everything in front of her. And I've had the privilege of talking to a woman who called that girl a granddaughter, and again today I spoke with a woman who called that girl a niece. And in terms of what this means for those families — the kind of grief and the kind of trauma; the way that that's connected with crime, with substance abuse, with drugs, with the gangs, Mr. Speaker — it is robbing us of what should be hope and should be our future. And these kind of things happen far too often, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of what is the response, I would submit that it is not what needs to be brought to bear.

And so when I think of that young woman, Mr. Speaker, I also think of the fact that I had the occasion to be at the community council meeting for Scott Collegiate this past month, Mr. Speaker, the September meeting. And again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the long and winding road that I will not canvass at this time, Mr. Speaker, that got us to where finally Scott has been renewed and is the beating, vital heart of the māmawēyatitān centre — “let's all be together” in Cree, Mr. Speaker — the way that that has finally come about is such a hopeful, wonderful thing. And I couldn't have been more proud to sit in the audience and watch the first graduating class stride across the stage this past spring. And I couldn't have been more proud, Mr. Speaker, to be at that meeting, where it was reported that for the first time in decades, Mr. Speaker, enrolment at Scott Collegiate is north of 300 students.

That's an amazing thing. That's so much hope, Mr. Speaker. But it's hope that will be robbed of us, that will be robbed of those young lives if we don't do what we need to do around poverty, around reconciliation, around housing, and the way that these things play themselves out so terribly in crime, Mr. Speaker. If we're not fighting the whole front, Mr. Speaker, then we're going to lose young lives like this, and we're going to wonder, you know, how could these tragedies go on. Mr. Speaker, we need to

do more as an Assembly. We need to do more as a government on these fronts that I've talked about.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think about as well the stresses of this job and the way that we all, you know, give what we can to these efforts. And I think about the fact that over the years I've had occasion to attend a number of meetings with a fellow by the name of Richard Murray, who I knew for many years as the deputy minister of Central Services and then as the newly minted deputy minister of Labour. And of course this is someone who died at work suddenly, unexpectedly. And you know, we don't want that for anyone, Mr. Speaker, but it reminds us of the hard toll that public service can exact. And I guess on behalf of the official opposition and on behalf of myself, I just want to say to Mr. Murray's friends and family that we extend our condolences.

And again, Mr. Speaker, it's a very painful reminder that these jobs are not easy. These jobs are not easy, and there is a toll that is exacted and a respect that is deserved for all of our public servants. So I thought a lot about those two lives and passings, Mr. Speaker, in terms of, you know, coming back to the Assembly and the work that we do here.

And again, Mr. Speaker, we'll hear a lot . . . Certainly there is a tenor to these things. You know, Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, our first job is to hold the government to account. We'll certainly do that in ready supply, Mr. Speaker. As the cycle moves on, we'll be moving into not just opposition, but into proposition as well. And I'm sure the former premier of Saskatchewan, Mr. Wall, is, you know, a private citizen now, and I'm happy to say his name in this place. I'm sure he'll be happy about that.

And I was glad to see the Renew Saskatchewan plan come forward. And you know, there's more details to be worked out for certain, but in terms of equipping people with the tools to get the job done, I think is in the best tradition of Saskatchewan ingenuity and Saskatchewan hard work and Saskatchewan willingness to get the job done and to take on big challenges and make progress. So I'm very excited to see that, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess this is also a good point to talk about our new Environment critic, who I thought gave one heck of a speech as an initial offering. Been on his feet four times today, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if we're going to throw him in again into the debate or, you know, I don't know if that much recycling . . . You know, it's all the rage, so who knows where that winds up.

But in truth I want to say, thank you very much and congratulations to the new member from Regina Northeast, to him and his family for all that hard work that went into coming here because we don't get here alone, Lord knows, Mr. Speaker. But again I thought he acquitted himself very well in his initial speech.

And I also, I guess, you know, I had occasion to be on a few doorsteps — not as many as the new member — a few doorsteps in Northeast. And you know, I'm a North Central Regina guy but, you know, I know my way around Uplands or Glencairn and some of these places. But it was interesting, Mr. Speaker, in terms of people looking at what the government was doing and the way that it was impacting their standard of living, their cost of living, the hope that they have for their kids in terms of jobs

and careers that are going to be there.

[19:45]

Mr. Speaker, I think they looked at the fact that the former minister of Finance brought in the 2017 budget and then, not too long thereafter, bid adieu to the Legislative Assembly and to the people of Regina Northeast after fighting very hard to get that seat, Mr. Speaker.

I thought it was very interesting that . . . You know, it's not like . . . I'd heard rumours of a sighting of the member from Gardiner Park out campaigning for the government side, Mr. Speaker. I'd heard further rumours of Saskatoon Silver Springs I think was out once, Mr. Speaker, but otherwise that was it. That was it . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Pardon me. Pardon me. I wouldn't want to, you know, slight the member in that manner.

But, Mr. Speaker, I didn't see a whole lot of folks out on the doorstep. I saw some of their staffers out on the doorstep. That was certainly the case. But in terms of the way that the enthusiasm gap worked out, Mr. Speaker, I guess, you know, maybe they thought they had better things to do other than to tell the . . . Or maybe they were saving up for the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, when they were going to, you know, tell the Saskatchewan people all these great things that they should be so very happy about.

It reminds me of question period today, Mr. Speaker, where the member from Meadow Lake was quite happy to lecture hard-working blue-collar men that had come to their legislature, that are having trouble getting a job — pipefitters, plumbers, Mr. Speaker — the way that they're having a troubling time, and the way that it was dismissed, Mr. Speaker. And you know, they just stick to the speaking points.

You know, I think that's got a lot to do with a government that grows kind of long in the tooth, gets kind of old and tired and starts longing for the greatest hits package, which is there in abundance in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, but doesn't have a vision, doesn't have a vision to where we're going to go as a province.

And, Mr. Speaker, you can rhyme off all the lists you like and you can talk about statistics from years ago, but that's not going to put food on those individuals' plates, on their tables, pay the bills for their kids.

So, Mr. Speaker, the way that that went, most interesting. Again, Mr. Speaker, there's some great things happening, there are some great things that were even touched on in this Throne Speech. I could go on at greater length about that, but I guess I just want to save a bit of time to talk about being entrusted by our leader with some new critic areas, and that is Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, Mr. Speaker, as well as First Nations and Métis Relations or indigenous relations.

And again, Mr. Speaker, under both of those fronts I had occasion to see the member from Saskatoon Southeast, the Minister of Labour, attend the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour on Thursday morning. And again, he's a funny guy, I'll give him that. He's a funny guy. And as is his wont often, Mr. Speaker, it was kind of animal-themed. You know, he wasn't talking about



turkeys. He wasn't talking about dinosaurs. He was talking about how, coming into that room, he sort of felt like a skunk at a garden party.

And you know, he's a gifted speaker, Mr. Speaker, got a great sense of humour on him. And at least he's got the self awareness to sort of know where it's at, in terms of the way that this government has disrespected the hard-working men and women of this province, Mr. Speaker, and the way that they've allowed collective agreements to lapse for, in some cases, years and the way that they keep playing games with, is the 3.5 on the table, is it off the table, you know.

I try not to make a habit of this, Mr. Speaker, but I almost felt kind of sorry for the Minister of Labour coming to make those remarks. But you know, he's a big boy and he can certainly fend for himself just fine, so I got over it. I got over it.

But he wasn't talking about turkeys. He wasn't talking about dinosaurs, Mr. Speaker. He was talking about how he was the skunk at the garden party. And again, you know, it engendered a certain amount of sympathy. But the fact remains that this government has presided over a distinct worsening of the relationship between the public service and this government, and that's only going to get borne out in ways we can only imagine in the days and weeks ahead, Mr. Speaker. But fundamentally it's a posture of disrespect on the part of this government for the work that those men and women do. And again, I don't think that's going to be very helpful for the province.

In terms of First Nations-Métis Relations, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate re-elected Chief Bobby Cameron on his re-election to the head of the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]. Also re-elected was Vice-chief Dutch Lerat and Vice-chief Morley Watson, and I extend a congratulations to them as well, Mr. Speaker, and to Vice-chief Heather Bear and Vice-chief David Pratt. And to everyone at the FSIN, I extend them good wishes on good work. And certainly there are a lot of things that are there to be done on that agenda.

And in terms of the work of reconciliation that is incumbent upon all of us, Mr. Speaker, I know this is something that you hold very near and dear to your heart. This is work. Reconciliation needs partnership. It needs recognition of truth, and then it needs partnership to move forward in that reconciliation.

And again, I'm glad to see that the indigenous society for the Sixties Scoop is having meetings around the province and the way that that is helping this government to finally arrive at some kind of progress on a promise that they made years ago. I'm glad to see that that work is progressing but, Mr. Speaker, it's not enough.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also think about they referenced Sandy Bay in the Throne Speech, and the work that's going on in the North under the leadership of this government. And I know that there'll be more to be said on the Social Services front shortly, and the member from P.A. Northcote is going to do a fine job of that, I know very well. And I'd just add parenthetically she's got her work cut out for her, Mr. Speaker, because the situation in Social Services is a mess in terms of the service that they are to provide the most vulnerable in our society. There's some terrible things going on there that ought not be going on.

But, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what's happening in the North and again, there's a great reference to the work that's being done in Sandy Bay and again, you know, good. That's great to see. And then in the same section they also talk about the graduation rate and the increases that have occurred since 2013, and again, not enough, Mr. Speaker. But they neglect to mention, of course, the fact that in this very same period, Mr. Speaker, we've seen stories come from the North about the difficulties that places like Sandy Bay are having in supplying teachers to do the work.

And they don't talk of course about the fact that they took a program like NORTEP [northern teacher education program], which had 40 years of success increasing the teacher supply for the North, Mr. Speaker, that put the tools in the hands of northern people to take some control over their own destiny, and how they tore that agreement up after having made it just before the election. They don't talk about that. And they don't talk about, you know, is there perhaps some kind of causal link here between the fact that you do tremendous damage to one of the success stories in terms of increasing the supply of northern teachers, and then sort of scratch their heads and wonder, well what happened? Why do we have this shortage of teachers in the North?

Mr. Speaker, these are the things where it's not just about sort of growing frustrated with an old and tired government. It's hard not to, it's hard not to get angry about it, Mr. Speaker, and I just know that the people of Saskatchewan deserve so much better.

So, Mr. Speaker, on many fronts, we've got lots of work to do. We've got lots of files to pursue as the official opposition. Again, like I'm not here to say everything's perfect on our side, Mr. Speaker, and everything's terrible on their side. And I think my remarks will bear that out. But on balance, this is a government that has grown old and tired and is more obsessed with the rear-view mirror than the vision that will take us beyond the horizon of these days, Mr. Speaker.

So for those reasons and many more, I'll be voting with my colleagues for the amendment. And we can only imagine what will happen around the vote for the Throne Speech itself. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it is a pleasure to be here. I'm just following the previous speaker about old and tired. There's probably nobody more old and tired than the one that was just speaking, so he would know. And to ramble on for 20 minutes and say very little, and yet he's condemning the Speech from the Throne, I just don't understand it. But that's for them to figure out.

Mr. Speaker, as I start, I'd like to just start with a few thanks. First of all, my wife and my family for being part of this with us. And I know even on Sunday evening my daughter and her family were wanting to . . . phoned to come over. And we said, well we're away. We're going to be at a function. So it does work on the family a little bit and, you know, I apologize for that. But it's just part of it and they certainly accept it. And I certainly appreciate that.

To my assistants, Judy Hatfield and Rosalie Boots look after the constituency office very well consistently, day in and day out.

And I don't have to worry about things at the constituency office ever, so it's a good place to be in.

I'd like to make note of my board, the constituency board, that are all good supporters, backing me and helping out in Moose Jaw North. And the constituents of Moose Jaw North, I can never thank them enough for the faith that they put in me as their member to represent them in Moose Jaw North.

Mr. Speaker, I do have to make an apology, like I told one of my constituents I would. The last time I had the opportunity to speak in the House here was the budget speech. And I made a comment and after I congratulated the new leader, the Premier of the province, and the new Leader of the Opposition for their positions, I made a comment at that time that the Leader of the Opposition, his parents actually live in Moose Jaw North in my constituency. In fact I made the comment that they were one-time supporters. They both had memberships in the party to support me in the nomination process and so forth. And at the end of my comments I said they're no longer members of our party; their memberships lapsed, but I think they like me better than they do the Leader of the Opposition.

Well there was some offence to that, and I did phone the Leader of the Opposition's mother and kind of explain it was maybe a poor attempt at humour. But I did apologize, and I thought everything was okay. And then his dad phoned me back about a month later explaining that he wanted me to change *Hansard*. Well we know we can't change *Hansard*, but I did promise him that I would stand up and make the record straight that yes, I believe that they like their son better than they like me.

All through this, Mr. Speaker, I did learn one thing: that there are two people, two people in Moose Jaw North, two people that I found that actually like the Leader of the Opposition more than they like their MLA. So we'll leave that at that.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne is really standing up for Saskatchewan. Standing up for Saskatchewan immediately brings the connotation about the carbon tax, but it is much more than that. The carbon tax, yes it is an imposition that was put onto this province by the federal government, and it's a nonsense tax that has nothing to do with actually reducing carbon or pollution. It's a tax on the people. And rightfully so, this province has taken a stand that says we don't want to be a part of this. We have our own initiative to fight climate change, and that's where it is.

So we realize that the carbon tax is something that comes to mind when we think of standing up for Saskatchewan, but it can only be described as a tax on consumers, a tax on us citizens, and a disincentive for investment into our province. And disincentive means slowness in our economic growth. So standing up for Saskatchewan is to fight the carbon tax, and this government is prepared to do so.

[20:00]

However, like I said, standing up for Saskatchewan is more than just fighting the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. It's about standing up for Saskatchewan interests and for Saskatchewan rights and, most of all, for Saskatchewan people. It's about growing our province, advancing our economy, attracting investments and creating jobs, increasing our population, providing quality social

programs for those less fortunate and who need help. It's supporting growth through education, investment, and infrastructure like transportation and education and health care and social housing. It's providing senior care and daycare and improving timely health services.

Mr. Speaker, there's the three hospitals, the Moose Jaw Hospital, the Dr. F.H. Wigmore Hospital that was built in Moose Jaw. What a fantastic facility it is to serve the needs, the health needs of Moose Jaw and the surrounding area.

And I know my learned friend had talked about the billboards that have, "Where did the money go?" I notice that they are strategically not near this \$100 million hospital that was erected because that's part of where the money went: to help the health care, the hospitals with the children's hospital and the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford.

Standing up for Saskatchewan is for quality schools, from preschool to advanced education at universities, affiliated and regional colleges, and Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

It's respecting our environment, taking care of the land and the atmosphere, and protecting our water sources; with recycling programs, recovering, reusing; and lobbying for pipelines that are safer and more efficient in moving the oil to market. It's doing our part to limit emissions while cleaning up our place on this planet and nicely encouraging others to do the same. Mr. Speaker, we can maintain our integrity in growth and support a growing economy.

Standing up for Saskatchewan is about facing challenges, Mr. Speaker, challenges like low resource prices, challenges of getting Saskatchewan product to market through distant ocean ports, challenges like prairie drought or interruptive harvest weather. These are all challenges we face. And Saskatchewan's history has been a long story of challenges beyond the scope of government, but we'll continue with challenges. Perhaps the Honourable Lieutenant Governor Thomas Molloy in the Throne Speech said it best when he said, strength is built as challenges are faced head on. And that is what our government will do, is going to continue to stand up for Saskatchewan's interests, our economy and most importantly our people.

The challenges of lower resource revenues, we faced that challenge with some difficult decisions. This government presented a plan to reduce the province's dependence on resource revenue and return the budget to balance in the next fiscal year. The plan remains on track. Mr. Speaker, it's important to realize that Saskatchewan's AAA credit rating is reconfirmed by Moody's, a major credit rating agency. On track and doing the right thing.

Growing the economy is an important part of growing the province. The Throne Speech will be expanding incentives to encourage mineral exploration and introducing new oil well drilling and productive incentives. This will attract investment. It'll create jobs and it'll grow our economy.

There are two more new schools being built, contributing to the \$1.6 billion we have invested in education infrastructure in the past decade, including 40 new schools and 24 major renovations.

Mr. Speaker, during this session we will introduce changes to commercial driver training to improve safety on Saskatchewan roads. The Minister of Highways is implementing an intersection safety strategy to reduce the potential for collisions on Saskatchewan intersections.

In Moose Jaw, an extensive study is in process at the 9th Avenue and Trans-Canada intersection, which has been an intersection of concern for many decades. We've had the former minister of Highways in there, and they had a meeting with the merchants along the North Service Road along with the mayor and the city manager. And we have done some improvements to that particular intersection, with an exit ramp coming from this Trans-Canada into the city, and slowing down the traffic in that particular area. However, it's still a dangerous intersection. In fact, there was an accident recently, just last week again. So there is a need for more to be done at that intersection, and our government is looking at that intersection and other ones around the province.

Our government recently undertook a process of public consultation on trespassing laws to better address the appropriate balance between the rights of rural landowners and members of the public. Now I've had several calls at my office on this issue. And there needs to be consideration given to respecting farmers' and ranchers' rights — realizing also that there can be concerns regarding overpopulation of wildlife, should it affect the hunting sector — as well as the protecting of land from citizens and hunters who have no regard for the right of hunting on the land and crossing the land, even tearing up posted signs so that they can go on it. So there has to be some consultation there, and that will be certainly forthcoming.

The Speech from the Throne focuses on improving access to mental health, with the implementation of crisis teams pairing an officer of the law, a police officer, with a mental health professional. These teams will be implemented in Moose Jaw as well as North Battleford, Yorkton, and Prince Albert.

Standing up for Saskatchewan includes amending *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* to extend parental leave from 37 to 63 weeks. To me, this is an important social program centring around family. I believe there needs to be more emphasis put on family and family values, and expanding the parental leave will build better family connections. So it is important, and I'm proud that our government is going forth with something of this nature.

It is also important to care for our senior family members. This Speech from the Throne will create a newly critically ill adult leave, enabling family members of critically ill adults to take a 15-week leave to care for the members of their family at a time of need.

Mr. Speaker, in regards to income assistance, another program that I believe is long overdue, I've received some calls in my office on this — on income assistance — who want to get back into their careers. And I'm pleased that the government is listening and understands the challenges to move from that social security that they receive. And they will review the income exemption to look at increasing the amount of income clients can receive before their benefits are adjusted. This means those accessing income assistance will be able to work in their jobs of their choice and gain the experience to help overcome the

challenges and to build their careers to help work toward self-sustaining careers. These challenges are significant if they are struggling on assistance but may need help to gain experience and rebuild confidence and advance in our province. Standing up for Saskatchewan means supporting people and facing these challenges.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are unique in many ways. We are a strong and creative people who have continually rose to challenges to find solutions. Challenges and resulting solutions have gained notoriety here, as well as nationally and internationally. Saskatchewan continues to make its mark on the world stage with innovation solutions that have been developed here and have been applied throughout the world.

Sectors like the technology sector, and I think of Sylvia Fedoruk, who was part of the team that introduced the cobalt-60 beam therapy unit, the cancer bomb that was the first treatment for cancer. I've got a lot of respect for a fellow by the name of Peter Anderson from around the Southey area where I grew up, who invented or developed the rock picker. Growing up on a farm there was . . . He has to be in for sainthood on that one, I'm sure.

The air ambulance was first implemented here in our province. Throughout the province's history, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people have created an amazing variety of devices, everything from kitchen gadgets to personal gear to agricultural and industry equipment. When we think of the Morris rod weeders, the Bourgault chisel plows, Doepker Industries, Honey Bee Manufacturing, Schulte's, and there are dozens more. In fact, there are about 3,200 inventions patented by Saskatchewan entrepreneurs and probably thousands unrecorded. So facing challenges, finding solutions is an important part of the history of our province.

The Speech from the Throne is standing up for Saskatchewan, facing challenges, finding solutions, making our province a better place to live and to work and invest and raise a family and to earn a good living and to retire with dignity. This is our province. This is our Saskatchewan, our people, and our pride. We face challenges. We find solutions. And we cheer for the Saskatchewan Roughriders like nowhere else in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne sets a plan of encouraging and support for Saskatchewan people for a better future, of finding solutions, working together with the strength of our people and the assets of all the amenities of this province, from agriculture to manufacturing to forestry, to mining and oil and gas and potash and uranium and coal and wind and solar energy. It's about facing the challenges and rising above with the initiative of Saskatchewan ingenuity, inventions, strength, determination, and enthusiasm. "From many peoples, strength."

Yes, we were and still are challenged with low resource prices. We're challenged by a lack of federal leadership in pipeline transport and rail transport. We are challenged without tidewater ports for exports. But we continue to find ways to overcome these challenges, and we're determined not to plunge this province into long-term debt. We made tough decisions, took unfavourable strides to protect the integrity of this province, to protect the social values that people depend on government to provide, with determination to maintain a growth agenda and lead this province rightfully into its capable leadership position in Canada. Many

peoples, strength.

We will deliver a balanced budget in '19-20. We will implement the Prairie Resilience climate change strategy, a plan with a positive design to reduce emissions without destroying our economy.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne covers a lot of territory. I'm very proud of the Speech from the Throne that this government put forward. And I am pleased to support the Speech from the Throne, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Nerlien:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank you and the thousands watching from home tonight for staying with us. We appreciate it.

No surprise to you and my colleagues as well as members opposite, I fully intend to support the Speech from the Throne presented by the Lieutenant Governor on behalf of our government. In addition, I reject the amendment proposed by the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

[20:15]

Before I begin with remarks specific to the Throne Speech, I want to again thank the constituents of Kelvington-Wadena for their advice, guidance, and support. I also want to thank my constituency executive for their commitment to the democratic process, the party membership, and to assisting me in my role.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank municipal leaders and community organizations across my constituency for their commitment to their communities and for their ongoing engagement with me and our government on delivering quality services across the constituency.

I also want to thank my wife, Giselle, for her support, and my friends and family for their ongoing support and honest views on my role and for their positions on issues we face daily.

And last but not least, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my constituency assistant, Christine Grisdale, for her professionalism and dedication to the constituents of Kelvington-Wadena and for her support and input in my role.

Mr. Speaker, despite weather challenges, my constituents report substantial completion of the 2018 harvest. Challenges continue with reported shortages of propane necessary for grain drying. However the supply chain is working hard on solutions.

My constituents also report average to above-average yields with some quality issues, but generally they are satisfied, noting a couple of areas that were particularly challenged by weather issues.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, I want to take this opportunity to recognize and thank the agriculture producers, the ag equipment manufacturers, the fuel supply chain, the fertilizer and chemical suppliers, the trucking companies, the ag science and technology

development folks, and all the family members and support teams for the outstanding commitment to Saskatchewan agriculture. We are all aware of the fact that Saskatchewan farmers are the best in the world and it is truly an incredible team effort from all involved to make every year a new milestone in the development of agriculture and our roles in feeding the world.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize the value of our ag industry through ongoing commitments to producer support programs and investments in the innovation that Saskatchewan farm families are famous for. We also recognize the incredible sacrifices and the stress and challenge that our farm families face, and we support their commitment to ag through working to build a safety culture on the farms and on the highways as part of our government's relationship with our ag producers. We are very proud of our local and global achievements.

Mr. Speaker, I want to specifically acknowledge the agriculture producers that struggle year after year with the challenge of water management as it affects their ability to be fully productive producers. Mr. Speaker, we need each and every agriculture producer to maximize their capacity for production as they contribute to the economy of Saskatchewan and to their own growth and financial health. Our ag producers have for generations been good stewards of the land, and we thank them for their resilience in the face of challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to have a number of students from Foam Lake and Wynyard in attendance at the Throne Speech. As experienced by anyone attending this building for the first time, they were overwhelmed by the size and construction of the facility, as well as the protocol and ceremony of the day.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many good things to talk about in this Speech from the Throne that frankly I had difficulty limiting my comments to a couple of key issues for my constituents and the province. My government has made enormous progress in many large-scale projects that are important to all citizens of the province. The most recent announcements of the opening of the overpasses at Warman and Martensville and the fact that the Regina bypass project nears completion speak to the need for safe and efficient movement of people and goods around the province. Perhaps passing lanes define our government as we pass many growth milestones in the province.

Mr. Speaker, these projects are not without their challenges, but they do speak to the vision of our government, of a province on the move, one that measures its economic success by its ability to delivery quality services to its citizens.

The North Battleford hospital, opening soon, is a commitment to provide a safe and secure facility for those most challenged by the most serious mental health issues. The new children's hospital in Saskatoon will serve the whole province and indeed Western Canada, and will attract the best medical talent to serve the families of this province.

Last Friday, while the Minister of Rural and Remote Health was announcing the new integrated health facility in Leader, I was in Wadena announcing new digital X-ray facilities — all part of our commitment to the health care of rural Saskatchewan residents. Digitizing historical records at the same time as new images are taken from patients will produce a significant accessible

database, contributing to the much better individualized health care for my constituents in the Wadena area.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I toured Greenwater Lake Provincial Park with senior staff and observed my government's commitment to first-class tourism facilities in the province. We looked at a new lift station, recently completed water system expansion, electrical system upgrades, and the maturation of an entirely new camping experience which was developed a couple of years ago. We also discussed the ongoing commitment of my government to maintenance and upgrades as needed. Other provincial parks in the province have been receiving similar upgrades, which help us to be a destination for Canadian and international tourism as well as a place for our citizens to relax and enjoy our natural wonders.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to make a commitment to crime reduction strategies through innovative programs like the recently announced police and crisis team in Prince Albert and the protection and response teams that bring together RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], conservation officers, Highway Patrol officers, and municipal police forces in a team approach to identify and respond to rural crime issues.

Mr. Speaker, we are a few days away from officially recognizing the 100th anniversary of ending the First World War. I want to take this opportunity to recognize our veterans and their families and all those who lost their lives in their commitment to protecting the democracy we value each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, veterans of the Second World War are now well into their 90s. As an example, my mother's husband, a veteran of Europe and North Africa, just celebrated his 100th birthday, continues to live at home with mom, and always has a smile on his face for friends and family who visit.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents are most concerned with day-to-day issues — highways maintenance, cell and the internet service, landfill, access to health care and social services are just a few. I am pleased to note that each of these issues is dealt with in our government's ongoing plan for growth and specifically in this year's Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a few minutes discussing two specific initiatives in the Throne Speech. First, my government is continuing its commitment to the connectivity of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

I was honoured by the Premier to be appointed Legislative Secretary to the Minister Responsible for SaskTel who has specific responsibility around the rollout of enhanced cellular and internet services in rural Saskatchewan. This work is in addition to the already-announced 300 million in capital spending to improve services and build out leading-edge technology.

Within SaskTel we have developed a four-phase plan which includes phase 1 investments in high-speed Fusion internet capability currently serving 103 communities, with more work to be done. Phase 2 involves the deployment of 100 small cell sites in new service areas across the province. Fifty of these sites have been announced for rollout over the next few months. Phase 3 involves working with independent providers of connectivity to

identify and build relationships in expanding services to our residents. Phase 4 involves working with municipalities to continue to identify service areas to formulate broad expansion of connectivity in our province.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why does this matter? Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've been doing a lot of research on the subject of connectivity as it relates to the people of Saskatchewan, specifically rural Saskatchewan. Connectivity is, in my view, the new utility.

In the last century we built out our highway system, our telephone system, our power distribution system, and our energy system. Incredible amounts of planning, consultation, and innovation went into delivering the best possible services at the time to the people of Saskatchewan. Each of these infrastructure projects has survived and thrived with ongoing investment.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would challenge that the new infrastructure investment required is our ability to communicate and connect with each other and the world using the technology of today. Education in the future will largely be dependent on the ability of teachers and students to access global information, to share their ideas with each other in real time, probably in virtual classrooms.

Health care is already fully dependent on technology. I mentioned earlier the digital X-ray investments we are making. This technology is an enormous user of data capacity that will challenge our existing health care technology.

We are just scratching the surface when we consider the opportunities in remote health treatment capabilities. Imagine, if you will, the opportunities to treat injuries and illnesses in remote communities through real time remote online specialists, surgeons, doctors, and nurses. Policing and public safety are very reliant on data management and connectivity, not only for the obvious identification and tracking capabilities, but for the ability of rural residents to connect in real time with law enforcement, ambulance services, and public safety considerations like floods and fires.

The very future of agriculture is reliant on connectivity as we explore opportunities in crop and herd health management, plant, animal, and soil science, carbon sequestration, yield maximization, and field-to-plate monitoring and tracking of food.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's estimated by some that 25 per cent of all food products produced globally are lost to spoilage. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our producers and our scientists are leading-edge innovators working on these issues. While advancing yield and quality of our products is critical to the future of food security, perhaps the greatest gains can be achieved through solving the safe storage issues faced around the world. Mr. Speaker, connectivity is the core of this agriculture opportunity.

Rural acreages and resort villages are becoming the home to numerous small businesses and consulting firms. The technology of today allows innovators to work from anywhere, and we should be encouraging this practice as we expand the Saskatchewan connected economy beyond the cities.

Connectivity is the opportunity before us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my government intends also to review our trespass legislation in the coming months. We recently completed an online survey that had in excess of 2,000 responses, which speaks to the importance with which our citizens view this matter. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it should go without saying that we should not need to have this conversation. Fundamentally the nature of Saskatchewan people is to be good neighbours and to respect each other's personal space, our private property, and our livelihoods. Somewhere along the way, however, some of our citizens have misplaced those values. Perhaps it's a result of misguided blame-the-victim drift wherein it has become okay to simply chalk things up to simple statements like, well if they would only lock their doors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course it's common sense to protect your assets and I don't for a second suggest we shouldn't be doing that in every reasonable circumstance. However, trespass law unfortunately must respond to the lack of respect for property that has become an issue in our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, rural Saskatchewan residents are particularly susceptible to the consequences of this disrespect. We want to be the good neighbour. We want to be the friendly local. We want to have open doors and a welcoming disposition.

Rural Saskatchewan residents have precisely the same expectations that you would have in the city. I doubt that you would find it okay if someone pitched an overnight tent in your backyard. I doubt you'd expect to find a photographer in your yard taking wedding pictures. I doubt you would allow someone to come into your yard to pick peas or raspberries from your garden. I don't think you would like a hunter standing in your backyard skinning an animal. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these things are common and are totally acceptable with permission. The key words here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are "with permission."

[20:30]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are considerate of many varying issues on this file. Ag producers are concerned about disease transfer, particularly but not exclusively clubroot, which is potentially devastating to our canola producers. We are conscious of the need to balance the province's history of hunting with the protection of landowners and rural families. We are aware of the emerging influence of organic farming on our ag economy landscape and the need to be mindful of its unique need for respect of the land.

We are fully conscious that Saskatchewan's unique landscape provides opportunity for tourist promotion and engagement with the land. We must, however, be cautious in the development of our response to the trespass issues that keep our land of living skies accessible. Trespass for criminal purpose should be of great concern to all of us. This is not an exclusive rural issue, as every homeowner, business owner, and owner of any kind of property should be concerned.

Most critically, Mr. Speaker, I must reinforce that the incidences of vandalism, theft, and property damage continue to cause stress and security challenges in rural Saskatchewan. The previously noted rural crime initiatives are a significant step forward, but we

must ensure the law enforcement professionals have the right tools to support the safety and security of our residents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we trust the Saskatchewan people to put forward common sense considerations on this file. We will always rely on the reasonable person considerations under the law. We do look forward to a revitalized and current trespass Act for the consideration of the people of Saskatchewan.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and that ends my comments on the excellent Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Steele:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is an honour and a privilege to enter into the Speech from the Throne debate on behalf of the people of Cypress Hills. I want to thank my constituency for electing me, my family and friends for supporting me, my executive board for all of their advice and support.

This is a responsibility I take very seriously, Mr. Speaker. Since I've been elected, I am proud to say that I have made some very big decisions in the building of and fighting for our communities and families in the province. Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to standing up for the people of Saskatchewan and staying on track and returning our budget back to balance.

Mr. Speaker, our province continues to see growth in the province. As of July 1st it has . . . growth of 11,000 people in our province. We have also seen growth in our worker force of 62,000 more people working in the province.

Mr. Speaker, even though there are signs of improvement in the economy, we are still facing challenges due to the threat of the damaging federal carbon tax, continued sanctions from the United States on our steel and our uranium industry, and the deeply discounted price of our oil caused by lack of pipelines. Politicians from Ottawa just recently made headlines with the new plan to hit Saskatchewan with a carbon tax. This is a shell game that they are trying to force on us to pay more for basic necessities like fuel, heat, and power, promising a new rebate for families to offset all of these increased costs. Mr. Speaker, the Trudeau Liberals are now desperately trying to convince us that we'll actually be better off by paying more for heat to heat our homes, that we are better off to pay more to keep our lights on, and that we'd be better off to pay more to fuel our cars.

Mr. Speaker, most of us here in Saskatchewan have to drive to work. Many of us don't have the option to carpool or ride a bike. In September many of us experienced a very early winter and received snow, reminding us all it does get cold here and we'll need to heat our homes. The carbon tax means that all of these things are going to cost a lot more, and those are just the direct costs we know about. Hockey rinks, rec centres, school divisions, and municipalities are all going to be paying a lot more carbon tax and at the end of the day the cost is going to get passed on to us. This will have a direct hit on everyone across the province.

Mr. Speaker, our agriculture sector will be hit hard as well despite the federal government claiming otherwise. Producers will still pay on inputs such as natural gas and propane

consumption in their shops, barns, grain dryers, as well as on shipping, road, and rail transport.

Saskatchewan people are smarter than this, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people know the carbon tax is not a good environmental or economic policy. Mr. Speaker, an analyst from the University of Regina earlier this year estimated the federal carbon tax would hurt Saskatchewan's economy by almost 16 billion with little effect on emissions.

Our government has a plan for the environment and reducing emissions — our Prairie Resilience strategy, which has been accepted by the federal government. The feds, however, are still choosing to push a tax on Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the Prairie Resilience will apply new performance standards for Saskatchewan's industries' heavy emitters and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the oil and gas sector while SaskPower continues to increase our renewable energy generation.

The Prairie Resilience strategy plan will retain and restore landscape integrity and optimize ecological goods and its services. Mr. Speaker, the Prairie Resilience plan will benefit generations to come, improving and continuing to work together with provincial and interprovincial governments, improving technology and standards.

Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. We do not believe the carbon tax will be effective in tackling climate change. This will only hurt Saskatchewan's economy and it will hurt the Saskatchewan families' finances. Our government has refused to sign the carbon tax agreement set out by the federal government. Saskatchewan's economy will hit hard if another tax was enforced to the people of the province. Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada with no carbon tax of any kind. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind everyone that the NDP was in favour of the carbon tax. This would put a hardship on the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, our government will stand up for Saskatchewan people and continue to fight the carbon tax. Our government continues to work together with the industry's leaders in the oil and energy sector, helping to enhance and improve policies. Since the 1950s to today, the oil and gas sector has attracted many people and investments into our province. It has made an impact on our economy and helped with improving our communities across the province, supporting thousands of people and employing both directly and indirectly.

Our government is proud of our resource sector. Mr. Speaker, our government understands the importance of resource development and the role it plays in our future of our province. Mr. Speaker, Bill C-69 will fundamentally change the resource industry should the bill be passed.

Without pipelines to get our oil across the country, Saskatchewan must sell nearly all of our oil to another market, to one market, the United States, for sometimes as low as half the price. Meanwhile more than half of the oil in Atlantic Canada comes from foreign sources. Pipelines are safe, efficient, and reliable methods of transporting our energy products.

This summer we did an energy and gas tour with Minister

Bronwyn Eyre in the Cypress Hills constituency. They have worked hard to create a stable, predictable, and reliable environment. They are great stewards of the land and leave it in better condition than when they found it. This year the oil producers would have earned an estimated 4.4 billion more if we could have had access to the international market.

Mr. Speaker, our government would have received approximately 300 million in royalties, additional taxes, and other revenues. The lost revenue would have been spent on services for the people in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, our government will stand up for the jobs of the oil and gas industry and continue to press the federal government to withdraw Bill 69 and take action and get the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion built. The Trans Mountain pipeline will help reinforce local businesses and economies across the province.

The oil and gas sector also contributes to our local rinks, pools, and kids' sports. Pembina Pipeline Corporation donated \$100,000 to the Leader and District Integrated Healthcare Facility. Whitecap energy has donated 85,000 to over 50 local organizations such as schools, minor hockey, and community events since 2016.

Canadian Natural Resources has contributed 30,000 to the Fox Valley Fire Department. The Southwest Emergency Response Centre in Eastend received funding for \$100,000 from Crescent Point. The oil and energy sector have helped communities with funding and upgrading equipment, manpower allowing communities to achieve goals otherwise not thought possible within their support and without their support and help.

Mr. Speaker, the oil and gas sector attracts businesses to invest in our communities and support our restaurants and hotels. It is vital that we help them, to enable them to transport and continue to work together to ensure that we make it better.

Mr. Speaker, we all know how near and dear health care is to our hearts. Saskatchewan has long been known in Canada as a pioneer in the health care field. We continue to remain as committed to providing high-quality health care to the people of Saskatchewan as we did on the first day we formed government. Mr. Speaker, our opportunity is to continue to strengthen and improve the way health care is administered in effective manner while meeting the health care needs of our people.

The provincial health authority has transitioned from 12 health regions into one. The provincial government's health board has been working to deliver the health services to the entire province and reporting to the Minister of Health.

I would like to point out that this government has been a leader in the field of health care since we took office in 2007. In addition, Saskatchewan has the shortest surgical wait times. This leadership has been shown not only to benefit urban care centres, but also to those in rural and remote areas. Mr. Speaker, we have made significant improvements towards creating facilities, providing innovative services, and recruiting health care professionals throughout the rural and remote areas in this province.

Our government has more than doubled investment in hospitals and health care and infrastructure compared to the NDP,

including the new children's hospital in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital will meet many of the needs of our province's children, expecting mothers, and their families by enhancing patient care with the state-of-the-art technology and facility, enabling a greater recruitment and retention of pediatrician specialists. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that the facility is currently 92 per cent complete and is on schedule to open in late 2019. Our government greatly appreciates all those who have so generously given in support of this very important cause. We greatly appreciate all the time and hard work that was done by the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation.

On Friday, Minister Ottenbreit and myself attended a ribbon cutting of a new expansion renovation at the Leader hospital. A new, renovated hospital is greatly appreciated by the Leader and surrounding communities, offering them many services: acute care, home care, palliative beds, lab and X-ray, emergency, and outpatient services. Mr. Speaker, our government has invested 36.2 million in the Maple Creek hospital, which included an upgrade and a renovation completed in 2015. Our government continues to provide that . . . [inaudible] . . . to investing in health care across this province. In 2017-2018 we invested 5.2 billion in infrastructure in core health care services. We have made a significant improvement towards creating health care facilities, providing innovative services, and recruiting health care professionals across our province.

Mr. Speaker, STARS, the shock trauma air rescue service, which has been operating in Western Canada providing highly specialized air medical services to the people for over 30 years. STARS offers a lifeline anywhere in the province offering advanced, quick health care services. STARS and the Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services system together provide efficient time and services with quick emergency response times across the province.

[20:45]

Mr. Speaker, it is a critical link to rural and isolated areas in how life-saving transportation is in a quick time frame to those that are injured or ill. I have many RMs [rural municipality], towns, and villages meeting with STARS in our office in ensuring that they have access and are able to use STARS in a time of need. The RM of Maple Creek just purchased an enclosed trailer to store and haul fuel when needed for the helicopter. A week after the community received training, their skills were put to the test to haul a cache trailer to the fuel STARS unit.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has provided funding to STARS since 2012 for an annual operating funding. This government makes the level of health care to be provided to those in remote and isolated areas a priority. STARS has provided care for 2,200 patients in the province since it has started in Saskatchewan, 757 of these injured in 2015-2016 alone. The STARS flight team consists of advanced care paramedics, critical care nurses, physician oversight, which are also available on flight if required.

Mr. Speaker, this government appreciates rural fire departments, their staff, their volunteers who help assist the STARS team when landing and taking off. Mr. Speaker, we need to continue to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people as the services for STARS continues to grow.

Mr. Speaker, as a government we are not about closing down schools. We want to ensure that the resources are being used in the most effective and efficient way. Since being in government we've invested over 1.5 billion in over 42 brand new schools and 23 major renovations in schools.

Mr. Speaker, during the 16 years in office, the NDP closed 176 schools during their time in power. The number of teachers dropped during 2001 to 2007 was around 400 when they underfunded education, causing a significant tax hike for the education property tax. An average of one school closure every month. We have seen an increase of 840 more teachers since 2007, a 9 per cent increase.

Getting a proper education is very necessary. It provides us with fundamental tools we will continue to use throughout our lives. Just like food is necessary to maintain a healthy body, education provides us with the mental, physical, and social well-being so we can continually be successful in our personal growth for our future. We, as a government, want to continue to ensure that we are able to provide important tools to offer to support the strengths in our classroom for our children, our communities, and the province.

Schools are the hearts of our communities, and it provides stability within our communities. Education is a fundamental part of the foundation of our province, and our government wants to make sure that we are providing the right services in the right locations using the best delivery options possible. We want to ensure education remains relevant and valuable.

Saskatchewan's population continues to grow, reaching out to 1.1 million people as of July. Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to invest in the education and schools to ensure that we are prepared for further growth. We will continue to promote community growth by keeping these services in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to make significant investments in the quality of education provided in the province, ensuring that resources that have been provided are effectively achieving the right outcomes for our students. Our government believes in investments in our future.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that we have chosen to continue improving our infrastructure. In doing this, we are helping to improve the quality of care in our communities across the province, and benefiting the people that we serve. Investing in infrastructure that we drive on will help make it safe for travel and supporting the growth in our economy. In new infrastructure of schools and ensuring that facilities housing education pre-K [pre-kindergarten] to grade 12 continues to house the growth and will create tremendous benefits down the road. Building and adding on to the infrastructure of our hospitals to help address their overcapacity pressures and emergency departments and wait times. Mr. Speaker, it is clear that our government has continued to take care of the people of Saskatchewan and maintaining infrastructure of our communities.

The jobs of every member of the Legislative Assembly is to help keep Saskatchewan moving forward and shaping a better province for today, tomorrow, and the future. This is a job we all take very seriously. These decisions are what is needed to meet



the challenges we are facing, and I believe that the end result will be as needed to continue to keep Saskatchewan strong.

Mr. Speaker, I want to finish by saying that our Throne Speech outlines our commitment to growing the economy and delivering important programs and services for people in our province. While we face many challenges, Saskatchewan people are determined, resilient, and resourceful, and our government will always reflect these qualities as it stands up for the province and works to build a strong, strong Saskatchewan.

I support the Throne Speech, but I do not support their amendment. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Today I've heard at least a couple of members refer to other members by their name, and I'd just like to remind members that they are not . . . they're to be referred to by their seats or in the case of ministers by their ministry. I would just put that out there for all members. I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my honour and pleasure to present today my remarks for the Speech from the Throne. Before I start with my remarks, I would like to take this opportunity to thank some important people in my life that have helped me with my role in this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my constituency assistant, Rose, does an amazing job helping individuals that reach out to our office. Rose is very busy managing many concerns from constituents, and she handles these calls with such professionalism, empathy, and respect. It is a pleasure working with her and learning from her years of experience as a constituency assistant.

I also want to thank my family for their constant support. My partner, Darren, is very supportive of my position and is very flexible with adjusting our time together to accommodate for me to attend important functions. And Darren was incredibly supportive when I made the decision to once again put my name forward as the candidate for our party in the next general election. It is such an honour to have the support of my constituents to represent them in this House, and I hope to continue in this role for a bit longer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a fellow constituent of mine, Priscilla Joseph, has a wonderful piece of advice that she has given to her children: "Live your life in service to others with no expectations of anything in return except a better world for children and grandchildren." Mr. Speaker, I will take her advice also, and I hope the way I serve in this House represents those values.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, since the last Throne Speech much has changed in this House. We have a new Lieutenant Governor, a new Premier, and we have welcomed our new Leader of the Official Opposition. I'm so proud to be standing with my colleagues. We have a great team, and I appreciate all the support I receive from them.

I'm also happy to have added another colleague to our team recently, and I wish to officially welcome the member for Regina Northeast to our team. I know he will be a wonderful addition to our team as he is extremely motivated and a hard worker as well as caring and compassionate. I look forward to being his seatmate

during this session.

Also since the previous Throne Speech last fall, my duties in this House have changed a few times, and I've had the opportunity to previously be the critic for Municipal Relations, Labour, and SaskEnergy. I appreciated the opportunity of learning a lot in those roles, and I'm very happy in my new role as the critic for SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] and Housing, but also returning to my previous role as the critic of Social Services and community-based organizations.

As you have noticed in the past few years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very passionate about the role the Ministry of Social Services plays in supporting our most vulnerable. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I truly believe that it is services that were provided by the federal and provincial governments, at a time, that helped me get to this position. When I was a young, single mother, I knew that, to properly support my children, I would need to further my education. Because of programs such as family allowance, income supplement, rental supplement, and funding for post-secondary education, I was able to continue my education, and I have had good employment opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that government plays a vital role in ensuring everyone has the same opportunities. Everyone has the right to education. Everyone has the right to publicly funded medical treatment. Everyone has the right to safe and affordable public transportation. Everyone has the right to feel safe and live in healthy communities. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, everyone has the right to supports and programs in their time of need.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I want for my family, I want for all families. I feel that this government has lost touch with the people of Saskatchewan and have no vision moving forward, and this Throne Speech is a clear example of that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, food banks are busier than ever and one in four children in this province live in poverty. Child poverty rates in our province are above the national average and these numbers are much higher for indigenous children, but yet no mention of child poverty in this Throne Speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the number of children in care continues to climb. Indigenous children remain overrepresented in the child welfare system and to this day we still have an alarming number of children in care that sustain critical injuries and way too many who have died. Our child welfare system needs to be completely revamped but yet received no attention in this Throne Speech.

Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the last budget this government made the decision to cut the rental supplement program. They claim that individuals on the program would be grandfathered in, but they fail to tell people that if their file gets re-evaluated due to a change in circumstances, they will lose that benefit. They also claim that the federal government will step in with some funding to replace this program. This is also very misleading because the federal government is providing funding to help with reducing homelessness, not to provide a hand-up supplement for families that need some support to help pay for their rent. This supplement helped families that were working hard but needed a bit of extra financial support to help keep a roof over their head. Service providers indicate that they see the real impact of this cut with their front-line community services.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, mental health and addiction is a problem in our province, but Prince Albert and the northern part of our province are feeling the impact in a big way. Recently the Prince Albert city police indicated that in 2018 alone, they have had 154 mental health related calls, 43 mental health warrants, and 244 calls for attempted suicide. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is almost one attempted suicide per day that's been reported to the Prince Albert city police.

I was happy to hear that Prince Albert will be implementing the PACT [police and crisis team] program. This integrated approach with law enforcement officers and trained mental health professionals will help ensure that individuals needing support will get the appropriate support.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was disappointed that this Throne Speech had no mention about a new, bigger hospital to address the increased medical pressures and addressing large wait times in Prince Albert, and no mention of adding accountable care units for Prince Albert, which would be very beneficial.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, since the disbanding of STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], individuals in Prince Albert and area have been struggling with having their medical needs met when many services are being only offered in Saskatoon. We have had individuals tell us that they have decided not to get treatment for their cancer because they cannot afford the transportation or accommodations in Saskatoon. People should be able to have access to medical supports no matter where you live in this province. This is a reason why expanding and improving health care services in Prince Albert is so needed, and this should be discussed every time the government talks about addressing the needs of the province.

[21:00]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reason why my family moved to Saskatchewan was because my dad got a job at the Saskatchewan Impaired Driver Treatment Centre or, as we called it, the St. Louis rehab centre. He was an addiction counsellor and would speak at many functions across the province about addiction and how to address impaired driving in our province. I plan to take the lessons I learned from my father to help me review the impaired driving issues we have in this province.

Having tough impaired driving laws is one step to addressing impaired driving, but we need to acknowledge the cuts that have been made with addiction services, especially services in the rural areas. Rural communities have seen the highest rates of drinking and driving and have little to no addiction services available. If we really want to address impaired driving, then we need to invest in early education and public promotion and make sure there are services available for those who need them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government contradicts itself when they brag about the privatization and expansion of liquor sales, and in the next breath talk about the embarrassing fact that Saskatchewan has the highest rates of impaired driving across this province. Being proud of your legacy on promoting more alcohol use in this province that has high rates of addictions, high rates of impaired driving, high rates of crime, and high rates of interpersonal violence without a plan to address the consequences of alcohol use is irresponsible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm looking forward to learning more about my new role as critic for SGI. There's a lot of new policies that are being investigated, especially after the tragic accident that involved the Humboldt Broncos hockey team. The parents of the players have been advocating for buses to be equipped with seat and shoulder belts. Transport Canada announced in June that all newly built highway buses will be required to have seat belts by September 2020. This government should be looking into having all buses equipped with seat and shoulder belts and find a way to have this regulated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the Throne Speech it was announced that there will be changes to the commercial driver training and that these changes will be made with consultation with other Western provinces to ensure consistent standards between provinces. It is always a good idea to re-evaluate standards of practice and regulations, and I will hope that these decisions will be based on best practice and evidence-based information.

Another new critic portfolio for me is housing. This portfolio is varied and includes all housing in the province, from low-income housing to ensuring that new housing starts are consistent and growing. To quote the director of Saskatchewan Construction Association, John Lax, "Construction does not drive the economy. It facilitates it."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the construction economy, both residential housing projects and commercial projects, is in a slump. Ensuring that procurement practices and procedures is a fair process for Saskatchewan businesses is important. This government has been inconsistent and lacks transparency with regards to this. PST [provincial sales tax] on construction has seriously impacted the construction industry in our province. This tax is yet another barrier to recovery from our already depressed market.

I was also surprised to not see any mention in the Throne Speech with regards to the prompt payment legislation that many industries have been requesting from this government and are expecting some action on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've heard from parents and teachers across the province that our schools are in trouble, but this government has made no commitment to restoring the funding they cut. And meanwhile, education in our province is becoming eroded.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only is this government eroding our kids' classrooms, making serious cuts to post-secondary education, but they are again looking at some major changes to our libraries. They are re-evaluating our library services, but the most concerning aspect of this is that they're doing the evaluation in a non-transparent way. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are watching what is going on, and I don't need to remind you how organized and passionate librarians are when they need to fight the good fight.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my office sees a lot of constituents who have had bad experiences with government services. Issues with government services include call centres where you wait on hold for long periods to speak to someone. When you finally get through, you're only allowed a limited time for services. If that is not enough time, you must call back and wait on hold again.

Many constituents have noticed how service cuts have affected front-line service delivery, making it more difficult to contact the government to clear up issues you are having. We should not expect government services to be delivered poorly. Staffing levels need to be sufficient to provide good service to the residents of Saskatchewan. We can do so much better.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, unfortunately our economy in Saskatchewan continues to struggle. While the government tries to tell us that everything is great, people still have a difficult time finding work so they can pay their bills. Instead of investing in Saskatchewan and making plans to improve our economy, the government has made cuts to health care, education, and other services. These cuts will increase government costs in the future and hurt Saskatchewan residents now.

Austerity is not working in Saskatchewan. Hoping for increases to oil revenue is not a plan. We can do better in Saskatchewan by taking action and making investments now. We can work together to make better decisions that will make our community stronger. We can have a government that is honest with people and makes decisions that benefit everyone and not just well-connected friends. We can have a province where people earn a decent paycheque, where the government invests in our communities to ensure a strong economy where everyone benefits, with services that work for people and strengthen our communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech is an opportunity for government to put forth a vision for the future. But this Throne Speech had no ideas, lacked vision, and was simply recycled ideas and finger pointing. This was a wasted chance to provide clear, strong leadership. And with that, I support the amendment submitted by my colleague, the member of Saskatoon Fairview.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to stand up and speak to the Throne Speech that was brought down by the Lieutenant Governor.

First thing, I would like to thank the constituents of Biggar-Sask Valley for re-electing me and putting their faith in me and the Saskatchewan Party and the vision of the Saskatchewan Party. Like many members, they've also . . . I would like to thank my constituency assistant, Janet, who is really fundamental to the health of our constituency, dealing with all sorts of issues that people bring forward. She's very friendly and deals with all the issues or passes them on to someone that will look after it. So I just want to thank Janet.

My family: my wife, Cindy, who is an educational assistant in Biggar Central School, my son who is going to Polytechnic in Prince Albert, and my youngest daughter who is working in Saskatoon, and my eldest daughter who lives in Regina as her and her husband Nick have two children. And I just want to recognize them.

Mr. Speaker, part of what I have always done in my constituency is, besides looking after the day-to-day constituents' concerns or through my CA, we go and do an outreach to the constituency at least once a year. We hold coffee parties around the constituency.

So in every community we'll hold a coffee party in the morning in one community and move on to the next community in the afternoon. And it really gives people an opportunity to come and visit with me and an opportunity for them to, you know, if they have any concerns or complaints or bouquets — we'll take bouquets as well — and I find that very fruitful. People really look forward to our visits. When I say "our," I take my constituency assistant with me to meet those folks in those communities and deal with any of their concerns.

And so we have our main office in the town of Biggar, and we have a satellite office in Hepburn where we have office space and we can hold meetings there as well.

So speaking to the Throne Speech itself, as a number of our members have said, but it's worth saying again, you know, what our government has been doing and continues to do. And the overarching concern last two budgets, and it'll be the third budget this spring, is to get the budget balanced. It's a three-year plan to reduce the province's dependency on resource revenues and get the budget back on track. We started out with a \$1.2 billion deficit in '16-17 and had to have made some very difficult decisions on the road to the last budget, '17-18, to reduce it to \$302 million deficit. And I'm very confident that the next budget will be a balanced budget. As a note, Moody's recently reconfirmed the AAA credit rating score for Saskatchewan, making our province one of the only two Canadian provinces to achieve Moody's highest credit rating.

Now the Saskatchewan economy has seen clear signs of improving. Our population is reaching 1.162 million people as of July 1st, an increase of over 11,000 in the past year and 160,000 increase in the past 11 years. And during that time, Saskatchewan has enjoyed the second-fastest rate of growth in the country with 62,700 more people now working in the province.

So when I look at those facts province wide, I just want to talk a bit about what's going on in Biggar-Sask Valley and particularly the town of Biggar and the area around Biggar. Number one, we're very fortunate again to have the harvest complete with excellent grades and yields. So every year's a challenge. Every year farmers put hundreds of thousands of dollars investment into crops, and so it's very satisfying and reassuring that the farmers of Biggar-Sask Valley, but all of the whole province, has got the crop off for the most part. And so that's one big stress that my constituency don't have to worry about over the next months and go into winter without having crop left over.

In the town of Biggar we have a company called AGI and it's owned by the Burton family. And they built the shaft for K+S potash mine, and they got the contract to build the shaft for the Jansen mine. And this is, you know, two or three years of work for people working for AGI. They're looking for welders. You know, where there's jobs there's more investment into real estate and more kids in the school, more people in the churches. And it's a very big contract for AGI.

Now talking to a couple of my colleagues, one from Melfort and one from Arm River, they're arguing about which constituency the Jansen mine is in. And we just had the discussion here an hour ago. So they can argue about which constituency has the mine in, but I had to reassure them that they have the hole in the ground, but Biggar has the shaft. We're actually making the steel shaft.

So Biggar can take claim to that part of the project.

Other businesses in Biggar: you know, Prairie Malt has been there for many, many years employing a lot of people; Rack Petroleum; E-Kay manufacturing, a shortline manufacturer. There's just a number . . . a lot of good things going on in and around the town of Biggar, as well as the main industry of agriculture in the constituency.

[21:15]

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a number of things that our government has been doing is a new four-year mineral development strategy that we announced this spring, which creates an incentive program to encourage mineral exploration and will increase the amount of geophysical data available. We'll be expanding existing incentives and we'll be seeing new oil well drilling and production incentives.

So a lot of work has been done and continue to be done on the people of Saskatchewan, people that are in need. The creation and enhancement of the Saskatchewan low-income tax credit has tripled the seniors' income plan benefit for low-income seniors and increased personal, spousal, and child tax exemptions to the point that 112,000 more people no longer pay any provincial income tax.

So a lot of talk about where did the money go. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one year ago we completed 18 new joint-use schools that will provide space for more than 11,000 students and remain in like-new condition for the next 30 years, thanks to the innovative P3 [public-private partnership] contracts. Two more schools will be built using traditional methods.

We remain committed to modernizing health care infrastructure with approximately \$1.5 billion invested over the past decade. This includes the completion of two new hospitals and 14 long-term care facilities and ongoing capital contributions to the construction of two additional hospitals. And I'm proud to say one of the 14 long-term care homes that were built is in the town of Biggar. We built a new long-term care home and renovated the hospital and joined the two together. And it's, you know, it's been very important to the health and welfare of Biggar and area people. We have three doctors working in Biggar.

And of course, other members have mentioned it. STARS has been a fundamentally important innovation that our government brought in. It's really health care for rural Saskatchewan, and so if there's ever a disruption in service or anybody in the oil patch or out in the farms that have problems, STARS is available to look after them.

Of course, a number of other things that we're completing — the new provincial psychiatric hospital in North Battleford. The new state-of-the-art hospital will be among the most innovative mental health treatment centres in the country and ensures that those facing significant mental health needs receive the best treatment available. Through a phased-in approach, the 188 mental health beds will be available to deliver mental health care and support and an adjoining correctional facility will provide 96 beds for offenders living with mental health issues.

One of the other things that in our constituency in rural

Saskatchewan is concerns over high speed. That's no different in Biggar-Sask Valley. But our government and SaskTel has expanded its high-speed Fusion internet to 35 additional rural locations in the province, completing phase 1 of our plan to provide communities with enhanced access to high-speed internet service. So we're dealing with issues that are very relevant to the constituents of Biggar-Sask Valley.

Phase 2 of this plan would be SaskTel will be working to improve 4G LTE [long-term evolution] cellular service in 100 rural Saskatchewan communities through the development of a small cell site solution, with the first 50 communities expected to be completed this spring.

Biggar-Sask Valley is like many rural constituencies that have had challenges with highways and thin membrane highways. More than 13 000 kilometres of highway have been built and improved. Two hundred seventy-five bridges have been repaired or replaced since 2007, and many of them are in the constituency of Biggar-Sask Valley. Just this month, the Chief Mistawasis bridge in north Saskatoon was opened to traffic, and new interchanges at Warman and Martensville, two of the fastest growing communities in Saskatchewan, will be open to traffic this fall, approximately a full year ahead of schedule.

Now many . . . the bridge and the exchanges, many of my constituents drive from bedroom communities like Hepburn or Dalmeny or Waldheim, Hepburn, into Saskatoon to work. So these are all very important developments for the constituency of Biggar.

One of the issues that is, like it's really a problem across Saskatchewan, is crime, addictions, which go hand-in-hand with crime, mental health issues. And the '18-19 budget provided fully funding for the protection and response team, the PRT. And that was created in response to recommendations by the government caucus committee on crime. So it consists of 250 armed officers who have arrest and detention powers, including municipal police, RCMP, Ministry of Highways vehicle enforcement officers, and Ministry of Environment conservation officers.

We have seen tangible results in and around the constituency of Biggar, where more officers of the various designations have made a difference in arresting people that have been dealing with crime in the area. Right in the town of Biggar, certainly has been a number of times when there's been a surge of RCMP and other officers come in and have really put a dent into the theft rings that have been going on and dealt with some of the drug problems that have taken place.

And it's been . . . It's a very serious issue. And I have a close, well not a family member, but a friend who has dealt with crystal meth addictions and many legal problems. And so it's just not policing that will solve the problem by itself, but certainly mental health and addiction funding, which we have committed to, will go a long ways to help deal with some of these issues.

You go on and on about those issues, which has been a real scourge on people right across Canada and in our youth, particularly in Saskatchewan. As I was saying, the focus has been on improving access to mental health services, continues as crisis teams pairing a police officer with a mental health professional

will be fully operational this winter in Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Yorkton, and Prince Albert. The multidisciplinary community recovery teams, made up of 40 new full-time employees, will be offering services in eight communities by the end of this year to support people with complex and persistent mental illness.

This winter a pilot project program to engage youth in mental health promotion will be launched in schools located in the communities of North Battleford, Sandy Bay, Regina, and Balgonie.

And to help address opioid-related overdose deaths, we introduced the take-home naloxone kit program, which has been established in 23 Saskatchewan communities to date. The program has contributed more than 1,100 kits and trained 2,800 people.

So there's a number of important things that our government has been doing in the past, we'll continue to do in the future, laid out in the Throne Speech. Nothing more important than our youth. We have fulfilled our commitment to provide individualized funding for children under six who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. And in the last budget, 2.8 million had been allocated to provide up to \$4,000 annually per child, giving patients more choice and flexibility to access the supports that best meet their children's needs.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on actually on a number of things that are in this Throne Speech. And the last thing I think I will speak about is concerning the carbon tax. And I presented a petition on Thursday concerning the carbon tax. So people are more than willing to sign a petition and ask that we do what we can do to stop the federal government from imposing this federal carbon tax on Saskatchewan and costing our province a lot of money. It will hurt our economy. It will, you know, we'll lose jobs in our province because of this carbon tax if it's imposed by the federal government.

And so at that point, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that I will not be supporting the amendment to the Throne Speech but will be supporting the Throne Speech motion. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Sask Valley . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Saskatchewan Rivers, sorry. Saskatchewan Rivers.

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well I'm very honoured to be able to participate and add my thoughts to the Throne Speech delivered this year, 2018, by the Lieutenant Governor, "Standing Up for Saskatchewan." And I do see so many of us are standing up for Saskatchewan, and I'm pleased to hear and read that our Saskatchewan values of volunteering to those in need are still very prevalent in our culture. And those who volunteer are very inspirational and makes our community a better place to live. These are duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seek gladly, firm in the knowledge that there's nothing so satisfying to the spirit than to serve others.

And our province is enriched in spite of weather or grievances, for those who stand up for Saskatchewan, and our values make us stronger. As our Throne Speech indicates, our government reflects on Saskatchewan people. We are resilient, determined,

and quite resourceful. And our prairie resilience will apply new performance standards and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the oil and gas sectors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, volunteerism is very important to our Saskatchewan way of life, and in fact is one of the highest rates in the country. And the community of Debden in Saskatchewan Rivers is no exception. This early fall the Knights of Columbus hosted a fundraiser for the local nuns and knights, and more than 150 local residents braved the cold weather on that day to enjoy a corn boil and putting greens and live music hosted at the Lalonde farm. Eugene was a gracious host and shared his home with warm hospitality. Many seniors enjoyed conversations and discussions regarding the grain harvest and the cold weather and the smoky skies.

Which brings us to the courage of all the Saskatchewan firefighters who braved many days of hard labour, difficult conditions, and smoky air quality by helping our neighbours of British Columbia.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my summer also consisted of several neighbourhood birthday parties. Happy 60th to Tim Oleksyn — many of you know him; he's a well-known Briarlea farmer — and also happy 60th to his twin sister Tammy. They both live and work in Saskatchewan. Also happy 80th birthday to my neighbour Dale McCoshen who has given much to his community, and his family held a surprise party for Dale, which was attended by many, held at Par Place. Dale is still active on his farm and helped change our community to make it much better than it was.

These celebrations of people are special occasions to recognize our friends, their meaningful values to society and contributions to the quality of life in Saskatchewan. In rural Saskatchewan, traditions like this bring us together to socialize and discuss important issues in our lives as a whole.

Now another volunteer I had the joy of celebrating this September was at the annual Lakeland Citizen of the Year event held at beautiful Christopher Lake. Marcia Bergman was chosen by this community to celebrate her achievements and support of her community, actively helping in the Emma and Christopher Lakes Association, the Christopher Lake Public Library, and the Lakeland Recreation Board, to name a few. I know our community and province is enriched by Marcia's giving and generous nature and being active, doing volunteer work has been proven to enrich one's health. And Marcia is glowing with it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lovely person.

[21:30]

I would be remiss if I didn't mention our staff who we work with daily and who are in the front line of the public also. Our constituency assistants are so valuable to us as elected officials and valuable to this great province. They do much work while we're on road or away at meetings and formal conferences. Marcus is at my main office, and Jason Beebe is at the satellite office at Big River. I offer them my gratitude and thanks. And Rupel is here in the Legislative Building for scheduling all our ambassadors and dignitaries, and she welcomes them with friendship and smiles. And that's one gesture that can speak words, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A very universal expression for all

our countries is a welcoming smile.

In the Throne Speech I see our government is encouraging investment and strengthening relationships with our global partners while continuing to work with the United States, who is our largest trading partner.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our summer this year was very short and sweet, so like most of Saskatchewan residents, I try to make the most of them. And this season was no exception. Our educational conferences and various elected duties take us away from home and families, but I think these conference duties are very important to network, educate ourselves on other provinces and territories, and discuss challenges and possible solutions in legislation. The value in learning and renewing our friendships across the country and positive possibilities for learning tools are very endless.

I attended the 56th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians conference, and it was an excellent tool to talk to other elected women in talking about changing the world for the better.

And in July and August, our town and city summer parades are always a source of enjoyment to the parade viewers. There's a steady stream of constituents who are there to visit with and have meaningful conversations. And they're very valuable to us to touch base with, as they will critique you without hesitation. Whether they are good, bad, or ugly, it's all valuable to us for good governance and the state of affairs in the province. And in discussing the Throne Speech with some of the constituents, we take away more valuable things for us.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the most valuable and joyous moment of the summer season was the arrival of our newest granddaughter, Maci Anastasia, born to our daughter and son-in-law, Lacey and Seth Barker. Now Maci arrived on August 9th in Yorkton, and she is our ninth grandchild. And we couldn't be more proud and happier to see our family growing and living close by in Saskatchewan. So everyone is living, raising their families and working, all in Saskatchewan.

And our last child and son, Markus, convocated from the University of Saskatchewan this past spring to come home to work as a dentist in our area. So we are truly blessed to have everyone at home. And we will be well looked after. So I am never lonely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, lots of family and friends to visit with.

I was also pleased to visit with a member of the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association at his farm near Fish Lake, where we discussed the challenges, opportunities, and successes of the cattle industry. Beef producers have a good story to tell of working in our province. So thank you to Arnold Balicki for his warm hospitality.

In our Throne Speech it indicates our commitment to our farmers in rural Saskatchewan by continuing to work with the federal government on issues of transporting produce such as grain and livestock in a timely manner. However, the carbon tax implemented by our federal government is not a good policy for our Saskatchewan farm families. And this year the grain dryers and the barns and the shops will be much higher with the carbon tax.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, working with l'Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise, I had the pleasure of meeting the new president, Denis Simard, where we discussed the importance of the identity, language, and culture of the francophone communities in our province. Our government will continue to meet, to collaborate, and focus on initiatives to make the francophone organization an accessible point of entry for newcomers as well as seniors in need of health care or young students wanting to learn. There are many points of interest for this community to help Saskatchewan move forward, prosper, and grow.

Services to the public and establishing pathways is one of our goals. An action plan in investing in our future will only strengthen our communities by improving response to needs in home care, care for the elderly, and mental health.

Now earlier in September, the province released its French language services policy annual report outlining the Government of Saskatchewan's key actions and performance measures taken to meet the goals outlined in the French language service policy. Our government recognizes the contribution the francophone community makes to our province economically, socially, and culturally. It's an essential piece in the fabric of our province, and as such it's important to continue to strive to provide French language services. And this report demonstrates the progress that is continuing and that we are listening.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan Rivers constituency has many wonderful parks and lakes for our citizens to enjoy. People of all ages and from many countries are attracted to our pristine lakes and our world-class fishing. Our government recognizes the values and the sacrifices our veterans have made in protecting Canada. We have offered free hunting and fishing licences to all military veterans of Canada. And as Remembrance Day draws near, I hope people appreciate and admire the veterans for what they have done for Saskatchewan.

As our Throne Speech indicates, our government plans to complete the new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford to address residents who have faced mental health challenges. The new children's hospital is expected to open in 2019. There are close to 4,000 more nurses and nearly 900 more doctors working in Saskatchewan since 2007.

Another Throne Speech initiative, and watched closely by rural residents in Saskatchewan, is the improvement of cellular service in very many rural communities, I believe it's 50. Paddockwood and White Fox in Saskatchewan Rivers riding will welcome this news.

So we continue to stand up for Saskatchewan people, but our current challenge is crime in rural Saskatchewan. So we continue to look at innovative ways to address crime in Saskatchewan, and recently we marked our one-year anniversary of our protective and response team, which is designed to help to respond to and reduce crime in rural Saskatchewan.

In Saskatchewan Rivers, PRT is already proving to be a valuable tool. A conservation officer was the first responder to arrive on the scene of a fatal construction accident at Christopher Lake. A break-and-enter call in Debden, which had the owner chasing a vehicle and being shot at six times, involved a conservation officer supporting the RCMP in search of the vehicle and the

apprehension of the individual responsible. The safety and security of Saskatchewan people is a top priority for our government and, as the Throne Speech indicates, we look forward to the continued positive impact this initiative will have as we move forward in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the very finest and capable people of Saskatchewan tend to work hard, and some wind up working in these seats in the legislature — on both sides, I might add — motivated by the need or the want to add their voice or expertise to do well for the community and country. This is unusual I think amongst all elected members, to enhance . . . Or this isn't unusual, perhaps, to enhance the quality of life for all Saskatchewan citizens. But I would like to add my congratulations to the newly sworn member for Regina Northeast. Congratulations. I am sure your voice will be heard.

I have had the pleasure of meeting and forging friendships and bonds across all provinces, and it makes our work very worthwhile. So in conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank all of our families and our friends for supporting us in the work we do that takes us away from home, our loved ones. These people, our partners and spouses, get us back on the road very quickly daily, weekly. They are our pit crew, our fuel, and our support team, and without them we wouldn't be able to do this job. So I thank all the spouses and partners as well.

May we all stand up for Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan built to last. I will support the Throne Speech, but not the amendment. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into the Throne Speech debate here this evening. I'm doing so as many other members have entered in both this evening — it's a rather late evening here in debate — and many that are sticking around and seeing this through, so thanks to those members. But it is an honour to enter into this debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to start just with recognizing how this Throne Speech started, with a blessing from Elder Betty McKenna. She's somebody that I had the privilege of working with and knowing and witnessing her good works while I was an educator in the community, and someone that I've continued to watch serve our community, as well as the imam that joined us here, Mr. Speaker.

And I've also had the opportunity to get to know that imam and their congregation at the mosque, Mr. Speaker. And I thought that that was a powerful message, an important prayer that was offered here in the people's Assembly as well, Mr. Speaker — of course we start each day with a Christian prayer, Mr. Speaker — and I thought it spoke to the inclusive province that we are. It spoke to the strength of many, a province with a motto "from many peoples, strength." So I was thankful for that entry into this session, that entry into the Throne Speech, and the care that was provided to all of us, Mr. Speaker.

I want to take a moment to recognize someone I work very closely with, someone who works tirelessly helping so many throughout our community, Mr. Speaker, and that's Jennifer

Morin in our consistency office. Jennifer stepped up and was successful in taking on the responsibility of constituency assistant in the spring. I know I had introduced her at that point in time and she's somebody who really works, Mr. Speaker, and really cares. And the diligence that she brings to her work, but also her compassion, but her drive to get results and push for action is something I really appreciate.

On any given day, Mr. Speaker, we've got phone call after phone call that's going back and forth to the ministers' offices working to find solutions for constituents. On that front, we don't aim to take hardship and challenges that constituents face and to place them into the media, but we work to find solutions for constituents. And Jennifer, that's where her heart is. And I want to say thank you to her for the work, the public service that she takes on.

[21:45]

She has a wonderful family as well, Mr. Speaker — two young boys that are good students and good hockey players and good kids, and her husband as well. Trevor Morin is a friend and offers good advice most of the time, Mr. Speaker. He's not much of a hockey player but he's a really good person. And I'd want to thank them.

I'd also like to recognize, as other members have their respective families, I'd like to recognize Stephanie who is a big part of this work and that service and how we work within the community. Stephanie's a schoolteacher, as you know. She's taken on a role as teacher librarian this year, Mr. Speaker, in addition to her teaching responsibilities. And she's somebody who goes in day in, day out, and does what she can for children within our community, and also provides invaluable advice and check-ins in the work that I'm engaged in as an MLA.

I'll reference our young guy, William, who's four years old now, Mr. Speaker. And it's pretty amazing watching a child grow like that, Mr. Speaker. And he's fully involved in all the community activities. And certainly you take your little one and have them in mind as you're making decisions in this Assembly, because the decisions we're making are going to have a lasting impact on the futures of young people and our children, Mr. Speaker. So it guides us there.

But I think most importantly for me, William grounds me in such a good way, Mr. Speaker. And you know, whenever given the opportunity to have a short window to get out into nature, sometimes in your riding, Mr. Speaker, whether for a hike or a fish or a hunt, or in other parts all across this beautiful province, him and I share some pretty amazing experiences together, and thankful for those connections as well.

Of course I want to thank the good people of Regina Rosemont, Mr. Speaker. I've been entrusted to serve for some time now, Mr. Speaker. I've been entrusted through a few elections. And it's really something to have that support and that faith placed in you as an MLA. Not only that, I'm lucky to have the advice, the involvement, the engagement, and the input of so many constituents, Mr. Speaker. And it means the world to me, Mr. Speaker, and it allows me to engage in this work in a good way to serve the people that I've been elected to serve. And it gives me an important lens to the needs and challenges and pressures,

certainly within Regina Rosemont, but also often reflective of challenges that so many face across our province. So I want to say thank you to all those people, such good communities, such good people.

And you know, from Normanview West through Mount Royal and Rosemont and Dieppe, Mr. Speaker, Prairie View, I'm lucky to work with the people that I do. And we're lucky for the involvement of so many to work to build and strengthen our communities, whether it's through our sports teams or through our schools or through our churches or through our community associations. Mr. Speaker, there's really an amazing group of people doing so much — raising children, looking out for one another, and doing all they can to build the kind of future that ultimately we all deserve, Mr. Speaker.

From that as well, it applies . . . You bring that lens to the Throne Speech. And I know from my constituents there was a real desire for improved action, real action around job creation, Mr. Speaker, about strengthening our economy, about ensuring that people here in Saskatchewan had those job opportunities, that businesses could grow and thrive here, Mr. Speaker. And you know, sadly that's really missing of course in this Throne Speech.

We also have a reality that so many people are struggling with, Mr. Speaker, and it's that so many people are struggling to keep their head above water when it comes to the cost of living. And certainly that's compounded by the job loss that's real across Saskatchewan right now, that's real within our community, that's real right across our province. But the cost of living is a real burden, Mr. Speaker, and a real challenge. And you know, the people of Regina Rosemont and people across this province who are looking for just a bit of relief, Mr. Speaker, will be, you know, will be sorely disappointed. And it's awfully expensive to raise children, Mr. Speaker, and so many are working and doing all they can to provide for their families and their children, but it's a pretty hopeless feeling, Mr. Speaker, when you're simply not able to make ends meet. And I hear it far too often.

It compounds itself in a lot of stress, a lot of anxiety. It compounds itself in the mental health of many, Mr. Speaker, and the health of relationships as well, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, we certainly need to work to build the kind of economy that performs for the hard-working people of this province but that we also address the high cost of living. And I simply don't see that.

I know that the people I represent were really looking for some reparation in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker. They've witnessed the cuts and the consequences of those cuts, the damage within our classrooms, the elimination of needed supports for students with intensive needs, the pulling away of supports from all students, Mr. Speaker. Bigger class sizes with real complex needs within those are awfully challenging for our educators and very difficult for our students, Mr. Speaker. And it's an area that it's past time that this government stepped up to invest in on the heels of their damaging cuts, Mr. Speaker. That was a critical space and we certainly didn't see that, Mr. Speaker, as well.

Then we see as well a real pressure — not just in the communities that I represent, Mr. Speaker but in communities across Saskatchewan, but certainly in the communities I represent — with pressures around crime, Mr. Speaker, with a direct

connection to crystal meth addictions, Mr. Speaker, to drug addiction, Mr. Speaker, that's been unintended to by the current government.

This is not an issue that has just arrived on the scene, Mr. Speaker. This has been something that police have been speaking to for a very long time. Something we've been speaking to in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Something that those in mental health and addictions have been speaking to. And sadly we have some really harsh consequences by way of the crystal meth crisis and drug addiction within our communities, you know, coupled with an economy that's not performing for people. We have definite concerns around community safety and property crime, Mr. Speaker.

And there's a cost to all of that. There's a cost to people on that front. There's a cost to families. And then there's the other cost as well when you're not tending to the basic and critical addiction services and supports to people. There's a real human cost, Mr. Speaker, and very sadly, very tragically we continue to lose far too many throughout our province.

So that's a few of the areas that we were looking for coming into this as we'd talked about what was important in this Throne Speech. And we just didn't see meaningful action on those fronts, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, it's really too bad, Mr. Speaker. We've come through a time when there was boom, Mr. Speaker. We saw that boom not managed well by the Sask Party. And now we're at a time where really what we're seeing is a tired and a worn, you know, almost exhausted government, Mr. Speaker, that on a daily basis appears to be sort of floundering in their response to the meaningful issues, the priorities of Saskatchewan people. And they deserve better than that. It sort of seems that day after day we got folks on the other side sort of mailing it in, Mr. Speaker, at a time where they need to be stepping it up, stepping it up for the people of the province.

You know, I've noticed that there's some new language being used by the Sask Party government at this time, and it's something about standing up, Mr. Speaker. But nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. Standing still? Quite possibly, Mr. Speaker. But certainly not standing up for the people of the province and the kind of future that we want to build in this province.

And this is a government that, you know, I'll grant has a large majority that they went out and earned in the last election. But they simply weren't straight with the people of the province during that process and as a result, they've broken trust with the people of the province, who expected so much more and expected better, and at the very least, expected them to keep their word, Mr. Speaker.

And we're a couple years on from that election where they went out and, you know, sold a bill of goods, Mr. Speaker, and then came back into this House and let Saskatchewan people know that their, you know, that their word wasn't worth much. We saw that with our finances, Mr. Speaker. We saw that with our Crown corporations. We saw that with STC. We saw that with the desperate scheme to sell off up to 49 per cent of all of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.



We see that with the continued efforts to give away Wascana Park, Mr. Speaker, to take over control of this gem within our city. We saw it with the foisting of a PST increase and expansion to the tune of a billion dollars a year. Add that up over a term, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about billions of dollars of taxes that this government never ran on, that the Sask Party wasn't straight with the voters on.

That ends up creating great hardship for Saskatchewan people. It impacts their bottom line, it impacts their ability to make ends meet, and it hurts our economy, Mr. Speaker. But when you break promises like that it breaks trust, Mr. Speaker. And that's one thing that's awfully hard to repair.

You know, it's fair to say that the Sask Party's failing to get the job done where it counts, Mr. Speaker — in our classrooms, within our economy. As I said, this is a time where our economy has not only cooled, but we have a government making choices that's making matters worse, foisting a PST on construction and on insurance and on restaurants and on used cars, Mr. Speaker, slowing our economy.

The actual PST on construction has caused building permits to plummet within this province. Building permits across the province, year over year, are down 20 per cent. Building permits in residential are down 30 per cent. A massive shedding of jobs in the construction sector that's impacting my constituents and yours, and businesses across this province, Mr. Speaker.

These aren't the actions of a government that's working to build a strong economy and serving people. These are actions of a desperate government that wasn't straight with Saskatchewan people. And it's time for them to admit the flaw in this approach and to reinstate the exemptions on the PST, to exempt construction once again, to exempt restaurants once again.

But more than that, Mr. Speaker . . . And I heard someone heckle across there. The member from . . . one of the members over there heckles, well where do you find the money? You know, the interesting thing about the operators opposite, Mr. Speaker, is you've got to think about where this money's going.

This is a government who had an incredible opportunity with record revenues flowing into government coffers, but they couldn't get the job done during the best days in this province. Times of record revenues, they didn't save a dime. They drained the rainy day fund, Mr. Speaker, and they piled on debt, in fact far more than doubling the debt in a very short period of time. And they signed taxpayers on to mismanaged project after mismanaged project. In fact, I heard members talking about it in some of their throne speeches. The biggest overrun in Saskatchewan's history, the bypass, Mr. Speaker, a tab that went from, if you can imagine, for a little over 40 kilometres of roadway and overpasses, went from over \$400 million to now over \$2 billion, Mr. Speaker, with that contract going to an out-of-country foreign conglomerate, Mr. Speaker, shutting out so many Saskatchewan companies from bidding on that project, providing value and being engaged, Mr. Speaker. It just doesn't make sense.

So that's where the money has gone. And that's how they're trying to pay for it now is hiking the PST, slowing down our economy to pay for their mismanaged bypass, to pay for their

mismanaged clean coal debacle, Mr. Speaker, \$1.6 billion for a very small amount of power production, Mr. Speaker, choosing one of the most expensive power sources possible for the people of this province, jacking up the costs of power for businesses and farms and families all across Saskatchewan.

[22:00]

And then of course there's the GTH, Mr. Speaker, that . . . well it's simply gone off the rails. And you know, those close to government have made out pretty well, Mr. Speaker. The nuns at the GTH that owned land, well they were ripped off, Mr. Speaker, as have taxpayers.

So all that mismanagement adds up. Not saving a dime during the best days, Mr. Speaker, adds up. And now we have a government that's bringing forward a billion dollar a year PST hike that's hurting our economy and that's hurting families. We have a government as well that's not doing all they can by way of procurement, that's shutting out Saskatchewan workers and businesses, and that's failing to get best value for taxpayers, for the people of this province, on public projects. That hurts us economically, Mr. Speaker. It hurts our finances as well.

You know, I have a focus as well into the areas of municipal affairs. And it's a critical time that this government builds out a revenue-sharing agreement that's ironclad and can be trusted because all . . . You know, it's awfully unfortunate we had the much-touted revenue-sharing agreement just a few years ago. Wasn't worth the paper it was written on, it would seem, Mr. Speaker. Grants-in-lieu that were contracts that municipalities had of course were torn up unilaterally by this government, leaving governments with shortfalls. And now we have communities with infrastructure needs, Mr. Speaker, that need to be funded and municipalities that are looking rightfully to their provincial government to be a partner, Mr. Speaker. So we've got a lot of areas that we need action, Mr. Speaker, and we just haven't seen it.

I want to touch just briefly on social services. Of course the member from Prince Albert Northcote addressed this so eloquently. But we have a government that mismanaged the finances, Mr. Speaker, and they're really making the most vulnerable pay the price. And sadly they're doing it in a way that is going to cost all of us more by pulling away needed practical supports for Saskatchewan people, the rental housing supplement, Mr. Speaker, putting people that are in the most need through a very . . . placing them into an even more vulnerable position, Mr. Speaker, hurting families across our province. And you know, I was pleased to hear some mention of increasing the exemptions, the thresholds for earnings for those that are on social assistance. But a lot more is needed than that, Mr. Speaker. We need to address the rates as well.

Mr. Speaker, at this time just before I would close, Mr. Speaker, I want to just touch again that we have a real crime issue across Saskatchewan right now. There's a direct connection to the crystal meth crisis across our province to addictions that aren't being addressed with the services and supports that are needed. And we see that as well from a mental health perspective within our province, far too many people that are left in darkness and despair, far too many in depression, Mr. Speaker. And there's a real toll to all of this. We owe it to Saskatchewan people to step

up to the plate and extend the services and supports that are needed and ensure hope and opportunity for many across our province.

So when it comes to, you know, not getting the job done when it relates to the economy, Mr. Speaker, I won't be supporting the budget. When it comes to the mismanagement and the lack of accountability with our finances, I won't be supporting our budget. When it comes to failing Saskatchewan people where it counts, in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker, I won't be supporting our budget . . . or this Throne Speech, and a reflection of the budget. And I certainly won't be, you know, supporting this Throne Speech when we see the inaction around crime and addictions and mental health, Mr. Speaker. I certainly will be supporting the amendment brought forward by the member from Saskatoon Fairview. And I thank you for the time to enter into debate here tonight. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm just asking all my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to wake up. I'm mostly telling myself to wake up.

It's indeed a pleasure for me to join with my colleagues here tonight to respond to the Speech from the Throne. I would like to start my response by saying it has been an honour to serve the residents of my constituency, Regina Wascana Plains, for the past 11 years. During this time, this constituency has seen significant growth both in Regina and in White City, Emerald Park area. From 2011 to 2016, White City's population grew by almost 20 per cent while the RM of Edenwold, where Emerald Park is located, grew by almost 9 per cent. Indeed just two weeks ago, there was another development announcement in the town of White City. So it does speak to the continuous growth in these particular areas.

Another one of the positive changes I've seen happen in my constituency has been the construction of the Regina bypass. As I mentioned earlier, with a growing population in Regina and White City, Emerald Park and a significant increase in commercial truck traffic, the need for a safe and efficient road system was very, very clear back a number of years ago. In fact it was studied a long, long time ago under the members opposite, and of course they never got it done.

The Regina bypass meets this need of increased traffic on this particular stretch of roadway. This is the largest transportation project undertaken in our province's history and it's already 90 per cent complete. Even more importantly, and it's been said by the members on this side of the House, this project is on time and on budget. Of course it's on this side of the House; it wouldn't be from the members opposite.

I'd like to take a moment to highlight some numbers to show how significant the project actually is. The bypass will redirect 75 per cent of the commercial truck traffic approaching Regina from the east from Victoria Avenue on to the bypass. In doing so, it is anticipated that the benefit of reduced property damage, injuries, and fatalities from the collisions will be approximately 2 to \$3 million annually.

In addition, it is anticipated that reduced travel time will save our economy 2.7 billion over the next 30 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's pretty clear why this project is one our government is extremely proud of — with the exception of the members opposite, one that the people of this province are proud of as well. And there is not many people other than the former minister of Highways and myself that spent as much time in the east side of Regina and White City, Emerald Park, talking about this very project that we have undertaken and near completion. I'm intimately familiar with the needs and wants of the communities. And I know that it is working and exceeding expectations of the people in the area and will continue to do so.

Another thing I've been very fortunate to see has been the construction of several new schools. Just last year École Wascana Plains and St. Elizabeth School opened in The Greens on Gardiner. A few years before that, Emerald Ridge Elementary School opened in White City.

The one thing here, Mr. Speaker . . . I mean we're speaking about, you know, the investment in infrastructure, particularly schools. And of course I'll talk about the hospitals a little later. But one thing, even with the issues that our economy is having as a result of the downturn in the resource sector, is that we are not talking about closing hospitals. We are not and I am not talking today about closing schools, unlike what happened in the members opposite. We're talking about things that we've been able to do and we realize the importance of continuing to do it. These schools reflect our government's commitment to education. And the growing number of students we are seeing are a nice contrast from when the members opposite were in government, and as I said earlier, and they were closing schools.

The only thing I would say is missing is a new high school either in southeast Regina or in White City, Emerald Park area. The growth in these areas and in the surrounding communities is significant and that is why I will be working with the Minister of Education to help and advocate to get a new high school built in these areas.

Now while I always enjoy talking about the great things happening, I would like to talk about the Speech from the Throne that was just delivered last week. It's a speech that reflects on the significant growth we've seen in our province and the important investments our government has made in many areas, including infrastructure. It also acknowledges that there are still plenty of challenges that we face as a province. However these are challenges we are more than ready to face head on.

As the Minister of Corrections and Policing, I was pleased that the Speech from the Throne placed a strong emphasis on keeping our community safe and secure. Indeed the safety and security of Saskatchewan people, no matter where they live, continues to be one of our government's top priorities. One of the major initiatives we announced last year to help make our communities safer and more secure was the creation of the protection and response team. The three main objectives of this team are to improve response times, increase uniformed presence in rural areas, and make our roads and highways safer.

The protection and response team consists of 258 armed officers: 60 of those positions with the combined traffic safety services Saskatchewan initiative; 30 new police positions; 30 repurposed

police positions; 40 commercial vehicle enforcement officers from the Ministry of Highways with the expanded powers granted to them; and 98 conservation officers from the Ministry of Environment, also with expanded powers.

In this year's budget, SGI provided 4.9 million in new funding to hire and equip 30 new police officers for the combined traffic safety services unit, a key part of the protection and response team. While this team was announced last year, the members of the team were actually deployed earlier this year and are already showing significant results. Since the operational launch of the protection and response team in April, members of this team have assisted with more than 1,300 actions including responding to 83 emergency 911 calls. We've also seen results in terms of safety on our province's roads and highways. 2017 saw the fewest number of traffic fatalities in more than six decades. While we are proud of the work that has already been done on road and highway safety, we are always striving to do better.

One of the ways we've assisted the protection and response team to help them do their work is by ensuring that every vehicle within the team is equipped with automatic licence plate readers. These readers can scan licence plates and alert officers if a vehicle is stolen, connected to a crime, or connected to a driver who has had their licence suspended for impaired driving or for other reasons. In doing this, these devices help assist officers in getting those vehicles and individuals off the roads and highways and making them safer places for the rest of the travelling public.

We also know that gangs are a significant issue in our province. They contribute to the trafficking of illegal drugs, guns, and contribute to our province's crime rate significantly. Last year the federal government announced \$327.6 million in funding over the next five years to combat these issues. Saskatchewan will be receiving over 10 million from this fund to support our own guns and gangs strategy with the objective of merging and enhancing our investigative and enforcement efforts to make our community safer.

In June we also announced that we would be providing roughly \$1.6 million to the RCMP to permanently establish two crime reduction teams in Saskatchewan. These two teams, consisting of 14 members, are based out of North Battleford and Prince Albert, but have the ability to deploy these units throughout the province as required. The crime reduction teams are focused on targeted enforcement including high visibility patrols, tracking chronic offenders, tackling gang activity, and executing arrest warrants. Even though they've only been deployed since September, the crime reduction teams are already showing great results: 172 arrests, executed 62 warrants, initiated 69 new Criminal Code charges, conducted 44 licensed establishment checks, and conducted 123 traffic stops — resulting in 122 charges, 105 warnings, and five suspensions.

Another initiative I'm proud of our government is undertaking is of course the police and crisis team initiative. These teams combine both policing and mental health resources to reduce the number of people coming into police custody and into our health care system.

There are already PACT units in operation in Regina and Saskatoon, and the results from them show why we are expanding this initiative to more communities. Between April of

2017 and June '18, Saskatoon's PACT units provided 922 interventions and diverted 234 patients from the emergency department. During that time, Regina's PACT unit provided 658 interventions and diverted 192 patients from our emergency services department. Even more importantly, they help ensure that the people experiencing a mental health crisis get the help they need and are able to direct them accordingly.

In this year's budget, our government committed \$980,000 to expanding this initiative to P.A., North Battleford, Yorkton, and Moose Jaw. I know that my colleague, the Minister of Crown Investments, was up in P.A. on Friday to mark the establishment of the police and crisis team. This initiative reflects our government's priorities of keeping our communities safe and secure while working to provide the much-needed mental health supports.

[22:15]

Another item I'd like to touch on and just mention when discussing the police and crisis team, of course, are the mental health supports. This fall the new Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford will open. I toured this facility back in the spring, as most of my colleagues have done, and I think we can all confidently say it is exceptional.

The work that will be done at the hospital, particularly on the secure correctional side, is urgently needed. Roughly 18 per cent of our inmate population has been diagnosed by a mental health professional with a mental health illness or mental health problem. Of that 18 per cent, a third or 6 per cent have been diagnosed with severe mental health problems such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression. As I said, those are just the numbers for the offenders that have been diagnosed.

It is also a fact that the costs to manage offenders with severe mental health problems in our correctional facilities are 25 per cent higher than for other offenders due to increased security and medical costs. This is the challenge that requires us to do things differently, and that is where the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford comes in. We will open 24 of the 96 correctional beds this fall, with another 24 to be opened early next year.

By treating the offenders there as patients and utilizing a therapeutic model of care, our objective is to improve their lives by addressing their mental health challenges, increasing their chances of successfully reintegrating into their communities, and reducing their rates of recidivism. This project reflects our government's commitment to dealing with the challenges associated with serious mental health issues and in a significant way.

Finally I would like to highlight a couple of pieces of legislation we will be introducing this session: *The Seizure of Criminal Property Act* and *The Police Act*. *The Seizure of Criminal Property Act*, our objective is simple. Make sure crime does not pay in Saskatchewan. These changes will make it easier for property to be seized if it has been acquired due to or used in unlawful activities such as serious firearms offences, directly related to gang or terrorist activity, or sexual offences involving children.

We are also looking to open up the portion of *The Police Act* dealing with regional policing services so that more communities can take advantage of various models of policing in the province. So this will be for communities with population under 500. They can join a regional police service. This will provide those smaller communities with another option to keep their community safe.

With my remaining time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a couple of general observations on some of the challenges we are and have been facing. These last few years have been challenging for our province, with the significant downturning commodity prices. It began the decline in 2014. Our government's resource revenues have fallen by 1.2 billion.

While these prices have come back up somewhat, we unfortunately now are facing another challenge — our federal government. The federal government intends to impose a carbon tax — and it is a tax no matter how you try and look at it — on the people of this province and across Canada. We know that more than 70 per cent of Saskatchewan people oppose this tax, and it is clear why they oppose. By 2030 a federal carbon tax could potentially reduce our province's GDP [gross domestic product] by almost \$16 billion. Our province's economy is the most export-dependent in the country. Whether it is oil, gas, potash, forestry, or our world-renowned agricultural products, our economy produces what the world wants and what the world needs.

A federal carbon tax would be a direct attack on all of those industries and the thousands of Saskatchewan people who work in them. In contrast to the carbon tax, Prairie Resilience actually looks at the key drivers of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and tackles them in a way that will reduce emissions while keeping our economy competitive. Prairie Resilience looks at the work that has already been done in Saskatchewan in sequestering carbon in our soil, grasslands, wetlands, as well as the many investments our industries have already made.

It looks at sectors of our economy that contribute to our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and manages those through output-based performance standards. It's flexible. It allows for those sectors to grow and remain competitive while reducing emissions.

The members opposite previously said that if we didn't have a made-in-Saskatchewan approach, we'd get a federal carbon tax imposed on us. Well with Prairie Resilience we do have a made-in-Saskatchewan approach, one that's actually going to reduce emissions and keep our economy competitive. The federal government acknowledged our plan but still intends to oppose a carbon tax anyway.

The good news for Saskatchewan people is that, unlike the members opposite who said they would just impose their carbon tax, this government is not going to sit back and accept the fact that the federal government is going to impose a carbon tax on us. We will take the actions we need to represent and look out for the best interests of all Saskatchewan people.

I'd also like to briefly touch on another issue that threatens our natural resource sector. This is Bill C-69. This bill purports to strengthen the federal government's environmental assessment on Canada's natural resource sector. In reality the bill will broaden the scope of assessment to include a whole variety of

criteria from which groups must be consulted, to how sustainable — and that is purely a subjective based on the ideological preferences of the federal government — the project being proposed is.

Rather than help our natural resource sector, these new measures will further delay approval of projects, add new costs and more layers of bureaucracy, and ultimately create even more uncertainty in the sector. Our natural resource sector is something we should take pride in, and that is why I'm proud to be part of a government that is standing up against Bill C-69 and its clear and direct attack on our natural resources.

I think this session ahead will reconfirm for the people of the province which side of this House is best suited to stand up for their interests. We've proven it. We have been standing up for the interests for the people of this province since we had the opportunity to form government in 2007, and whatever challenges we face moving forward, they can continue to count on us. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that I will not be supporting the amendment and I will be supporting our Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join in the debate tonight on our Throne Speech delivered last Wednesday, "Standing Up for Saskatchewan," delivered by the Lieutenant Governor on behalf of our Premier and our government.

Mr. Speaker, as I quite often do, as many members do, I want to recognize some very important people before I get into the brunt of my comments, Mr. Speaker. Of course first and foremost is family: my wife, Leone, a great support through thick and thin. We've been married 32 years now, dated for five and a half years before that, so she's put up with me for closing in on four decades. And we've been blessed with three beautiful kids, two of which are our daughters, Katelin and Rayanne.

Katelin just got married this last summer. I think I've talked about her former fiancé and their children previously, but now officially married as of June 30th. And we've gained two grandchildren there as well, Mr. Speaker. Raya's 16 at Sacred Heart High School in Yorkton and Malaya is nine years old, goes to elementary school in Yorkton. So great additions to our family; we love them greatly.

And of course my younger daughter Rayanne, married to Austin. Katelin, married to Mark Cuthill, and my younger daughter Rayanne married to Austin Krahenbil, an oil field geologist working a lot in the South. And they blessed us with a couple amazing little grandkids as well. Wynnslet is three and a half and little Otto Gregory Krahenbil turned seven months just a few days ago, so just a real blessing and enjoying the Halloween time. And it's great to have those FaceTime pictures and things to be able to enjoy them even when we're here. So again very supportive family that I'm very thankful for, great blessings.

Of course all the constituents of Yorkton, Saskatchewan that have sent me here for 11 years and nominated two years before that, so I've spent a number of years in this place. And it has been

a real honour, some challenging days obviously, but again a very rewarding career. And it's a pleasure that I have of representing them here in this place, this great building.

Of course, the staff. As many, we'll give credit to the staff. We can't do this job without them. My staff back in Yorkton, Lauretta and Rachele, that do a great job representing the constituency back there and doing the day-to-day casework. And of course all the staff in my office here: Brayden, my chief of staff; and there's Whitney and Kathryn doing casework; and Carter's a new addition to our staff up in the office here; and Anna-Marie, our new exec admin up there, Mr. Speaker. So we're really, we do have a great team of course working closely in conjunction with all the Minister of Health office right next door, working very closely together to do the jobs that we do here every day. So very, very grateful to have those individuals to work with, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And of course all of the colleagues on this side of the House and of course the other side of the House, Mr. Speaker, as well. Of course I'd like to . . . the new member for Regina Northeast, congratulate him for his win and entering this place. And of course the members on this side of the House, it's just a pleasure to work with them every day.

Our new Premier, I think, is just doing an amazing job. He's been representing us very well in China and throughout the States. And of course he's going to be going to India very shortly to forward our interests, Saskatchewan interests there. Now we know we've got to deal with some of the challenging issues we have with the United States and some of the challenging issues we have with our federal government, Mr. Speaker. You know, we're not letting that get in the way of representing Saskatchewan and making sure that our interests are well represented nationwide. So again very thankful for all those supports.

So when we start looking at the Throne Speech again, Mr. Speaker, standing up for Saskatchewan is something that we're proud to do every day. And of course I think our Premier set the tone in the leadership run when he was questioned, you know, what are you going to do about the carbon tax? What are you going to do representing our province? And his statement, "Just watch me," I think was pretty apt a statement. And we've seen, we've watched him represent this province, this legislature, the people of this province time and time again in a very strong fashion and a very balanced fashion, representing again our province of Saskatchewan.

So we look at some of the key points in our Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. One of the first points made is, "Today, our economy and provincial finances are showing clear signs of improvement." And they are. We have to be very protective, very cautious, and very protective of where we are. We've seen some challenges over the last number of years, but of course we're focused on keeping our province strong, our economy strong, which in respect, you know, we know that's the way that we're going to maintain a strong economy, finances for the province, which helps us finance those things that are so important to the people of the province.

The file that I represent with my fellow Minister of Health from Rosetown . . . Whether it comes to Health, Social Services,

Advanced Education, Education, Justice, Infrastructure and Highways . . . Our new Minister of Highways, I'm blessed to call her my friend and a colleague very nearby. I think she's doing a great job initially of representing our infrastructure investments in highways. And I'm just looking forward to seeing what she's going to do in the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So when we look at, again, some of the key things in the Throne Speech when it comes to financial management, we've talked quite often about our three-year plan to get back to balance. Of course, we know we had a \$1.2 billion deficit a couple of years back. We brought it down to, this year, \$303 million forecast. And of course aiming to be at balance next year, which is recognized not only by independent agencies around our province and our country but around North America, which is the reason that we do have the AAA credit rating that we do have, Mr. Speaker, which does save us ample amounts of money when it comes to finances, and recognition not only of that but also recognition of our province being a very strong place to invest in.

We see that we continue to enjoy a very strong investment climate when it comes to industry and business in our province, which again is very important in creating a strong economy and making sure that we have those jobs and those opportunities for people, including our children to make sure we have them staying in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's reflective of one of the significant numbers that we see when it talks about the strength of our province is our population. Now at 1.162 million people which . . . We heard from the members opposite only a few short years ago before we formed government, us shooting for a 10 per cent growth in population, they called it statistically impossible and something that was, you know, somewhat ludicrous. But it's something that we've been able to, with the strong support and work of our provincial partners, been able to sustain and maintain that to the point now that we have grown by well over that 10 per cent over the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker. So a good strong indication of the growth in our province.

Part of developing that strong economy is focusing on our resource sector. We know we have a strong resource sector, but it's important to keep that resource sector strong.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It now being 10:30 p.m., the time of adjournment, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]



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