



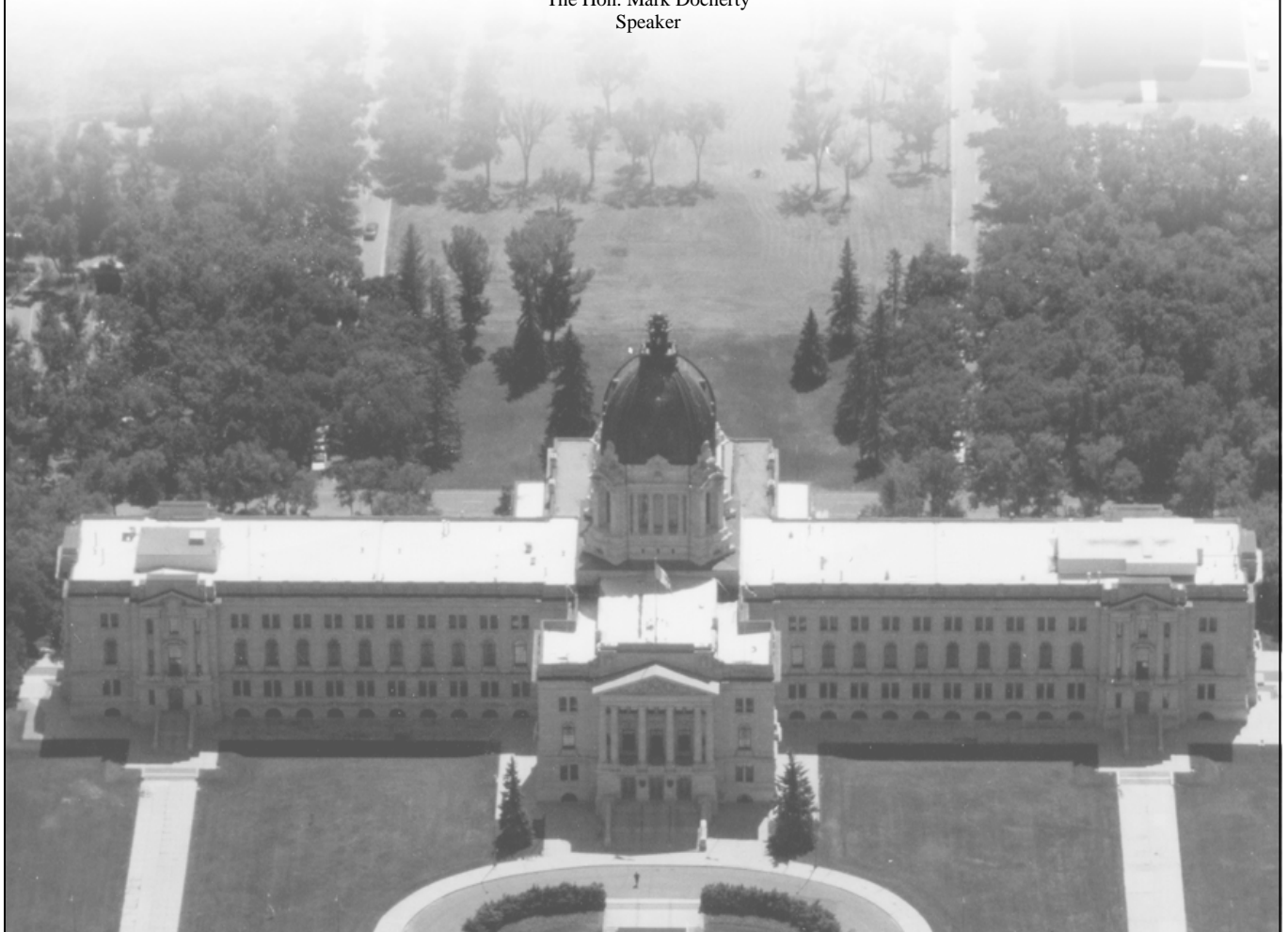
THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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



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3rd Session — 28th Legislature

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

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Speaker: — It now being 7 p.m., we will resume replies to the Speech from the Throne. I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

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.]

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will pick up where I left off earlier in speaking about the investment of oil companies in my area and the investments they've made that support the cities and communities, and how they've benefited from their ongoing presence, their employment of people in the area, the support they have offered their employees and families, but most importantly as well the ongoing sponsorship of events and monetary donations to many non-profit organizations in the area.

This year Saskatchewan has seen clear signs of an improving economy, but we need pipelines. On a side note, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to mention that a couple of weeks ago Husky executives were kind enough to give the Premier, the Minister of Trade and Export, and myself an aerial tour and a ground tour of some of their SAGD [steam-assisted gravity drainage] plants in the area around Lloydminster, along with the new dam they are building which will create more efficiency and environmentally conscious use of their main water source, the North Saskatchewan River. It was a very informative and educational day for us and affirmed to us the significant and important investments they are making in our province and our economy.

Mr. Speaker, all research has shown and leads to a cry for pipelines. Pipelines are the safest and most efficient way to transport oil. Getting our oil to tidewater is imperative to opening the industry to global markets and getting a fair price for western oil. We will continue to advocate for pipelines as a safe, efficient, and reliable method for transportation of our energy products.

An economist recently estimated without the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project or Keystone XL pipeline, the demand for oil by train could increase 200 per cent by the mid-2020s, putting significant pressure on our already overburdened rail system in the country.

This year oil producers operating in our province would have earned an estimated \$4.4 billion more if they had access to international markets. Mr. Speaker, my government would have received approximately 300 million in additional taxes, royalties, and other revenue, and this is lost revenue that could have been spent in the important programs and services Saskatchewan people deserve. Right now, more than half of the oil to Quebec and Atlantic Canada comes from foreign sources, countries

whose human rights are deplorable and unconscionable in today's society.

Today courts have blocked the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion with the federal government effectively ending the possibility of any future pipelines being built in this country through Bill C-69, which will make pipeline approval of future pipelines virtually impossible. And without pipelines to get our oil across the country, Saskatchewan must sell nearly all of our oil to one market — the United States — for even less, as we are seeing, than half of the global price. We will continue to stand up for the jobs our oil and gas industry create by continuing to press the federal government to take immediate action to get the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion built and to withdraw Bill C-69.

Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne shows that decisions my government has made did begin with the end in mind with a significant investment year over year on infrastructure needs in this province. Under the NDP [New Democratic Party], schools, hospitals, long-term care homes were closed, and highways left crumbling and in complete disarray, and that definitely doesn't support Covey's habit of beginning with the end in mind.

But my government could see the future for growth in our population and opportunities for more jobs for our young people to stay here and work and raise families. So we built infrastructure, \$12.5 billion in infrastructure to be exact, a spend of over 1 billion per year. 1.5 billion in infrastructure for our health care system alone, more than double the previous 10-year period. Projects including the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, the Moose Jaw Hospital, and 14 new long-term care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, we all know and understand the significant rise in mental health needs in this province. That's why my government has spent \$3 billion since 2007 on mental health and addictions. Once complete, the new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford will offer 188 mental health beds and be among the most innovative mental health treatment centres in the country and will ensure those facing significant mental health needs receive the best treatment available.

I can tell you that this facility can't get done fast enough. In the past year alone, three to four mental health warrants a month have been issued by the courts in Lloydminster as families become more desperate to protect and help their loved ones.

Both school divisions in Lloydminster began the new school year with a shared, dedicated, and assigned RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officer to support and connect with troubled students to help curb mental health issues before they become criminal activity.

Mr. Speaker, nearly 8.4 billion has been spent on improving 13 000 kilometres of highways. Just in this past year, 6.5 million was spent in my area on road and highway improvements. More needs to be done, particularly the future reconstruction of Highway 21, but we are working on that. My government understands the significant role transportation infrastructure plays in the success of Saskatchewan, enabling growth and making travel safer for everyone.

Just this past month, I attended the opening of the Chief Mistawasis bridge in north Saskatoon, which will provide an important truck and commuter route to improve traffic flow and safety. We've also repaired or replaced 275 other bridges since 2007. The new interchanges at Warman and Martensville, two of the fastest growing communities in Saskatchewan, will be open this fall, and the overpass was just opened this past weekend ahead of schedule.

Nearly 1.62 billion has been spent to build and repair schools. Forty new or replacement schools and 23 major renovations are completed or in the works. Over half of Saskatchewan's schools have had a repair or renovation; 49.6 million has been spent for preventative maintenance or renewal, as well as the giving of emergent funding — a 15 per cent increase over the previous year.

Lloydminster Public, Lloydminster Catholic, and Northwest school divisions in my constituency have all benefited from our government's commitment to begin with the end in mind, and have received increased operating funding, major renovations, and a couple of new schools, all for the benefit of today's and our future generations of learners.

Mr. Speaker, rural crime has been a topic of much attention in my constituency over the past couple of years. That's why our government took action to make improving safety for the people of Saskatchewan a priority. The implementation of the protection and response team took place a year ago, and we are seeing good results from the extra officers. More enforcement visibility, more eyes, and improved response times have certainly helped. Conservation officers and highway patrol officers in my area have assisted with emergency calls, arrests, and takedowns.

Drugs and alcohol and gang-related activity are some root causes and we still have much work to do. We have strengthened our impaired driving laws over the past few years and made some recent changes specifically targeting drug-impaired drivers and those caught driving impaired while transporting children.

My government recognizes the benefits regional policing services provide our communities and will be amending *The Police Act* to enable rural communities and municipalities with populations under 500 to join regional police services.

Mr. Speaker, my government also recently undertook a process of public consultation on trespassing laws and will be introducing legislation to better address the appropriate balance between the rights of rural landowners and members of the public. I know many in my area welcomed the opportunity to share their concerns, stories, and provide input.

Mr. Speaker, more First Nations and Métis students have the opportunity to attend and graduate from Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions. The number of credentials awarded to First Nations and Métis students has increased 35 per cent since 2013. Our government implemented and has supported work readiness youth and adult training courses at many of our colleges.

I recently sat in on Lloydminster's fifth indigenous economic summit and heard how many of the First Nations and Métis students that are in the HOOT [heavy oil operations technician]

and STEAM [science, technology, engineering, art, and math] ticketing programs at Lakeland College are being connected with and employed in the oil and gas industry. This is great news for employment in our province.

Mr. Speaker, as we approach the month of November and stop to recognize and pay our respect to the invaluable contributions and sacrifices of our nation's veterans and those who continue to fight for our freedom, my government chose to begin with the end in mind by ensuring that we never forget, by offering through a small act of our appreciation, free fishing and hunting licences to all Canadian veterans.

My dad was a veteran, and as a flight engineer flew many bombing missions during the Second World War. He passed away a couple of years ago just before his 96th birthday. After the war he came back to Saskatchewan, where he was born, to farm, marry a Saskatchewan-born schoolteacher, and raise 11 children. He worked hard, but he did love to fish when he had the opportunity. He helped me catch my first fish off the shore at Echo Valley near Fort Qu'Appelle. He took me fishing up north to Big River, Ile-a-la-Crosse, and La Ronge. We fished at Pike Lake, Blackstrap, Candle Lake, and he even helped me catch and clean a mess of perch out of the lake in Moose Mountain Provincial Park. I truly enjoyed that time with him and will always treasure those memories.

Mr. Speaker, this weekend I will be participating in a special ceremony in Lloydminster called No Stone Left Alone. No Stone Left Alone was launched in Edmonton in 2011 by Maureen G. Bianchini-Purvis in recognition of the sacrifice of the Canadian men and women who have lost their lives in the service of peace, at home and abroad. It became her mission to see that one day all the soldiers' headstones would have a poppy placed in their honour and the ceremony would resemble the idea of Flanders Fields where the poppies grow "row on row." No Stone Left Alone has grown from one cemetery in Edmonton in 2011 to 101 cemeteries across Canada in 2017, including the first-ever ceremony in Cracow, Poland.

Mr. Speaker, I'll wrap up with a quote from a gentleman by the name of John Dooner, president of McCann-Erickson advertising worldwide, who in 2000 secured a marketing partnership with Coca-Cola. He said, "You only get to be the best if you're the one with the clearest vision."

Mr. Speaker, I believe my government has the clearest vision for this province. We did begin with the end in mind, and the end is still a long way off. Do we have more work to do? You bet. But we are up for the challenge. We will continue to make investments in infrastructure, healthcare, and social programs while still managing our finances, paying attention to debt, balancing the budget, and supporting our businesses and economy so that the quality of life we create for our children and our families is the best it can be now and into the future.

Mr. Speaker, although the opposition may think there was nothing exciting or new in this Speech from the Throne, I believe this Speech from the Throne was just a reminder to the people of Saskatchewan of the good work that has been done on their behalf, the work we are doing, and that which is yet to come on their behalf. And more importantly, it shows the strength, courage, vision, and tenacity and heart my government has to

continue leading this province.

We will always stand up for the people of Saskatchewan and we will continue with our clear, strategic, and comprehensive path forward to ensure that future generations of this province are as proud as my colleagues and I am to call Saskatchewan home.

I will not be supporting the amendment put forth by the opposition and I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin by formally welcoming the new member from Regina Northeast. I also want to congratulate my colleagues, the new Minister of Highways and the new Minister of Agriculture, on their respective new roles, as well as the member from Saskatoon University, who assumes the role of our caucus Chair, Mr. Speaker.

As is customary, I would like to begin with a couple of thank yous. Firstly to thank the good people of Regina University who put me in this seat. And it's really my sincere hope that they feel that they are very well represented in this place.

I'm also able to do this job to the best of my ability because I have a very strong group of people who support me. I've thanked my chief of staff, Tessa Ritter, and my constituency assistant, Wendy Ward, many times for their ongoing support and I do again now. However I would also like to thank Linda Stordy for stepping in at my constituency office to help out and going above and beyond.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that I have — and I know my colleague beside me might disagree — but I have the best ministerial office staff, I think, in the whole building. Every single day when I walk into this beautiful, historic place I feel blessed to work with Michelle and Dawn who keep me on task and on a daily basis do some small act of kindness like say, hey, Minister, have you eaten? Ashley, whose attention to detail on the comm side is really unrivalled and Kirsten, who has a positive and upbeat disposition. These ladies are a fierce team, and I'm really blessed to have them.

[19:15]

I also want to thank Mark, Tammy, David, and their teams in Advanced Education; Wes, Kari, and their team at Innovation Saskatchewan; and Mari and Jackie at Status of Women office for their professionalism and the really great working relationship that we share.

And most of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my kids, Kayman and Montana. My kids had the benefit of a mom who kind of worked a previous career at the university around their schedule, and so we developed a really close bond. And I had the privilege of being there for them for every sporting event and school commitment for many, many years.

This has changed a bit since I got elected, as some of my colleagues will know. And while I work to get to as many games

as I can, there's no question that the demands of our job has had an impact. Luckily they are teenagers with cars and jobs and a social life, and sometimes they don't want me around all that much. But there's no question that this has been an adjustment for our family, and so I'm really grateful for the ongoing support that I get from them.

And despite some bumps in the road, I'm pretty proud of the people that they've become. Both are very high-performing students and high-performing athletes and people with good hearts, even if sometimes the state of their bedrooms would qualify for a season of *Hoarders*.

Now with all the niceties addressed, Mr. Speaker, I'm feeling a little punchy today, and so I want to get to the issues at hand. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition asked, "When will the Premier get to work?" Now Mr. Speaker, I generally sit quietly in my seat, but I almost laughed out loud at this.

Our Premier has an exhausting schedule of constituency events, meetings, public appearances and speeches, trade negotiations, and economic lobbying efforts that outpaces any of us because he is very committed to engaging with the people of this province at every single opportunity he can. Frankly I doubt the Leader of the Opposition could keep up with the Premier's efforts to engage people all across this province on his best day, and certainly not from a skateboard.

But not only that, Mr. Speaker, but to ask the question in the context of challenging the Premier's efforts to establish trade agreements on behalf of the people of this province as the new so-called critic for the Economy, Mr. Speaker, speaks to exactly how out of depth the member opposite is on this very, very important file. We export 70 per cent of what we produce in this province, Mr. Speaker, 70 per cent. So of course the Premier of the province is focused on building trade agreements for our export markets, both interprovincially and internationally. Open access to markets through our trade agreements, and Saskatchewan's ability to constantly add value and innovate to be globally competitive, is fundamental.

How else does the Leader of the Opposition think we pay for things like the 284-bed, state-of-the-art Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, which will help address significant mental health needs in this province? How else does the Leader of the Opposition think we pay for things like the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, or the take-home naloxone kits for opioid addiction, or universal drug coverage for HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] medications?

Surely the Leader of the Opposition values these investments and understands the critical connection between growing the economy and investment in the quality of life for people. We don't just grow the economy for the economy's sake, and never have.

The history of our hinterland economy means that we are often at the mercy of forces outside of our control, and it has been the job of governments over the history of Saskatchewan to find ways to effectively lobby and build workarounds to adjust. This stems from the historical national energy policy, to the Wheat Board, to today the imposition of the carbon tax or the inability to get goods to market due to rail backlogs, deteriorated highway

infrastructure or pipelines.

A strong economy and a strong government in this province requires someone to stand up and aggressively lobby on behalf of our economy and our citizens in the face of this long-standing historical fact. And I believe our Premier is doing just that. The fact that the Leader of the Opposition doesn't seem to understand this underscores his lack of suitability for the job on this side of the Assembly.

Now building further, Mr. Speaker, on one of these important issues, the issue of transportation, I find it curious that the members opposite, five of whom are from the city of Regina, continue to attack the Regina bypass project. This is the single largest infrastructure project ever in our province, which is almost complete, includes multiple interchanges, and is on time and on budget. It is most certainly not, as the member from Saskatoon Fairview argues, and I quote, a "costly and failed" megaproject.

I am glad, however, that she referred to it as a megaproject. It includes 12 overpasses, 45 kilometres of new four-lane highway, 21.4 kilometres of resurfaced four-lane highways, almost 55 kilometres of new service roads, and the twinning of about 5 kilometres of Highway 6.

As someone who has lived in southeast Regina for most of my life, I can share with you that the traffic congestion at that end of this city has been a significant issue for residents and businesses for years. This has been magnified by the really big explosion of new communities in the Greens, the Creeks, now the Towns, and the bedroom communities of Emerald Park, White City, Balgonie, and Pilot Butte.

And I would note there for the members opposite that part of the reason that housing starts are down is because there is an oversupply in the market as a result of overbuilding. The vacancy rates here in Regina alone are 6.9 per cent. The overall vacancy rate for the province according to CMHC [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation] data was 8.6 per cent and the national average for the same is 3.7 per cent.

At the same time, the province's population continues to grow, Mr. Speaker, something which it has done for 49 consecutive quarters, which is the fastest and most sustained period of population growth in 86 years. So it doesn't take a rocket scientist or even an economist to figure out what's going on here. But I digress.

I took a look at the city of Regina's traffic flow map this year and noted that Victoria Avenue and Arcola, which had previously been the highest condensed urban flow arterial roads in the province, are significantly down since the bypass has been constructed. And this is important not just because of the impact on the commute of residents in southeast Regina, but it is for two reasons.

One, for years we heard from frustrated businesses and the trucking associations about the challenges of transporting goods from one destination to the other and the bottleneck they encountered when they arrived at the outskirts of our city. Those trucks had to transport goods straight through town, which caused serious, inefficient delays.

Our government's response to this issue is part of a larger response to transportation challenges we have as a province in getting our goods to market, whether by rail, by road, or yes, by pipeline. In this case we are talking by road, and the Regina bypass has been critical to providing the literal off-ramps to truckers transporting our goods to market so that they can get to their destination in an efficient manner. Lord only knows that we encounter enough other barriers when we want to get to ports or to rail lines with it.

But the second, more critical reason why I'm surprised that the members opposite rail against the Regina bypass is because of safety concerns, Mr. Speaker. The number of vehicle collisions and fatalities along Pilot Butte and Balgonie interchanges, Mr. Speaker, are very well known. And indeed the heavy volume of truck traffic going through roads that are already highly congested as a result of the rapid growth of southeast communities was a very significant safety problem.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, as was mentioned earlier, so significant was the safety problem of the high congestion of truck traffic into Regina that the member of Regina Rosemont rose and petitioned this Assembly not once, not twice, but 80 times in the 27th sitting of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, 80 times. And not only did he petition 80 times, but he also did two member's statements on the same issue. And I know he did this, Mr. Speaker, because he's a resident of this city and he knows the problem well. And I'm pleased to say that first responders, municipalities, and police are already telling us that safety has improved as a result of the Regina bypass.

So now that the bypass is 90 per cent complete, Mr. Speaker, is on time, has created 9,200 jobs with a GDP [gross domestic product] impact in this province of \$942 million, and has dramatically improved safety, I find it curious that the new critic for the Economy, the Leader of the Opposition or, at the very minimum, members who represent constituencies here in the city of Regina don't stand up and applaud this project for job creation, ensuring our goods get to market more efficiently and improving safety and literally saving lives. It defies all good logic, Mr. Speaker.

Now members opposite also argue that there is no vision. But having a theme "dream and deliver" is really not enough. We do have a division to diversify our economy and build on the increasingly digital terrain that is the characteristic and hallmark of the fourth industrial revolution. Part of that, it requires investments in digital infrastructure that we are making. This year SaskTel expanded its high-tech Fusion internet to 35 additional rural locations in this province as part of a larger effort to increase 4G LTE [long-term evolution] coverage in 100 Saskatchewan communities. This focus is directly the result of two things: firstly, the aggressive and sustained engagement that we have had with communities all over this province; and secondly, because we know that our economy will increasingly be built from digital infrastructure, much of what is already being led by innovators in our agricultural sector and things like Dot Technology's autonomous tractor, for example.

The Minister of Education has also talked about the inclusion of coding in the K to 12 curriculum, Mr. Speaker, so that we can ensure that our students have the tools of the future. And we have introduced the most aggressive angel investment tax credit in the

country for technology start-ups, Mr. Speaker. The most recent data shows that the uptake on this program is very strong from both tech start-ups and from investors. Our government has supported the Co.Labs incubator, Mr. Speaker, and in its first 15 months, the government has seen a very significant return on its investment. Fifty-two start-up companies have received programming support and over 800 hours of mentorship and, as a result, over \$5 million in private investment have been leveraged and secured by those very same companies.

We are working hard to grow our entrepreneurial ecosystem, Mr. Speaker, and to create opportunities for innovation so Saskatchewan can be the disruptors and not the disrupted. Of the major global disruptive trends and innovation — artificial intelligence, genomic research on both the plant resilient side and also on the health side, in advanced robotics, additive manufacturing, and both agricultural and precision healthcare — I'm happy to report that Saskatchewan is delivering through our sector entrepreneurs, industry leaders, and post-secondary researchers.

You know, I recently had the opportunity to attend and make interventions on behalf of Canada at the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada talks for the G20. And I'm so proud to say that Saskatchewan's vision on pathways, on innovation, on the role of education and linkages to the economy are in line with global thinking on these issues. And I'm so excited to realize the next few years of this government as we move forward on many of these fronts.

Now I think it's well known that I got involved in this party, Mr. Speaker, because I saw the investments that this government was making for people with disabilities, for women fleeing domestic violence, and for providing an environment where young people saw opportunities to grow and to pursue their dreams. Three-quarters of all of our government expenditures go towards initiatives that directly impact the quality of life of people here in our province. We grow the economy so we can actually help people, Mr. Speaker, and there really have been tremendous investments in health, some of which I have discussed already.

But what I think I'm most proud of are the investments this government has made on the issue of domestic violence. Now I will say that I would prefer that we were not opening women's shelters, and I would prefer that we were not making changes to legislation with respect to domestic violence, because maybe there wouldn't actually be those problems anymore. But I am so grateful for the work that our government has done in these areas to help women and their children fleeing domestic violence situations.

[19:30]

And here I want — I think it's very important — to highlight and emphasize the very strong role that our male colleagues have played in championing aggressive legislation on *The Residential Tenancies Act*, on initiating and leading the domestic violence death review panel, on the expansion of interpersonal violence leave to include sexual violence of any kind, on changes to privacy legislation to prohibit revenge porn, and to introduce Clare's Law, the very first province in Canada to introduce this legislation.

And just today, my colleague from Swift Current discussed the renovations in the Southwest Shelter. Mr. Speaker, these initiatives have all been done under the leadership of the current and former ministers of Justice and Attorney General, male colleagues in our caucus that I am very, very proud of.

I had hoped that there would be some recognition from the members opposite that while there's always more to do on this front, these are very powerful and important steps in the right direction and they were steps largely taken by my male colleagues while walking miles in the red shoes.

Now there's so many more things I'd like to talk about in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, but time — and I'm sure the patience of my colleagues — is wearing thin.

Today, individualized home care options were announced by our government. And together with individualized funding for children with autism we've initiated, we're moving increasingly to focus on customized options for people, especially vulnerable people. And this, I am sure you would agree, is a welcome move and a welcome change, and is in line as a matter of fact with global thinking about something that has been referred to as Society 5.0. Now I applaud these initiatives and I look forward to others as we continue to negotiate trade agreements, build and lobby for transportation infrastructure that we need to get our goods to market, and oppose job-killing taxes, Mr. Speaker, so we have the economic performance to support all these initiatives.

And so therefore, I'm very proud to stand with the Premier and my very distinguished colleague from Lumsden-Morse in passing this motion to support this Speech from the Throne. I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the opportunity to rise to speak to the Speech from the Throne. And it is truly my honour, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to firstly thank a few people, as is tradition. I have a few people that I'd like to thank, and first and foremost is my wife, Fran, who's constantly by my side — in theory, anyway — when I'm down here. I mean, her and I used to work side by side at our business. For almost 20 years our offices were next to each other. And now being down here and being apart like this, it's very difficult, very difficult for both of us because we're so used to being together and side by side.

So we do talk a lot, quite a bit on the phone. Every night we talk probably for an hour on the phone just to catch up on the day and because we're so used to talking to one another. But she is the love of my life and I'm so grateful to have her and so grateful that she accepts the sacrifices that we have to make to be able to stand up for the people of Saskatchewan and to represent the people of our fair city in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my kids, my four kids. They're not kids anymore. They're all adults. But my oldest son is Trent, and his wife, Lisa, and my grandson Elias, who's just about 10 years old, and he's pretty good. And my daughter

Angela and her husband, Joe, and their two children, Noah and Layla. And my son Colby and his wife, Becky, and Hannah and Myles are their two kids. And then our youngest is Jillian, and her partner's name is Greg. And my little sweetheart there is Madilyn. She's 17 months old and she's probably . . . Well, put it this way: she loves her grandpa dearly.

An Hon. Member: — He's always showing me pictures.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — I am. I'm showing my seatmate pictures constantly of what she's like. I seen her last night for about a half hour, and at 17 months she showed me every trick she knows now. She can jump. She can do this. She can hide on grandpa and she can . . . Whatever. She makes me laugh all the time.

I tell you, I didn't want to go to the event. I would have just as soon stayed there and played with her. So that's how much fun she is, and she is that always. And she has been since she was a baby. When she was a baby and when I was around, if she was tired, wanted to sleep, she would only come and to go to sleep on grandpa's knee and didn't want to have anything to do with anyone else.

Anyway, you know, all my grandchildren are beautiful and I love them all and they're all treasures. And as they grow up and they get a little older and they're wonderful to have because you can do so many other things with them and they're great. So those are the six people that I do a lot of the work that I do for. I mean my four kids, plus the six grandkids, and then my wife are a lot of the things that I have . . . reason why I have passion for the fight against impaired driving that I do.

But some of the other folks, Mr. Speaker, that I'd like to thank would be my CA [constituency assistant], Joy Schewaga, in Prince Albert. She's been with me since I was elected. She worked for me many years ago in another business that I had. Fabulous, people love her all the time. They would rather deal with her than me, and I don't blame them. But she's very . . . If she says she'll get back to you by 2 o'clock she's back to you probably by 1:50. So she's excellent. I know she probably even would, she would probably even help out the member from Athabasca if he phoned. That's how good she is.

We probably have some other . . . Some other good people that I'd like to thank, Mr. Speaker, is the staff in my office. My chief of staff is Angela and she is a great researcher and been around the legislature for some time and does a great job for me and we're happy to have her. But I have a new young ministerial assistant — his name is Dane — and a young fellow that is going to be excellent. He's good now, and he's just learning, and he's going to be even better.

I have another MA [ministerial assistant], Linda. And Linda's been with me for a while now and just does a wonderful job. She used to be my admin and took great care of me in that role and looks after me very well in a role as an MA. And then my admin is Shelley. And Shelley's been around with us for a long time, and Shelley Duke is her name. And in fact she's very close to retirement. She'll probably retire here some time over the winter or early in the spring. But she does a wonderful job and she knows what I'm thinking and need before I even do it. She totally has my back.

A few of the other people, Mr. Speaker, that I'd like to thank are my officials over at SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], and there's a number of them over there — Andrew and Penny, Kwei, Don, Barb, Kim. They're awesome people. They work very hard over there and they have passion for what we're trying to get done here in improving safety on the highways in Saskatchewan and improving safety from distracted driving and impaired driving. And they're excellent people in working for that and they have that passion for it and they're thrilled to do it. They have won awards here in the past year for some of the work that they've done and I'm very, very proud of them.

As well I'd like to thank the folks at CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan]. Blair and his team of people have done a fabulous job for me, they're always there with the information that I need, and I thank them very much for what they do, Mr. Speaker.

And some may know, and I know at least one member on the opposite side who I've worked with quite well in the past — used to be my critic and is no longer, Mr. Speaker, but we have worked together well on the impaired driving file and it's a very passionate thing for me, Mr. Speaker.

Last year in 2017, the numbers are in, and overall safety on our roads, Mr. Speaker, we had only 102 deaths. Well, 102 deaths is a 102 deaths too many on our highway, Mr. Speaker. That is the lowest number of deaths in this province on our highways since 1954 — that's the lowest number of deaths on our highways since 1954. And, Mr. Speaker, at 1954 there was maybe a half the cars that there is on the road today, half the number of drivers, half the number of cars. And that number, Mr. Speaker, that goes a long ways to saying that we're on the right track, that we're doing some good things when it comes to preventing deaths and injuries on our highways, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, one other number here that's of note and I'm very proud of — I'm very proud of the staff that have worked on this, Mr. Speaker — and that's the number of deaths from impaired driving, due to impaired driving from alcohol. Alcohol-related deaths on our highways declined in 2017 over the same time period in 2016 by 40 per cent, Mr. Speaker, 40 per cent. That is a significant number, Mr. Speaker, of deaths. That was still 39 deaths and that's 39 too many. We have to continue to work extremely hard to fight this battle on impaired driving, Mr. Speaker. We do not want that number, that decline, that number of 39 to be a blip on the chart; we want that number to continue to decline every year with a goal of zero, Mr. Speaker.

To that end, Mr. Speaker, the staff have worked very hard at SGI and my team here in the legislature, with various campaigns. We've worked very well with awareness campaigns, Mr. Speaker. And that's one, that's one aspect of working towards getting those numbers and keeping those numbers down.

Three of the campaigns that we had is the People Shouldn't Disappear campaign, Mr. Speaker. And that was an extremely effective campaign where it showed pictures of families and then all of a sudden one of those family members that was killed would disappear, Mr. Speaker, off there. And that was from families all across the province, Mr. Speaker.

In Prince Albert it was like Ben Darchuk. Ben Darchuk, who I

knew, Mr. Speaker, and he was tragically killed by an impaired driver. So he was lost to his wife and his two daughters and his son, Mr. Speaker. And all of a sudden he's gone. He was a very good man. I knew him. He was a friend of mine, Mr. Speaker. And then there's the Van de Vorst family in Saskatoon that was tragically killed, Mr. Speaker — four people. And they were part of this campaign, Mr. Speaker.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we had the Wingman campaign. Now the Wingman campaign was about, you know, be a good friend; Be a Good Wingman. When you go out, don't let friends drive impaired. And I think that's a crucial lesson, Mr. Speaker, and that everybody should adhere to is, you know, if this is a friend, don't let them drink and drive, Mr. Speaker. So both those campaigns, Mr. Speaker, won international awards. They won national and international awards for the quality of advertising that they were and the effectiveness of those ads.

Now the most recent awareness campaign, Mr. Speaker, was the Knock on the Door campaign. Now the Knock on the Door campaign, again it showed the effects on a family, of a mother in this case, that never come home. A husband talks to her on the phone and yes, she had to work late. She's coming home. He gets the kids ready for bed. And all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, up to the door comes this knock on the door. And it's two police officers and they advise him that his wife has been killed by an impaired driver.

Now in that ad that's on the TV. That's actors, Mr. Speaker. But I've talked to many, many families that have experienced that. And my officials at SGI have met with these families and that was the common denominator. They all talk about that knock on the door. That very instant when the police knocked on the door, they opened the door, and their lives have changed forever. Forever.

One individual, he told me that he got that knock on the door. He went. He didn't want to answer the door. When he looked outside first, he'd seen the police car there and said, one of our kids has been killed. And then he went downstairs and he did not want to answer the door. He knew what it was. And his door, he said, had one of those metal knockers, and so the police knocked with this metal knocker. So after that in the weeks following that tragedy and the months following that tragedy he said, where I sat, if I sat at the table or in the living room, I could see out the window, and I could see if somebody was coming to my house. And he says, I would run to the door so they wouldn't knock on the door.

And that was like . . . oh, you know, that hits home very hard. He said within six months after the accident, he actually had to have the door system replaced because he couldn't take the sound anymore of that particular knock. That's how tragic that is, and that's that knock on the door that changes people's lives forever. And all you got to do is talk to any one of these people for five seconds, and you know that you have to do something to help prevent this, Mr. Speaker.

It's quite the thing, this Knock on the Door campaign. What was really nice as well with it is it featured first responders, first responders telling their stories about what happens with them when they meet up with people.

[19:45]

All of them were very effective. There was 12 of them. And they talked about various things. One was about, you know, coming across the accident scene and being the first responder there and looking in the car. And you're seeing a baby seat in the car, and you're seeing the toys in the car, and you're preparing yourself for what you're going to find.

And I just admire those people so much, those first responders that have to go to that scene. And I know with the Humboldt tragedy, I mean, those first responders that went to the Humboldt tragedy, what they must go through. And I know the families of the victims, they go through a ton, but I know the first responders, they go there. These police officers, they go to the door and they have to tell the person that they've lost a loved one to an impaired driver. And then people expect them just to go back to work. And you know, I know it must be extremely, extremely difficult for the first responders to be able to do that.

Like I say, Mr. Speaker, I've spoken to many retired and many current first responders and listened to their stories, many of their stories. And you know, they remember them. The retired guys remember them like they happened just minutes ago. I mean, they recall every detail that ever happened. And I just . . . I feel for them. I feel for them as well. And you know, the fact that now it's actually recognized, PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] is recognized as an injury — even though you can't see it, it's recognized as an injury — and these people suffer from that. And I look forward to helping them whenever we can, Mr. Speaker.

So we hope to have more things to come that's going to help with giving people a better option to choose than driving after they've been drinking or smoking or doing drugs, Mr. Speaker, and that's ride share. So you know, the legislation was introduced in the fall session, Mr. Speaker, and we're very optimistic that we'll have all the regulations and everything in place in the very near future so that when this is proclaimed that the cities will jump on ride share, that ride share companies will come to town. And they'll provide that extra option for people to get that safe ride home because that's so important for people.

I mean, sometimes they'll go, if a cab doesn't show up right away they go, well I guess I'm good enough. I'll drive. Well that's not good enough. That's not a good enough reason to drive while you're impaired. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that by providing additional opportunities for people to catch this safe ride home that there will be less charges laid eventually. I mean it might be more initially, but still there will be way less charges because people will avail themselves of this other option to take another ride home. And we're so optimistic that that's going to happen for people and that they'll choose to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Now the second thing, Mr. Speaker, is the worst cause of death on our highways is impaired driving, and the second-worst cause is distracted driving. And so we've changed some legislation on the distracted driving, Mr. Speaker. All of a sudden now since we changed that legislation and made it against the law for them to even handle their cell phone, Mr. Speaker, the charges have gone way up because the police officers now have no problem in laying a charge. So they're there and they lay a charge of distracted driving, and it actually follows through before they could say, well I was just moving my phone from one pocket to another. I wasn't really on the phone.

So they were getting frustrated and were not laying enough charges. Now that we've changed the laws, they're laying charges. I'm very pleased to say they've laid a number of them this last year. We're monitoring the numbers of charges, and we're looking to see what other jurisdictions are doing. Manitoba just increased their fines up to \$1,000 for distracted driving. And so that's significantly higher than ours, but we're going to monitor the effect that that has on theirs.

We're still monitoring the effect that the change in our legislation has had on our numbers. And we will have no problem, Mr. Speaker — should it be necessary, should people not learn their lesson that distracted driving is unacceptable — we won't have a problem in increasing fines or increasing vehicle seizures or whatever the case may be to stop people from distracted driving. And I'm sure the members opposite would even be supportive of that initiative. I would hope they would be, anyway, Mr. Speaker.

And as well, Mr. Speaker, we've been working on another issue, the commercial driver training, Mr. Speaker. We've been working on that since July of 2017. And you know, it really got heightened in April with the Humboldt Broncos tragedy, Mr. Speaker, but we're working on that. We hope to have something very, very soon in an announcement, in what are the enhancements that we're going to make to the commercial driver training program because we think it's very important that we do it right, that we get it done, and that we improve the safety on our highways from semi-truck driver accidents. So we do know that they need to make sure they get the proper training, that the training schools are properly certified, and that the examiners are good and that they are doing the proper exam of these individuals. So we're optimistic that that'll take place very shortly, Mr. Speaker.

A couple of other things, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to talk a little bit about, you know, our city of Prince Albert. I mean, Prince Albert's a great city. We moved there in 2000. We started our business there in 2000 and expanded to quite a large size. We've since shrunk it down because I'm here, and my wife is running the one business that we do have left, Mr. Speaker.

But we love Prince Albert. It's been very good to us, and we think it's a great city. It's a great gateway to the North, and we're pleased to host many people from the North to our fair city when they do come down. Even the member from Athabasca, we wouldn't mind if he actually comes to town just once in a while as well. So . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, I know. It's a drive north. It's not a drive south.

But, Mr. Speaker, some of the good things that have happened in Prince Albert lately, the forestry centre there. The forestry centre, Mr. Speaker, was only a building that was leased out by a few government agencies, by some accountants, doing whatever. But, Mr. Speaker, as luck would have it, now the university has acquired it from SOCO [Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation]. I think that's a great deal. And you know, they plan on moving some of their classes there. Initially they said dentistry. I don't know what'll happen, you know, by 2020 when they actually start going full time in there but, you know, the city is very excited about it. They view this as a big step into revitalizing the downtown of Prince Albert. This will be full of university students. There will be businesses come to downtown Prince Albert that will revitalize the downtown core. So we're

very, very pleased with that and that we could assist the university in acquiring that property. And like I say, and the city and the mayor are extremely happy that this has happened.

You know, some of the other things that we've done in Prince Albert is funding for the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] for Our House up there, Mr. Speaker. That's been very good for our community. There's \$465,000 to River Bank Development for the Homes of Hope project, consisting of four single-family homes for larger families in Prince Albert. I was to one here just a few weeks ago along with the member from Prince Albert Northcote attended as well. And it was a great thing. And it's for a family with six kids, Mr. Speaker. So it's a home where . . . Some of those are very, very difficult to find a house that works for them.

So we did a home for Habitat for Humanity just a few weeks before that that I was at and had the privilege of speaking at. And it was for a family with eight kids. And you know, Habitat for Humanity, I don't know how many of the Habitat homes I've been at and at the key ceremonies or at the groundbreaking ceremonies over the last year. My wife does serve on the board for the Habitat for Humanity, so we think it's a great cause for the city, in the city of Prince Albert and throughout the province.

Now I'm very proud that our government has contributed significant funding to help those people get a home and give them that hand up — not a handout, but a hand up, Mr. Speaker — and that comes from the Habitat for Humanity people. And it's been a very, very good, very, very good program for the city of Prince Albert and for the citizens of Prince Albert that do, like I say, find it very difficult to own a home.

So another project that we've been at is, you know, another home for the mentally challenged people. We just were at a groundbreaking ceremony here a few weeks ago — I mean, it seems like we're doing one a week, which is great news that we're there constantly — it's for six units at one location for people that have mental challenges. And I was very pleased to represent the Minister of Social Services at that groundbreaking ceremony for this very valuable home. We were at one last fall as well for another six-unit facility that was just down the street from this one. And it's been great again for the city of Prince Albert to be able to have these facilities funded by, you know, a combination of CMHC and the province of Saskatchewan. And it's great facilities for those people that need it.

Like I say, and the Habitat for Humanity has been a great organization in Prince Albert, and the number of homes I think is nearing a dozen that they've had over the past year. So that's an excellent program.

Another real positive announcement, just last week actually, Mr. Speaker, was the Star-Orion South Diamond mine. That's a project that could develop into 750 jobs in the area, and it's a diamond mine out in Fort-à-la-Corne territory, out in that area. And so the environmental assessment approval process, while it was long, it was thorough, and it was completed and approved.

And we're optimistic that that program, that project will go forward, which will be a great boon for not only the city of Prince Albert and the city of Nipawin, but the First Nations around also that live around in that area, and the other smaller communities

that live around in that area. So we expect that to be a great boost to the economy not only of Prince Albert but of that area and to the province.

A diamond mine of that size . . . I understand the largest diamond deposits in the world, are right there. So, Mr. Speaker, it's not just diamonds that you might have in a ring. It's diamonds that are used for cutting, diamonds that are used for many, many projects and many, many manufacturing things. So we're very optimistic that that project will go ahead.

I was very pleased on Friday to be at an announcement as well, again on behalf of the Social Services minister and the Minister Responsible for Policing and Corrections, on a new police and crisis team that has launched in the city of Prince Albert. There's four cities that are getting funding for this police and crisis team, where a mental health professional will attend with a police officer to a scene where a person that has some mental challenges is involved, and that they can help the police to maybe keep this person that shouldn't be just thrown into the criminal justice system because they do have a mental disorder or because they're having a mental situation, that this mental health professional will be able to help the police to help this individual.

And I'd look for a much better outcome than just the police going there and arresting him, or the police going there and taking him to hospital and having to sit there for, you know, a couple of hours with the individual. This way, with the mental health professional, we're very optimistic. It's been very successful in both Saskatoon and Regina, and on Friday it was rolled out to Yorkton, to Prince Albert, to North Battleford, and to Moose Jaw. And we're very excited.

I met with all the folks there that are at the hub and the COR [centre of responsibility], which is a model for policing and for community mobilization in the province, and in North America actually. Prince Albert founded this system of hub and COR where people from the community are involved in trying to make things happen. These people were extremely excited with this new police PACT [police and crisis team] team they call it, P-A-C-T team, and that this will work extremely well for people in need, those people that are most vulnerable. It's about helping people with mental challenges. And that was a total funding of about a million dollars, Mr. Speaker, so we're very excited that we have that.

[20:00]

You know, another nice thing we've got going out of there is there's been two new bus services both start up out of the fair city of Prince Albert. One is KCTI. And KCTI is working from La Ronge to Prince Albert. And now they're expanding their business — not only doing that, providing bus service from Prince Albert to La Ronge and back, but they're going to expand and go from Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Edmonton. So they'll be covering off some of those routes there that with the Greyhound shutting down that they'll be covering off that route. And they'll be providing the services, like I say, from La Ronge down here down to Prince Albert and down to Saskatoon. So that's been a very, very good success story. And they're doing very well and they're very pleased with business as it's progressing.

You know and another bus service that . . . Again another individual from Prince Albert and very proud of, that started Rider Express. Now Rider Express comes in the province and they go Prince Albert, Saskatoon, down to Regina, and they're also expanding their service. There was an article in the paper yesterday, Mr. Speaker, where they were talking about a service they're going to start to provide from Winnipeg right through to Vancouver. And they acquired five buses and these buses were very nice. They even have scenic skylights that people can watch as they drive through the mountains. So they'll have these five buses providing regular transportation from Winnipeg, stopping many stops in Saskatchewan, and right through Alberta and into Vancouver. So we're very pleased that this individual has seen this business opportunity and taken advantage of that opportunity. And we're optimistic that he's going to continue to expand that.

There's a number of other companies that have been very successful, Mr. Speaker, in also establishing riding opportunities or busing opportunities or transportation opportunities for people throughout the province. And it's very nice to see the private sector have stepped up and are doing that. They are as well looking at a number of . . . to provide services for people with disabilities. And so we're optimistic that that's happening. And we're thinking that when ride share is finally implemented, that they as well will provide people rides wherever around the province and provide transportation for people with disabilities. So I'll be very excited to see those as well, Mr. Speaker. So we're very, very pleased with what's been going on and we'll continue to monitor that.

Mr. Speaker, a couple other people that I want to sort of talk about briefly. I mean, these people are very courageous people and I've got to know them very well over the last two years. And I've worked very close with them and I admire the courage that they have. Every day they get up, and I don't know how they do it, but I do.

And Allan and Melanie Kerpan, they've become very good friends. They've become very, very good friends of mine. And their daughter was killed by an impaired driver around Bladworth, Mr. Speaker, on a divided highway when an impaired driver was going down the wrong side of the divided highway and collided with their daughter. And that was a very, very tragic accident. And Al and Melanie, like I say, have become very good friends.

And unfortunately there was an accident yesterday and alcohol is suspected to be a factor in it where a family of three was killed. And the driver of one vehicle and two people in the other vehicle and, of any consolation, the baby that was in the vehicle did survive. But again, Mr. Speaker, that was on a divided highway. And a suspected impaired driver . . . not suspected or alleged impaired driver going down the wrong side of a divided highway. That was just yesterday, so people are still not there. And these families . . . And tragedy like that happens. I don't how you could ever . . . For me I don't know how I'd ever wake up in the morning again because it would be so difficult.

But Al and Melanie have become very good friends. Lou and Linda Van de Vorst. I mean these people, I've got to know them, and they lost four members of their family. And you know, they reach out to all kinds of people that have experienced similar

losses. And these people give so much of themselves. And Lou works for SGI actually, and he's just a phenomenal individual, Lou. And so is Linda. So they come . . . All I have to do is phone and say, you know, we're having an event somewhere; can you come? Can you just be there? You don't even have to speak about what's going on.

Craig and Bonnie Stevenson, they're so active in the community. They're so active in Saskatoon. They're active everywhere. They go out, they provide rides home for people. They have volunteers that go and they do it as a fundraising project. And their son Quinn was killed by an impaired driver. He was on his way to work at the golf course like at 6 o'clock in the morning and an impaired driver hit him and killed him — went through an intersection, T-boned him and killed him. It's such a tragedy. They spoke here in the legislature, that announcement we had just a few weeks ago about getting their knock on the door. And I tell you there was not a dry eye in the room because it's quite the story.

Alyscia Kaufmann, a young mother in town here, and her husband was killed by an impaired driver. She's another gal. She had two young boys, four and two, and when her husband didn't come home she told me the story of trying to text her husband. He went out with the dog, taking the dog for a run, and she said, I tried to text him. Hmm, wasn't like him, never answered the text. That's not like him, she says, and then all of a sudden somebody . . . My doorbell went. I had the knock at the door and I opened the door, she said, and there was a police officer standing there. I looked him right in the eye, I said, don't you tell me my husband's dead. Because she just knew that that's how bad it was.

And you know, and her two young boys, I mean it was two years. It's been almost two years and she hasn't worked since then. I believe she just started employment here just recently. But I mean she's educated, she's whatever, but the tragedy was just hit that hard. And when you have two small boys whose dad's not coming home again and now they're six and four, it's very tough, very tough for this young lady. I mean, everybody's got to move on, but I mean it's an extreme tragedy.

There's the Haughey family, I mean Marilou and Alex Haughey. Their son J.P. was killed by a person who was impaired, stole a truck, and crashed into them. They're innocent kids — great musician, athletes, all that; they're going to practice. They're going to practice. They're driving on 22nd Street in Saskatoon and this individual, impaired, impaired, steals this vehicle, steals this truck, tries to outrun the police, runs through the intersection, smashes into their vehicle, pushes them up against the building that's, you know, on the other side of the street and way up. And both these two young individuals died. They had the rest of their life. That was an only child for Marilou and Alex. J.P. was their only son and that tragic story has to get told again and again so that people get the point.

And I know I'm supposed to be up here and speaking about everything else that's there and the 176 schools that the NDP closed because they did, and all that nice stuff . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . But I haven't closed one. I have not closed one school. Hey, my school, my school in my hometown was closed as well. So but I knew, I knew, I knew that would sort of wake the member on the opposite. I knew I would wake the member

up. I didn't mean to wake him up, but it's good.

I'll go back to speaking about . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Okay, but thanks for that nice little interlude. I recognize the minister.

An Hon. Member: — Let's see if you can get it straight this time.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — I'll try to get it straight. How many, how many . . .

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre, thanks for disregarding me. I appreciate that.

An Hon. Member: — Kick him out.

The Speaker: — Well it's up to you. It's your call, your call. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — I haven't opened any schools, Mr. Speaker, but I haven't closed any either. But I did go to school. I mean, that's a real positive. And you know, I didn't have to because — you know what? — quite honestly because my parents taught me a lot about respect. And so you know I try to live by that standard, Mr. Speaker. So I try to live by that, and you know, I'm sure that I'm more than happy to teach any other members that as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll go for just a few more minutes here on impaired driving, on impaired driving. I won't go on school closures. The little town was called Chelan and that school got closed, but you can look it up.

But anyway, Mr. Speaker, I had a first responder give me a couple of their stories, Mr. Speaker, so being I can look it up and it looks like I got a few more minutes to go and I know the members opposite are anxious to listen to me ramble on, so I'll keep going. But now I wish I was talking about more of these things.

But anyway, far more passion here for the fight against impaired driving. Anyway, one of these first responder stories he gave to me, Mr. Speaker, it says: It's early Friday morning and one lone police officer was on patrol watching for any suspicious, and in particular possible impaired, drivers. The bars are closed so the possibility of people driving while impaired have significantly increased. The officer noted headlights coming up behind him at what seemed to be a rapid pace. The car went by the police vehicle at excessive speeds.

After the emergency equipment was activated, the vehicle continued a short distance and turned off the highway onto a gravel road but continued at a high speed. A second officer was advised of the direction of travel, and was directed to a location to set up a roadblock. As the vehicle approached the roadblock, it slowed down and then at the last second accelerated right at the police vehicle, just missing the officer.

Police then followed on the gravel road, not making any attempt

to overtake the vehicle. Other police vehicles were in various positions on the highway in the hopes of keeping the vehicle off the main highway and on the gravel road. The vehicle then turned up a bush road and only travelled a short distance before spinning out and getting stuck.

Both police vehicles pulled onto the same road and stopped behind the vehicle. As one officer approached, the suspect vehicle backup lights came on, and the vehicle started to move backwards. The police officer went down and appeared like he had been run over.

At that same time, a male person got out of the driver's door and began to run off into the bush. Officers arrested the suspect a few hundred yards into the bush. And he refused to identify himself and had no identification. The driver was very uncooperative and a very strong odour of alcohol beverage was on his breath. Upon searching the man before placing him in police vehicle, drugs were found in his pocket. He then admitted that he had had at least 20 drinks that night and had smoked four joints.

The man was identified once back at the detachment as a man recently released from prison. He had been in prison for impaired driving after he failed to stop at a stop sign, broadsiding a vehicle driving on a highway, killing the parents and seriously injuring the children. This man showed no remorse or feelings for his actions. He was again charged with impaired driving and several other offences and was sent back to prison. The first term in prison for impaired driving did not deter him from driving again while impaired. We were fortunate this time; no one was killed but the circumstances were certainly there. Mr. Speaker, that's just one of the stories, Mr. Speaker, that I hear from first responders all the time about people they had.

I had a person call my office the other day to say like I heard that you can get me my driver's licence back. The police have taken it over an impaired driving charge. And this individual was like 24 years old — 24 years old — and as luck would have it, it was their second impaired driving offence at 24 years old. And all they thought was, but I need my vehicle back to get to work.

Well, Mr. Speaker, with the new laws and regulations, thank goodness that person won't get their vehicle back, Mr. Speaker, and they shouldn't. People have to learn we don't drink and drive, and we don't do drugs and drive. With the approval of cannabis now as legalization, we're hoping that the numbers will not go up on deaths and injuries from impaired driving, Mr. Speaker. That would be just a tragic event if it does.

We'll be continuing to fight the good fight, Mr. Speaker, in relation to impaired driving. It stays front and centre on my radar and I won't be remiss, I won't be hesitant to act on any factor that could reduce the number of impaired driving charges and the number of injuries and deaths from impaired driving, Mr. Speaker.

[20:15]

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I will be supporting the motion put forward. I will . . . I'm done, Mr. Speaker, I'm pretty much done . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I could talk more about schools if you'd like and with school closures. I don't know if he

could take it. Because I do, you know, I do appreciate that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion, supporting the Speech from the Throne, and I will not be supporting the amendment, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand in my space and place to speak about my response to the Throne Speech. But before I do that, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that's the first carbon-free speech I've heard in this Assembly since we've been sitting since the day that Brad Wall created the carbon story, Mr. Speaker, that they have been revelling in for the last number of years, Mr. Speaker, as a distraction. Not trying to do anything serious about the carbon price challenge, Mr. Speaker, but they've used it to cover up all the messes that they created. But before I do that, Mr. Speaker, I want to . . . There's a song in my heart this evening to respond to some of the things that was said previously.

But before I do that, I want to say hello to my good, dear friend, Mr. Ron Osika, and his wife, Barb. They are obviously watching this in Melville. I want to say that not only was he an accomplished minister of the Crown, he was also a very, very fair and a very hard-working police officer, Mr. Speaker. He also served in your chair. So this has been a very, very good friend of mine. Him and his wife, Barb have been very, very loyal supporters of some of the work that I do and certainly some that our party does. And I want to say to all of them, to both of them, that they're certainly in our prayers and our thoughts all the time, and to say that I really miss Ron and Barb being around this building because he added so much to the history of this building, and he done a great job, him and his wife. They both done a great job in representing Saskatchewan and being true friends over the years that I've served in this Assembly. So a big hello to Ron and Barb and again to point out that it's just not enough time in this world that I wish I could visit with them more. So I hope they know that coming to Regina to visit with us is an open invitation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member from Prince Albert Carlton, I believe, and he spoke about the team, the SGI team, Mr. Speaker. And I can remember several years ago how he glowingly spoke about another team called the STC team, the Saskatchewan Transportation Company team. He spoke about how great they were. And I would warn all the members of the SGI team, be very careful how he glows praise over you because you might be on the selling block next, Mr. Speaker.

Because less than a year ago, less than a year after he spoke glowingly of the STC team, they shut it down, Mr. Speaker. They shut it down. They were toast, Mr. Speaker. So I would encourage all the people of SGI to be very, very careful because what you don't want to do is have the privatization plan that has been very apparent in the Sask Party's benches for a number of years, as we've seen evidence not only of the SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] closure of some of the stores that we had, but, Mr. Speaker, as well with the land titles branch.

So I would say to the member from Prince Albert Carlton that your words of praise to the STC team you spoke of are hollow. They're very hollow. And I say to you today that your words of

praise for the SGI team . . . if I was an SGI staff member, I'd be very worried about getting praise from you, sir, because obviously they might be on the selling block next. So really I would tell people of SGI, be very, very careful of what this minister says, Mr. Speaker, because obviously he has sold Saskatchewan down the river before and he's going to do it again, Mr. Speaker. And that's one of the reasons why we tell people of Saskatchewan, be very careful because the Sask Party has an agenda led by that minister to sell as many Crowns as they can. And once they have decimated our Crowns, Mr. Speaker, then they'll head off to green pastures. And this is the MO [modus operandi] of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. They have done it time and time again.

So, Mr. Speaker, we also want to echo the sentiments behind the loved ones that are lost to impaired driving. As I pointed out, there's no question in my mind the tragedy attached to losing loved ones to impaired driving. It's incredibly difficult. I've lost a sister and two brothers to impaired driving and this is something that it's always in the back of our minds, that we have to be vigilant in ensuring that message gets through. So while we applaud the effort to be wary of the consequences, we also have to be cognizant of the fact that people make mistakes, and we must teach them as much as we can that those mistakes could be horrific in the end. So, Mr. Speaker, it is all about making sure that we respect the victims and we learn to reduce the amount of impaired driving. And that's something that's really, really important.

So, Mr. Speaker, I also notice, Mr. Speaker, as we listened to some of the speeches by the Saskatchewan Party, and particularly the member from Moosomin, when I listened to him today — which is not too often I listen to some of their speeches because all they do is point fingers — but when the member from Moosomin, as the member from Prince Albert Carlton just did, they spoke about the NDP shutting down the hospitals. So I'd ask those members that always point to the NDP, do you remember Grant Devine?

Do they remember Grant Devine, Mr. Speaker? Do they remember that the interest on that debt, compliments of the Conservatives and Grant Devine? When the NDP took over from Grant Devine and their cousins, the Conservatives — that's what they are — when they took over from government, Mr. Speaker, in 1991, the second-highest cost of operating government at that time, Mr. Speaker, was not education, was not environment. The second-highest cost was interest on the debt piled up by Grant Devine and his cousins, Mr. Speaker. That is where the debt came.

So when they come along and the member from Moosomin talks about the NDP shutting down schools and hospitals, Mr. Speaker, just a reminder, just a reminder to him that the second-highest cost in operating the provincial government of Saskatchewan following Grant Devine and the Conservative mess of the 1980s was interest on the debt piled up by their cousins, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, let history speak very loud to the member from Moosomin and the member from Cannington, Mr. Speaker. Do you remember how Roy Romanow had to go hat in hand to the banks of the East to borrow money just to meet payroll? They don't mention that, Mr. Speaker. So the member from

Moosomin, the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton, the member from Cannington, they do a great disservice when they stand up and they omit conveniently and they conveniently omit the history of Saskatchewan for their political gain.

Mr. Speaker, that is a sham and that is a shame, Mr. Speaker. And as long as we stand here, please tell history to its full extent. Please tell history to the full extent conservative governments have driven this province into debt year after year since they've been in office and, Mr. Speaker, this day and today specifically, nothing has changed. They have driven us into debt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about their record. This is really important about their record. We're sitting here, Mr. Speaker, after 11 years of Saskatchewan Party rule. And I'll encourage the Saskatchewan Party to now come out of hiding. Come out of hiding. You know, like the witness protection program is over. So get your Saskatchewan Party name off the way; bring back your Conservative name. That's what people want to see. The witness protection program has elapsed. You can now assume your rightful title as conservatives because that's what you always have been, and what you've always been. So stop hiding behind the Saskatchewan Party banner and come on out, Mr. Speaker. Come on out from behind that banner and tell people exactly what you stand for and who you are, Mr. Speaker.

Let's calm down a bit. They're yelling a bit too much over there, Mr. Speaker. Let's settle down. Let's bring the temperature down in the Assembly just a bit, okay.

I want to go on their record, their record. Mr. Speaker, never in the history of Saskatchewan has any government enjoyed the revenues, the record revenues that the Saskatchewan Party has enjoyed in the last 11 years — never. Never has any government enjoyed the record revenue. But after 11 years, what's the net effect, Mr. Speaker? They had a record tax increase. There wasn't a tax any one of them didn't increase. They looked at every tax they could conceivably find, Mr. Speaker, and they jacked it up. They jacked it up. So they had record tax increases.

So I'm sitting here trying to do the math. I'm trying to figure this thing out. And I'm just a northern hockey player, Mr. Speaker. Like I'm not an economist. I'm not an accountant. I'm not part of any special legislative committee that knows all this stuff. From a hockey player, from a northern perspective, let's see: they've had record revenue; they've had record tax increases. And then I turn around and say, hey, how's our debt doing? Oh we're going to have record debt. And I'm saying . . . I'm scratching my head. I said, I was a former mayor of Ile-a-la-Crosse, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell you if I ran my community like the Saskatchewan Party ran this government or the province, I would be trounced out of my community, Mr. Speaker. I'd be asking to live at your place, very fast.

So I'm sitting here, I'm sitting here thinking, they've had record revenue. Now they had record tax increases, and we have record debt. I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan this very, very important . . . Every day we hear the Minister of Finance or the Premier or one of the front bench, they get up and they say, oh, our deficit for this year is 320 million. I said okay, being a northern hockey player, I would say, what's that got to do with the debt? Oh the deficit and the debt are two different things. So okay, if they're two different things, what is a deficit? Well it's

what an operating loss is for this year. Okay that's 300-and-some million, okay. So what's our debt? Well it's projected to be 23 billion by 2021. Well why don't you tell the people of Saskatchewan that? Why don't you tell them, hey guess what? Our debt's going to be jacked up another 323 million. Now we're going to be paying \$23 billion. So okay. And that's exactly how they operate, Mr. Speaker. They try and fool the people of Saskatchewan.

So they had record revenue. They had record tax increases. And now they have record debt. So what else could go wrong? Well the conservatives say, well hold it here; we're going to continue down a path. We're going to enter into these P3 [public-private partnership] deals that will not only compromise us in the future for 10, 20, 30 years, we'll add more debt but we won't tell anybody what that debt is.

So I'm sitting here saying, well ask that northern hockey player. If you have record revenue you shouldn't have tax increases. Right? As a northern hockey player, I'm thinking, well if you had record revenue you shouldn't have record debt. And as a northern hockey player, if you had record revenue for 10 years you shouldn't have to go to a private sector to borrow money. Like what's up with that? What's up with that? So, Mr. Speaker, then they say, oh perhaps.

And then, Mr. Speaker, we find out they sold the Crown. They sold a number of Crowns already. So where did that money go? Where did that money go? Some say, well geez, I just can't make sense of these conservatives, Mr. Speaker. First of all, they hide behind the Saskatchewan Party banner. And we say, come on out, guys. Come on out. And then now we're calling them out on the debt. Tell the people the truth. The people deserve to know what our state of all our finances is right today. And not an inch, not an inch of any announcement or admission of that debt through the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

Now from the northern hockey player perspective I say, well maybe they're using all that money to stimulate our economy because the economy has gone down the tank. We're finding a lot of problems. So then I turn to my learned colleagues who are much smarter than me and worldly and know the province better than me. I say, well did we build pipelines for our oil and gas sector? They said, not one inch. They didn't build one inch. I said, well aren't they supposed to be conservatives? They're supposed to be doing these things like they always say they are?

Well Harper was only in office for eight or nine years. He didn't have time. The former leader, Wall, well he was so busy trying to solve the world's problems that he didn't have time either. And then the next door neighbour, the premier of Alberta, Prentice at the time, well he was busy too. So all these right wing, conservative leaders did not build one inch of pipeline in the 8 to 10 years that they're leaders of Canada, of Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Not one inch of pipeline built, Mr. Speaker, to tidewater. Not one inch built to tidewater. So the conservatives, you have squandered record revenue and an opportunity to build the legacy to our economy, and you have failed miserably to be able to achieve those objectives.

[20:30]

And who do we see championing the effort to build pipelines,

Mr. Speaker? It is now the Premier of Alberta, Notley. Rachel Notley is now the champion in Western Canada to try and get our product to market, Mr. Speaker. It's not, it's not, Mr. Speaker, Brad Wall. It is not our current Premier. It is not Harper. It is an NDP Premier of Alberta that's championing that pipeline to get the product to market, of course to get it to port, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other issue is the movement of our commodities, things like potash, Mr. Speaker. It's really important. Things that the grain transportation needs that we have in the province, Mr. Speaker. So we think about that. From our perspective we think, well in order for us to strengthen our economy in the long term, we need to address our transportation issues. We are a landlocked province.

We have great producers. The agricultural ability of Saskatchewan is phenomenal. People know what Saskatchewan can do. The Saskatchewan producers are well above, they punch well above their weight, Mr. Speaker, and we hear results of that when we hear the export market building and building. And we are proud of the agricultural sector of this province, Mr. Speaker, as a party.

But when we see them waste \$2 billion on a bypass that can't handle farm equipment, that can't handle trucking length properly, Mr. Speaker, we start to say, well why didn't we embark on a journey to build, to build a solid transportation system to move our product to port? Why didn't we do that? Wasn't that the plan, Mr. Speaker, to begin with, with all the revenues that the Saskatchewan Party inherited? Well guess what, Mr. Speaker? Not an inch of pipeline to port ever built by this government.

And, Mr. Speaker, you look at the notion around the grain transportation crisis. It is what is hurting Saskatchewan and its future right now, and yet there's very little movement. Now you ask the question, why isn't there movement? So I say to the agricultural sector that the Saskatchewan Party let you down. They not only put our province in record debt, Mr. Speaker, they have put their money into places that they completely mismanaged. And a good example of that is the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] and the Regina bypass. That's why, on this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we're holding them to account. We're holding them to account. And this is another good example of how they've lost their way and that's why I tell the people of Saskatchewan this: they are tired, they're old, and they're bankrupt, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we need to get rid of the Saskatchewan Party government now because we can't afford any more years of that kind of style of government because the people of Saskatchewan deserve better, Mr. Speaker.

Now I want to talk a bit about the Throne Speech itself. I was really hoping that we would talk about the steel industry, Mr. Speaker. As a result of Trump's tariffs, there is something that we need to recognize. In the capital city of Regina where Evraz, who has a phenomenal workforce, Mr. Speaker, they have been telling this particular government there are some problems. Not a word of that within the Throne Speech.

And wouldn't it be nice . . . Wouldn't it be nice, Mr. Speaker, if we looked at how we could build a system using Regina steel to build the infrastructure on rail, to build a pipeline for oil, to really begin to address a water crisis that will be soon faced by the

producers of our province? And I spoke at great lengths about that, Mr. Speaker. Not a mention of this in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. So I looked and I looked and there's no promise to build that bold, brave economy, Mr. Speaker, and yet they had record tax increases, they had record revenue, we have record debt, and what do we have to show for it, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely nothing.

But the other matter I paid attention to in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, was the Sixties Scoop, and I really wanted to hear what the government's going to do about the Sixties Scoop. And for those that may not be familiar with the Sixties Scoop, that's when a bunch of Aboriginal, indigenous children were picked up from some of their homes and transferred to all points throughout the world. Many of them ended up in the States. Many of them ended scattered throughout Canada. And a great number of those children were adversely affected. We wanted to hear what was attached to the Sixties Scoop, what was being talked about when they mention the Sixties Scoop, Mr. Speaker. And the Premier has pointed out that they talked about an apology.

And many of the Sixties Scoop survivors that I speak about, Mr. Speaker, they are not pleased with the simple fact that they want to do the apology, Mr. Speaker. I had the privilege of listening to a radio program when they talked about correcting an injustice. People talked about an apology, and a lady spoke at great lengths about atonement, that there has to be a level of atonement by the perpetrator — in this case, the government — that there has to be some corrective action to remediate the harm caused by that particular action. They need to talk about the fact that there has to be a rebuilding of life, of the career possibility of some of the children impacted by the Sixties Scoop, Mr. Speaker.

So an apology is hollow, if not harmful, if the correct actions are not followed through with that apology. If it is a simple apology, Mr. Speaker, then I say to the Premier and to the members of the Saskatchewan Party government that you're doing more harm. And we're not learning the lessons of our past if we continue ignoring the Sixties Scoop survivors' stories of how this had a dreadful, harmful effect on their future as children. So we looked at some of those points.

And exactly what we talked about atonement, when we were talking about the Justice for Our Stolen Children camp that was located outside of the legislative grounds, Mr. Speaker, that's what they're talking about. They had advice, they had guidance for the government, and the Premier did not even take the time to go visit with them and talk to them about what issues were important.

So, Mr. Speaker, on the Sixties Scoop we are paying very, very close attention to that, Mr. Speaker. Because I tell the people of Saskatchewan, this isn't a financial money grab for many of these survivors. They want to see redresses to that past injustice. That's what it's about. They want to see a rebuilding of their lives. They want to see a career opportunity to training, Mr. Speaker. They want to see stability brought to their existence. They want to find that purpose, Mr. Speaker. All that is attached to the level of atonement that the government has when it comes to apologies on matters such as the Sixties Scoop.

So it's really important, Mr. Speaker, that the government get the message, that if you're going to simply do an apology that is

hollow, then you're doing more harm than good. There has to be real action attached to those particular apologies, Mr. Speaker. Otherwise you should not be playing with people's emotions nor lives.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out as well as I look at the history of the Saskatchewan Party . . . And I'll tell you that the people of Saskatchewan, at one time, gave the Saskatchewan Party the opportunity. And I go back to my earlier point. It had record revenues. They ended up having record tax increases. They have had record debt. They have added the burdensome debt of the P3 models which we'll be paying for 20, 30 years. And today where are we as a province?

We're seeing that the economy is shrinking. We're seeing PST [provincial sales tax] on construction costs, Mr. Speaker. We are actually seeing an out-migration of people, and now the bill is coming due. We've long maintained in the opposition ranks that as long as the spending went unchecked, Mr. Speaker, that we would be in this predicament that we are in today. And, Mr. Speaker, we are here.

Now the NDP are not going to adopt the attitude, well we told you so. That is not our role as the opposition. We want to offer opportunity to the people of Saskatchewan to provide us with the opportunity to show what we are able to do when it comes to managing the finances of this province and rebuilding the incredible opportunity of our Crowns and engaging people to resolve some of these long-standing problems that plague our economy, that plague our society, that plague our communities all throughout this land. It is important. We tell that message, Mr. Speaker, because Saskatchewan does need solid leadership.

And I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan the other points that I would raise. Number one, the people of Saskatchewan didn't vote for the hundreds of public sector jobs lost to places like Moose Jaw. And I watched the two members from Moose Jaw sit in this Assembly and vote budget after budget to reduce the amount of public sector jobs that Moose Jaw has lost. Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity to visit Moose Jaw and we saw the decimation of this Sask Party's cuts to the public sector. Their war against the working men and women has to be told to the rest of Saskatchewan. And Moose Jaw, despite the awful treatment that they got from the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, their members continue voting in favour of the budget that have cuts to services, cuts to opportunities, and cuts to employees out there.

There's no way that any one of the members of Moose Jaw, the two members here today, can stand up and say they didn't lose hundreds of public sector jobs out of Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is they did that to Moose Jaw. And I'll tell you right now that Moose Jaw has no appetite for the Sask Party and that there's going to be a collection of debt come next provincial election. And I can tell the members from Moose Jaw, shame on you for not standing up for your brother and sister within the public sector. Shame on both of you. You should have stood up and said no. But you sat there and you clapped and you got up and you voted for them. And I say shame, shame for not standing up for the people that stood with you on many times to help.

And I say again that once we get proper representation from Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, instead of backbenchers that will stand

up and vote how they're told to vote, Mr. Speaker, that's when Moose Jaw will start seeing benefits of working closely with the government, Mr. Speaker.

Then we talk about again the shutdown of STC. When they talk about the shutdown of STC . . . Mr. Speaker, the member from Prince Albert Carlton was talking about STC a while back, a couple of years ago. And he said, we cannot afford to be continue subsidizing the bus service. It is \$14 million. Then he added, over 10 years it's 140 million. Well he ended up adding on; he added on another 20 million.

They throw figures in there, Mr. Speaker, and the bottom line is I know that they didn't even assess the cost of transportation of a number of services that the government needed to get: things like water treatment analysis done on some of the remote communities; some of the blood work of some of our hospitals getting to the larger centres for testing on time. They didn't talk about the delivery cost to government. They didn't incorporate any of that, Mr. Speaker.

So what they said . . . To the library service. The list goes on. STC provided a valuable service, Mr. Speaker, and they done a lot of great work to strengthen Saskatchewan far and wide.

And then, Mr. Speaker, they said, oh, we can't afford the subsidy, the member from Prince Albert Carlton said. And then, Mr. Speaker, we hear now the member from Prince Albert Carlton, he's standing there and they're voting for a subsidy, not for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They're voting for a subsidy, not to help people travel from remote locations for medical appointments, Mr. Speaker. They voted for a subsidy, not to help an elderly couple come to visit their grandkids at a reasonable fare from some of the rural parts of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

What they did, Mr. Speaker, is they put half a million dollars into a bus run to haul workers to the plant out in Loblaw store at the GTH. They spent \$500,000 hauling the workers, the workers to Loblaw. And the owner of Loblaw, Mr. Speaker, is the 16th richest man in the world. Not in Saskatchewan — we're talking about the world, Mr. Speaker.

So they couldn't find the money to keep the transportation company going and help recover costs on a very smart basis, Mr. Speaker. Instead they turn around and they said, we'll spend \$500,000 to transport workers to Loblaw out at the GTH so the 16th richest man in the world can get even richer, Mr. Speaker.

[20:45]

That's what the Saskatchewan Party did. And yesterday they recanted and said, oh, maybe that wasn't right. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's what we mean on this side of the Assembly. They have done so many things wrong, so many things wrong. And the people of Saskatchewan didn't vote for that, Mr. Speaker. They didn't vote for that.

And never mind talking about subsidizing transportation costs for billionaires, Mr. Speaker. What of the GTH? We asked the question, how much did Loblaw pay for their property? They were so desperate to get tenants at GTH so they could claim success at GTH, and yet the more they argue about it, Mr.

Speaker, the more Saskatchewan people are finding out how they've handled that whole GTH. And the Regina bypass, horribly so.

Mr. Speaker, that's exactly why they continue to glean over some of the issues that plagued the GTH, some of the money they spent, Mr. Speaker, and even went so far where one day we understood they were trying to sell a borrow pit. And it's a big hole. So I'm saying, how does that work? How do you sell a hole? Like, what are you going to build, a massive swimming pool? What are you going to put on there? A lake, maybe, for the ducks?

You know, like I'm trying to figure how do you sell a hole in the GTH. Well again, being a northern hockey player, saying, well we never could sell a hole in the North for anything. You don't sell holes in the North because that's empty space. And that's exactly what I think happened to that person that tried to sell that from the government.

And what makes it worse, Mr. Speaker, all their mismanagement attached to the GTH and the scandal and the waste, Mr. Speaker, they're now saying, oh the city of Regina will now pay. And I'm saying to the northern hockey player, I'm saying, hey, to my Regina colleagues, they're trying to make the city pay for their mistakes. Well, what the heck's up with that?

And the property taxes are going to go through the roof here in Regina because the Sask Party mismanagement. And then we turn around and we find out that the combines can't go in these overpasses. And now we find out that even the design flaw of the width of some of the overpasses, now even the semi-truck, semi-trailers can't get through as well. There are some significant design flaws, Mr. Speaker. And we spent \$2 billion on that, Mr. Speaker.

So the people of Saskatchewan didn't vote for that. The legacy of debt, as I mentioned earlier, where two years from now we're going to owe \$23 billion. That's the debt projected for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Again, despite record revenues, and they could not tax people more because they went to that avenue once too often. There wasn't a tax that this conservative party did not increase, Mr. Speaker. They looked at every possible tax they could find, Mr. Speaker — the rich guys got away with it — but every possible tax they could find.

I remember going . . . I talked about this earlier, Mr. Speaker. I said I went to have a pizza and I asked the . . . I used to pay five bucks for a piece of pizza. So I went there and said, I'd like to have a piece of pizza. And so I put five bucks on the counter and the lady said, I'm sorry, it's \$5.25 now. I said, why is it \$5.25? Oh, because the fast food now is being taxed by the Sask Party government.

Insurance, life insurance policies, Mr. Speaker, are being taxed by the Sask Party government. It's almost embarrassing, Mr. Speaker, to equate conservative with the tax-and-spend Saskatchewan Party over there. But that, it confuses me. Again, a northern hockey player saying, well aren't they supposed to be against tax increases? My colleague said, well apparently that's what they say to people. But a billion-dollar tax increase in one year — well, Mr. Speaker, that is a sham and that is a shame.

This Saskatchewan Party government has got to go, Mr. Speaker. People did not vote for a lack of leadership when it comes to answering the question, how do we get our goods to market in a landlocked province? You had record revenue and you've disappointed the people that produce a lot of goods in this province — the oil and gas sector, the potash industry, the agricultural sector, Mr. Speaker. They had record revenue. They couldn't get the job done. Today as farmers struggle to get their commodities to market, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party had the opportunity and they failed miserably.

And now they talk about the power bills that we have. You get home; you open your power bill. You're going to see over the last number of months and years, the power bill has increased. People are paying more for their power, Mr. Speaker. And the reason why is this government established this carbon plan. Going to get rid of carbon, they said, much like what the federal Liberals are talking about.

So what they said is, they would go to a company saying, look, instead of us . . . through SaskPower, the stacks, we'll capture that carbon. We'll pump the carbon underground and that will push out more oil and that will in essence give you as an oil company more chances of recovering that oil that needs the gas to push it out from underground. Pretty simple idea, Mr. Speaker. Pretty good idea overall, in terms of getting enhanced oil recovery.

But the problem is, Mr. Speaker, in the expertise of the Saskatchewan Party, they signed agreements. And part of the signed agreement says, well if you don't produce enough of that carbon gas to push up our oil, you're going to pay us a penalty, is what the oil and gas company did. And guess what, Mr. Speaker. We've been paying those guys pretty steady. We've been paying them pretty steady, so we're paying somebody else to get rid of the carbon that we're responsible for, and we're paying for. So instead of the Saskatchewan Party talking about that, Mr. Speaker . . . They're not going to tell the people of Saskatchewan, the 400,000 homes, guess what — your power bill is going up because we couldn't figure out how to negotiate with the oil and gas company.

So now the people that are using our power in the province of Saskatchewan through SaskPower, they're paying a carbon capture tax, Mr. Speaker. And when they get up and they cry foul with the federal Liberals about this carbon tax, this side of the Assembly, we laugh because the problem is the people of Saskatchewan have been paying this carbon tax on their power bills, Mr. Speaker, for a number of years since the Saskatchewan Party has been in power.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other matter I spoke about earlier when I talked about the incredible missed opportunity that the people of Saskatchewan have had over the years, when we talked about the Justice for Our Stolen Children camp that was located outside the Assembly, the indigenous people wanted reconciliation. They wanted atonement. They wanted a recognition that perhaps there was problems within the child welfare system that we could collectively work towards to address, Mr. Speaker. And they sat out there and the courage and the amount of discussion they had. And, Mr. Speaker, above all else, the respectful process in which they expressed their view, Mr. Speaker, fell on deaf ears.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have said it time and time again in this Assembly, that if you embrace the indigenous people of this province and really begin, really begin to engage them to the extent that they should be and want to be engaged and that they ought to be engaged, Mr. Speaker, that is a \$90 billion opportunity for Saskatchewan — 90 billion, not million; 90 billion. Studies have shown conclusively that this is good for business. Yet the Saskatchewan Party has again failed on that front.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan didn't vote for the harmful, hurtful cuts to essential services throughout our land. They didn't vote for that. They didn't vote for that in Moose Jaw. They didn't vote for that in Buffalo Narrows when they closed down our correctional centre. They didn't vote for any of the closures and the hurtful, harmful cuts that the people of Saskatchewan had to suffer, Mr. Speaker. They didn't vote for that.

And we know on this side that the tides are turning, Mr. Speaker. People are starting to wake up to the fact that the Saskatchewan Party have failed miserably on that front as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of things that I'll tell people what the Saskatchewan Party do. We sit here and we watch them and listen to them every day and they do the same thing over and over. Their answer to all this crisis, Mr. Speaker, is tell everybody, oh don't worry; we're taking care of everything. Well people are worried. We see the amount of mortgages being in default in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We see the rise in costs of raising families in the province of Saskatchewan. We see the challenges around health care, Mr. Speaker. We hear often about the education dilemma that's felt all throughout our province, Mr. Speaker. People are under extreme pressure right now, and all the Saskatchewan Party can do is tell everybody, don't worry; be happy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is not leadership. But the moment you challenge the Saskatchewan Party or conservative member in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, they start to point fingers, Mr. Speaker. That's why, when I hear the member from Moosomin or the member from Prince Albert Carlton or the member from Cannington talk about the NDP in the past, that is not leadership, Mr. Speaker. They have refused to take responsibility for their inaction and inability to govern. That is the issue, Mr. Speaker. And as they point out, which is a shame and a sham, as they point out the history in this province, they omit key parts of that history as to why decisions were made in those days under those tough circumstances. And that's exactly what we see every day from the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

They're not answering critical questions around the GTH, Mr. Speaker. They're stonewalling. And when you have accomplished people in the opposition . . . We have three very capable lawyers within our midst, Mr. Speaker. And the theme is the RCMP did not have enough evidence on the GTH. They did not have enough evidence. And that's why we're calling today and I've always called for a judicial inquiry into the matter to finally shine light on what happened, Mr. Speaker, what happened. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we don't support the carbon tax that's being imposed on us by the federal government, but I'll tell you one

thing. They use that as a diversion from their inability to govern. Every day they talk about the carbon tax, that they tell people, oh the evil carbon tax, the evil carbon tax. Well I tell the people of Saskatchewan, pay closer attention to how they're running our finances. Pay closer attention of how they're ignoring the indigenous community, Mr. Speaker. Pay close attention of how they're not developing a solid transportation system to get our goods to market. Then all of a sudden the shine comes off the Saskatchewan Party.

And I tell the people of Saskatchewan that it's not too late. It's not too late to send these guys a message. And I can tell you today, Mr. Speaker, that this government's old; they're tired. And they're not only bankrupt of money, they're bankrupt of ideas as well, Mr. Speaker. And that's when you should step aside and let the NDP come in, alongside the people of Saskatchewan, and bring this province back to greatness, which this province deserves, Mr. Speaker.

Again, that is not leadership, Mr. Speaker. All they do is point fingers, and that's typical of conservatives everywhere they go. Their only MO, Mr. Speaker, is to point at the other guys. And it is my dream for people to pay very close attention to what the conservatives do, not just in our province but throughout the country.

It's very important to point out what the Saskatchewan Party is doing wrong, Mr. Speaker, instead of following their fingers as they point to others, to blame others. That's not leadership, Mr. Speaker. And I go back to my earlier comments, Mr. Speaker, that we need leadership at this critical time in the history of Saskatchewan.

Now the other thing I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, which is really important, I watch what goes on over there and I'm not sure exactly which seat but I know Saskatoon Eastview is one of the seats and Regina Walsh Acres is the other. Currently there's two Saskatchewan Party MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], okay, and those two Saskatchewan Party MLAs, guess what, Mr. Speaker. They are now nominated Conservative candidates federally. They both are nominated in their appropriate ridings to run federally. So I'm saying to them today, well you guys are . . . You want out of here so bad because you messed things up in Saskatchewan. You want to be a federal candidate. Well why don't you run federally, and why are you still here?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan, they're being paid \$100,000 a year, these two members from the Saskatchewan Party, to campaign as federal Conservative candidates. And the Saskatchewan taxpayer is paying for it. The billboards, who's paying for that? The travel, who's paying for that, Mr. Speaker? Their salary, who's paying for that?

[21:00]

Well I would say to them, both those members, the member from Saskatoon Eastview and the member from Regina Walsh Acres, if you have other ambitions, if you have other desires, seek them. Don't sit here and campaign on our dime. And the message I have for them today, Mr. Speaker: do not be surprised if a private member's bill comes forward making amendments to *The Election Act* that would dictate that if you're seeking and you are

a duly elected, nominated candidate of a different riding for a different purpose — a federal election as an example — that you ought to step down as a provincial MLA because it's fundamentally wrong that we continue paying for their campaign bill, Mr. Speaker. That is not what the people of Saskatchewan voted for.

So again in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I leave on this note: record revenues, record tax increases, record debt, Mr. Speaker. And where did that have the people of Saskatchewan? That is why, Mr. Speaker, we need to get rid of this tired, old government that Saskatchewan cannot afford any more years under their regime and under their watch, Mr. Speaker. We simply cannot afford it for a number of moral, financial, and leadership matters, Mr. Speaker.

So I'd point out leadership does matter in the province of Saskatchewan. And as one of our former leaders of the New Democratic Party often said, it is never too late to dream of a better world, Mr. Speaker. And we can help develop that through strengthening our Crowns, engaging the indigenous community, and protecting agricultural interests, because it's a mainstay of our economy. We can get the job done, Mr. Speaker.

So on that note, I move that I'll be supporting the amendment . . . Sorry, Mr. Speaker, that I'll be supporting the amendment being brought forward by my colleague and not voting for the Throne Speech being presented by the Saskatchewan/Conservative Party.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Doke: — Let the games begin. No light. There we go. Well, Mr. Speaker, I thought I'd make a few corrections on the member from Athabasca, but I don't have that much time. So thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure that I stand here today in the House to give my reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I'd first like to start off by thanking a few very important people in my life, first and foremost my wife, Valerie. Thank you for continuing to stand by and support me and make it possible for me to be here today. You keep our day-to-day operations at home running with such ease and grace, and I could not have done this without you. I would also like to thank my two constituency assistants, Cheryl Hume who works full time and Maureen Paron who is a part-time office. You ladies keep my office running smoothly, and you are a great asset for my constituents. I would also like to thank the people of Cut Knife-Turtleford who have supported me and who I am privileged to represent as a member of the Saskatchewan Party.

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The member from Cut Knife-Turtleford has the floor. I would ask members to let the member deliver his comments and represent his constituents. I recognize the member.

Mr. Doke: — It's great to be on at night, I can tell you that. Mr. Speaker, our government's three-year plan to reduce the province's dependency on resource revenue and return the budget to balance remains on track. After a \$1.2 billion deficit in

2016-17, our government made some difficult but necessary decisions in 2017-18 budget. Those decisions reduced the 2017-18 deficit to 303 million. This past spring the Finance minister delivered the 2018-19 budget which kept the government's three-year budget plan on track while also improving investments for Saskatchewan people.

Moody's reconfirmed the AAA credit rating score for Saskatchewan, making our province one of only two Canadian provinces to achieve Moody's highest credit rating. During this session our government will deliver the 2019-20 budget and it will be a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a little bit about the Saskatchewan economy. Strong financial management provides a solid foundation for the province's economy, and this year Saskatchewan has seen clear signs of an improving economy. Our population continues to grow, reaching 1.162 million people as of July 1st, an increase of more than 11,000 this past year and 160,000 in the past 11 years. During that time, Saskatchewan has enjoyed the second-fastest rate of job growth in the country with 62,700 more people working in our province. Saskatchewan's gross domestic product has grown from 49 billion in 2007 to more than 60 billion in 2017, an increase of more than 22 per cent in the decade. Mr. Speaker, during that time, public and private capital investment grew at five times the national rate, increasing by 70 per cent to more than \$14 billion.

Mr. Speaker, the self-appointed critic for the economy is the Leader of the Opposition. His idea of boosting the economy is to support a carbon tax, raise taxes on corporations, close pipelines, and raise royalties, something that Premier Calvert realized that maybe the reason we seen 16 years of decline was because the royalties were too high. Mr. Speaker, diagnosing the economy is not like diagnosing a bad case of hemorrhoids where you put a little Preparation H on it and it'll heal.

Mr. Speaker, the Fraser Institute's 2017 survey for mining investments ranked Saskatchewan second out of 91 jurisdictions in the world for mining investment attractiveness. Our government will continue exploring ways to maintain and improve the competitiveness of our oil and gas industry.

Oil and gas is extremely important industry in the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency. Currently there are five SAGD oil production facilities under construction at various stages. There are 10 producing SAGD plants in operation already, producing anywhere from 6,000 barrels a day to 30,000 barrels a day depending on the plant. These plants, when under construction, supply hundreds of good-paying jobs and when completed employ 20 to 30 full-time employees depending on their size. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Husky Energy, Serafina Energy, CNRL [Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.], Baytex, and all the service companies who have invested in the Northwest.

Mr. Speaker, with very few pipelines, trucking is the primary way of moving oil to the loading facilities. As a government we recognize that, and that is why we have upgraded 16 kilometres of Highway 26 between Vawn and Edam. Also the construction of passing lanes from North Battleford to Cochin are near completion. The Highway 4 route has seen a drastic increase in truck traffic as there are no rail lines to the North. Mr. Speaker, pulp, OSB [oriented strand board], oil, and grain deliveries all

come down Highway 4 and these improvements will make a safer driving experience.

Our government understands the significant role transportation infrastructure plays in the success of Saskatchewan, enabling growth and making travel safer for everyone. That's why more than 13 000 kilometres of highways have been built or improved and 275 bridges have been repaired or replaced since 2007. Mr. Speaker, just this month the Chief Mistawasis bridge in north Saskatoon was open to traffic. One of the most significant projects is the Regina bypass, which offers a long-term safety solution for Regina and the surrounding area. The Regina bypass will be completed next October, on time and on budget. 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.

Mr. Speaker, one year ago our government completed 18 new joint-use schools — I won't get on to how many were closed by the NDP because it's a bit of a nerve — that will provide space for more than 11,000 students and remain in like-new condition for the next 30 years thanks to our government's innovative P3 contracts.

Mr. Speaker, our government is nearing completion of the new provincial psychiatric hospital in North Battleford. Once complete, the new state-of-the-art hospital will be among the most innovative mental health treatment centres in the country and ensure those facing significant mental health needs receive the best treatment available. Through a phased-in approach, 188 mental health beds will be available to deliver the mental health care and support, and an adjoining correctional facility will provide 96 beds for offenders living with mental health challenges. This facility, located in The Battlefords, employs many people from the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency, and I encourage everyone to take advantage of the public tours that are taking place now as it an unbelievable facility.

Mr. Speaker, improving safety for Saskatchewan people is a priority for our government. The protection and response team known as the PRT was created one year ago to reduce crime particularly in rural areas, by bringing together highway patrol officers, conservation officers, the RCMP, and municipal officers. The PRT has improved response times and enhanced officer visibility in rural Saskatchewan. Since the operational launch of the PRT in April, conservation officers and highway patrol officers have assisted with more than 1,300 PRT-related accidents, including responses to 83 emergency 911 calls.

PRT vehicles are also equipped with automatic licence plate readers funded by SGI. Mr. Speaker, as these devices can scan licence plates, they alert officers if a vehicle is stolen, is connected to a crime, or if the vehicle is connected to a driver who has been suspended for impaired driving or other reasons.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Highway is implementing an intersection safety strategy to reduce the potential for collisions at highway intersections. Highways has already conducted a preliminary review of more than 900 intersections and has dedicated \$700,000 this year to clearing sightlines and improving intersection safety.

The budget for safety improvement program, which funds

projects like turning lanes, lighting, guard rails, and rumble strips, was increased from 1.1 million in 2007 to 7 million in 2018. Our government is committed to further increasing funding for this important safety initiative in next year's budget.

Mr. Speaker, cannabis is now legal across the country and our government has implemented a framework and retail model to prioritize public health and safety while balancing the need to provide legal access. The competitive private model for distribution and retail sale of cannabis in Saskatchewan has been chosen to ensure a safe, regulated supply of cannabis and minimize the upfront costs to taxpayers. Our government has also chosen the legal age of consumption to be 19 and has taken a zero tolerance approach for drug-impaired driving.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the benefits of regional policing services provide for our communities. During this session our government will amend *The Police Act* to enable rural municipalities and municipalities with populations under 500 to join regional police services.

Mr. Speaker, a focus on more effectively delivering health care services led our government to a transition of 12 health care regions into the Saskatchewan Health Authority last December. By moving to a single authority, our government expects to save between 10 and 20 million annually while providing more coordinated care. Work is under way to establish performance-based ambulance contracts with the goal of reducing rural response times and ensuring the closest ambulance available is dispatched. Today in our province nearly 90,000 surgeries are performed every year, and there are 44 per cent fewer patients waiting for more than three months for surgery than a decade ago. Our government remains committed to reducing wait times in hospital emergency departments.

Mr. Speaker, while both Saskatchewan's economy and our provincial finances are showing signs of improvement, serious threats remain. Our government will continue to show strong leadership by standing up for Saskatchewan in response to these threats. A very real challenge to our province is a federal carbon tax. The tax is an ineffective policy that will not significantly reduce emissions. Instead, Mr. Speaker, it will harm our economy and make life less affordable for Saskatchewan people. Recent research from the University of Regina confirms a carbon tax would reduce our provincial GDP by 16 billion by 2030. At the same time, Ottawa's plan would only reduce emissions by 1 per cent.

The government is taking action to stand up for Saskatchewan communities, families, businesses, and jobs by challenging the federal carbon tax in court. Mr. Speaker, not long ago Saskatchewan stood alone in defending our citizens against the federal carbon tax, but not anymore. The new Government of Ontario, the Government of Manitoba, the Government of Prince Edward Island, and the new government in New Brunswick will also join our fight against the carbon tax.

At the same time our government is fighting the federal carbon tax, it is also taking meaningful action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by implementing the Prairie Resilience climate change strategy, which the federal government has approved. Mr. Speaker, this plan includes commitments to reduce annual emissions by 12 million tonnes by 2030 by reducing emissions

from electrical generation by 40 per cent, decreasing methane emissions from upstream oil and gas production by 40 per cent, and implementing output-based performance standards for heavy industry.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is an export-driven province. Agricultural exports are the foundation for the province's economy, accounting for almost half of the total exports. In 2017 Saskatchewan's agricultural exports were the fourth largest in history of the province with total sales of \$13.6 billion. Because of Saskatchewan's location, our province is heavily reliant on transportation to get our products to the markets that is needed in 150 countries around the world.

[21:15]

However this journey from Saskatchewan fields to markets around the world faces bumps along the way. This spring our farmers once again faced a major backlog for their crops. Our government pushed the federal government to address this problem and Bill C-49, the *Transportation Modernization Act*, was passed by the federal government in May. This Act allows for rail companies to be penalized if they do not deliver the promised railcars.

Mr. Speaker, with the 2018 harvest wrapping up in most areas, we are hopeful this winter and spring we'll see our crops arrive on time to its many destinations around the world without any backlogs for our producers. Our government will continue to advocate on behalf of our farmers and ranchers to ensure that their produce reaches markets around the world in a timely and efficient manner.

In order to free up rail lines for our agriculture industry, we need to ensure rail lines are not an above-ground pipeline for oil. Our government will stand up for the jobs our oil and gas industry creates by continuing to press the federal government to take immediate action to get the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion built and to withdraw Bill C-69.

Our government will always stand up for the people of Saskatchewan and the interests of our province. It wasn't that long ago we saw people leaving Saskatchewan for other opportunities, jobs, and a better quality of life. The NDP drove people out of Saskatchewan and the population dropped by 22,000 people from 1996 to 2007. We'll never go back to the dark days of the NDP, and that is why I will be supporting the Throne Speech and not the amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I once again appreciate the opportunity to provide support to my government's Throne Speech. And I would like to thank the members that have spoken before me on their eloquence, some more than others, and passion, some more than others, and their support that they have shown for the constituents of this province.

In a speech to some school students earlier this month, I identified for them the incredibly diverse business background that we have as expressed by a number of members on our side.

You know, and I think it's worth reminding our audience where kind of the background of some of our caucus colleagues when it comes to business. We certainly have a number of farmers here. We have a grocery store owner. We have car dealers. We have aerial applicators. We have business consultants. We have many business owners. And I think this province is well served by people who understand business.

And while I'm in that mode, I'd also like to thank our Premier for his leadership and guidance that he's shown to this province in some relatively challenging times. In the relatively short time that he's been in this role, he has met with provincial and federal leaders, with US [United States] leadership, been on a trade mission to China, all to ensure that this province is on everyone's radar.

The Premier, within weeks of taking on the new role, had to provide a very steady hand to a province that was reeling after the Humboldt Bronco tragedy. There was really nothing to ease him into the new position but a steady demeanour and careful guiding hand has really served him and us very well.

I know we had something special, and I remember recalling the description by my in-laws, Irwin and Louella Gatzke, who farmed in the Shellbrook area. They were telling me about this ambitious young man who is running a custom crop spraying business while he was paying his way through university. He would be out in the field by 5 in the morning, and he wouldn't go home until the job was done. He was careful. He was conscientious. And he ran a good business. All words expressed by my in-laws, and I'm not sure they expressed the same thing about me. But while contemplating really whether I really wanted to be involved in this business, I was encouraged by Irwin and Louella to talk to their MLA from Shellbrook-Rosthern. They said he was extremely well liked in his constituency, and he was making a difference. And since that first conversation I have considered him to be a mentor whose vision of this province I've come to appreciate in so many ways.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't thank my wife, Carla, who has to eat a lot of meals by herself, especially since I've taken on a few more responsibilities since becoming minister. I value her thoughts and opinions, especially from her experience as a town administrator for our community of Churchbridge. She has had to cope with a lot of distractions, quite a few phone calls, but I have yet to hear her complain about it. And she does admit that she has done a lot more scrapbooking since I haven't been at home.

I'd also like to take a minute to thank my constituency assistant, Rick McIntyre, who has been invaluable as a representative for me in the constituency. He's a professional when dealing with all the issues that are given him, and he also golfs far better than me, so he's really represented me well in that role throughout constituency events.

And I also would like to take the opportunity to recognize the great people that live in the constituency of Melville-Saltcoats. We depend on agriculture, on potash, and CN rail in our constituency, so we've endured a lot of hardships, really, over the last few years, but continue to be cautiously optimistic about our future.

And I appreciate my constituents' encouragement and appreciation for the work that we've done for them and for the more that we have yet to do. And I feel privileged that you have put your faith in me to look after your interests.

I'd also like to provide encouragement to the last few remaining producers who continue to struggle harvesting their crops and getting their fields prepared for next year. And I know they're treating every good harvest day like it's the last one that they're going to have this year. And this government appreciates their investment and the risk that every producer makes every year for this province.

In the ministry office, in room 30, we have some incredible people, like Grant McLellan, my chief of staff, who has the wisdom of the portfolio as if he's been in that position for a decade or two. Tennille Olson has supported me in some good and not so good events and driving conditions. Michael Young is a great person to bounce some serious issues off and does very detailed research. Donna Rybchuk has done an admirable job managing our office schedule, which I understand can be a little hectic most of the time. And our new addition, Kelly Deck, has brought some youthful enthusiasm to our office regardless of the task.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech provides insight into where this government has been and to where it's headed. The number one issue, the number one issue that I hear about in my constituency of Melville-Saltcoats is supporting our direction in balancing the budget in 2019-20. Constituents are, to put it mildly, extremely disappointed in our federal government in continuing to spend their money in reckless abandon on projects that they believe they should not be involved in, a pipeline for example, or in areas that they believe has no benefit to them or their children. A broken promise in keeping the federal budget to \$10 billion, long gone. Against that backdrop my constituents appreciate the efforts that this government, that their government, has made in getting back to balance and spending money on tangible items that are benefiting them, their community, and their children.

Our constituency has been blessed with the new school in Langenburg, \$23 million; significant investments in the Langenburg activity centre, 220,000; the opening of a new group home in Esterhazy, 400,000; new water treatment plants in Melville, 3.4 million; a new drinking water reservoir in Grayson, 157,000; new road resurfacing on the 80, on the 47, on the 9; and new culverts under numerous highways and throughout — millions. My constituents are not asking where the money went, they drive on it, they send their kids to it, and they drink from it every day.

A balanced budget means my constituents watch a AAA credit rating keep their government's borrowing costs down, keeping debt repayment costs down to ensure that their kids and grandchildren aren't expected to pay for it in the future. It will ensure that personal and business tax rates are kept at manageable levels in the future. Mr. Speaker, my constituents are having a difficult time also accepting that if the NDP were allowed to get back in, they plan to increase spending by over \$2.5 billion per year, \$10 billion over four years, which would ensure that future generations in this province, whoever are left here, would be far worse off financially than their parents or the grandparents. Their only possible means of increasing revenue would be to tax and

burn the provincial economy.

This has not worked well in neighbouring NDP jurisdictions. Let's not get fooled by the job illusion that the Alberta government has been attempting to sell us on. The financial report article from August 22nd, 2017 highlighted the "Alberta's job mirage." And this is an article that identified of the 48,500 jobs created in Alberta during the period of June 2016 to June 2017, 41,900 "... were in the public sector, financed by deficits of over \$10 billion at the provincial level and of nearly \$30 billion in Ottawa." I don't expect that's going to fly in Saskatchewan.

The article further explains:

The logic is [really] that Alberta is most prosperous when investments in the economy are made by NDP politicians. The NDP imagines that it alone possesses the knowledge on how best to deploy economic resources to create the best jobs and the most prosperity — and that people who actually run profitable job-creating businesses possess [really] no such knowledge.

Again this feeds into the narrative of the NDP taxing those that create wealth, jobs, and prosperity in this province. And a fact I think that the member from Martensville-Warman aptly described on Thursday.

Mr. Speaker, we have turned the corner on improving this economy. Last night I was talking to my youngest son, Matthew, who's a sales engineer working out of Toronto. He's marketing high-end measuring devices. He indicated that he has had a significant uptick in calls generated from Saskatchewan businesses just in the last few weeks. They are ready to pull the trigger on some major capital investments.

My oldest son, Michael, is working for an engineering company in the city that is extremely busy working on various projects for the resource sector within the province. They and their contractors are having a very difficult time keeping up. Both of these stories, I believe, are economic indicators that we are turning the corner.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to stand with my government in standing up against the federally imposed carbon tax. I'm proud of the fact that this government is committed to stand up for Saskatchewan communities, families, businesses, and jobs by challenging the federal carbon tax in court.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think that we're on the wrong side of this issue when we have over 88 per cent of Saskatchewan people and 72 per cent of all Canadians supporting this government's decision to challenge this tax in court.

Just to highlight the hypocrisy of this tax, my nephew from Alberta, who's going to school at the U of R [University of Regina], just sent me a tax notice where he's been assessed a penalty because he doesn't qualify for the Alberta climate leadership adjustment rebate. He comes from Cochrane, Alberta. The kid drives a two-door Fiat and is going to university. So try and figure that one out. I don't get it.

Mr. Speaker, this government believes in our plan, and that's the

Prairie Resilience climate change strategy. This plan believes in this province's people, in ingenuity, and making a difference by actually reducing greenhouse gas. Our citizens in this province just want to make their environment better, and they want to do it from the bottom up, to working together in partnership and planning that'll have an impact on global emissions, not just here in Saskatchewan.

The Prairie Resilience plan is going to achieve meaningful targets of reduction by a gradual movement towards green energy, by decreasing methane emissions from upstream oil and gas production by 40 per cent through a coordinated action plan, not by handcuffing the industry with burdensome taxes and creating an increasingly non-competitive business environment.

Our ag sector continues to provide significant opportunities in carbon sequestration through innovation and technology. Direct seeding and reduced tillage tools were invented in Saskatchewan by implement manufacturers like Seed Hawk, like SeedMaster, Conserva Pak, Bourgault, Morris Industries, Flexi-Coil, Degelman Industries, and Brandt Industries, to name just a few. These manufacturers are now part of a worldwide network of seeding and tillage tool manufacturers that have the majority still designed, built, and manufactured in this province.

The crop development centre out at the University of Saskatchewan continues to develop and utilize new genetics in pulse crops including lentil, field pea, chickpeas, and faba bean. We continue to have one of the world's best plant-breeding facilities and plant breeders in the world located in our province, in Saskatoon. Innovation is found at the local level.

Mr. Speaker, in my constituency I have Terry Aberhart and family who own and operate Suregrowth Technologies in Langenburg. They utilize the most current technology available to provide producers in eastern Saskatchewan and western Manitoba with soil testing, variable rate, and precision farming advice. This provides producers with a very efficient fertilizer management system, ensuring minimal nutrient loss. Inefficient nutrient application has been blamed on carbon release. Terry represents local ag innovation that is helping the ag industry do its part to reduce the carbon footprint.

The carbon capture and storage unit at Boundary dam 3 has removed more than 2 million tonnes of carbon emissions from the atmosphere. That's equivalent to 2 million 40-year-old trees absorbing carbon over their lifetime. That's equivalent of carbon released from 1 billion litres of gas combusted, or taking 300,000 cars off that road in a year. The CCS [carbon capture and storage] unit at Boundary was the world's first commercial-scale plant equipped for carbon capture removal. And that was built here in Saskatchewan — not somewhere in the US, not somewhere in China, not in Europe — here in Saskatchewan.

So I'm not really sure what we could have constructed in that time that allowed us to sequester that much carbon in that short of a window, regardless of any of the industries.

This also allowed a further analysis of our energy production industry in this province. So we can now assess where we're headed and what we need to invest in in the future while immediately achieving results. So even with our movement towards 50 per cent renewable capacity by 2030, we must still

provide backup generation of over 110 per cent baseload power-producing capacity to ensure that during those extended periods of say, minimal wind — could be two or three weeks at a time — or maybe 40 days of overcast conditions, that our citizens will still be able to keep their lights on and heat their homes.

[21:30]

I follow a Twitter site called Reliable AB Energy under the handle of @ReliableAB. And it captures at any time the amount of electricity produced by fossil fuels and the amount produced by wind and solar; the contribution to their main grid at any time; and the percentage of capacity. For instance, at this time solar is now providing 0.00 per cent of capacity and producing 0.000 per cent of total production.

This province continues to develop renewable energy at a sustainable and a responsible rate including flare gas energy production from oil and gas facilities. Innovation is what we do best in this province.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other initiatives in this Throne Speech that are going to improve the lives of my constituents, whether it's the ongoing protection and response team that's going to utilize conservation officers and highway patrol officers to help reduce rural crime. Or maybe it's the implementation of Clare's Law that's going to help provide a framework for police services to assist in reducing risk to individuals with potential violent partners. The amendments to the Sask employment Act are going to allow for more family time with critically ill family members. Or maybe it's extending parental leave or maternity leave.

Or it's going to be the improvements that we're going to be making with commercial driving training. And the significant investment that we're currently unrolling in improving rural cellular coverage throughout the province. Or it might be the amendments that we plan on making to *The Police Act*. Or introducing legislation on trespass laws to balance the needs of property owners with public recreation use.

We've been busy since 2016 when we were given the renewed mandate to govern, passing or making changes to over 60 pieces of legislation. This has included the creation of the Saskatchewan Health Authority, the single Saskatchewan health authority; improved impaired driving laws; the Sask lobbyist Act; introducing laws to help workers suffering from PTSD; or providing tow truck drivers with safer lighting displays. And there are many more that could be introduced in this next legislative session that have been initiated by residents and stakeholders in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to indulge my colleagues with some of the Throne Speech initiatives and other activities from within our ministry. Of significant importance is the working towards meaningful apologies to the Sixties Scoop survivors in our province who were impacted by past government policies of child apprehension and adoption.

We're currently supporting the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Saskatchewan who have done a remarkable job, I believe, in organizing and facilitating a number of sharing circles around the

province. These circles are designed to encourage survivors to share their stories and provide respectful conversations about the Scoop and the effect that it's had on them and their families.

These events are giving survivors a voice, and also a voice to provide guidance to us as to what will be a meaningful apology to them. To date we have had a number of MLAs and cabinet ministers attend to listen to the survivor stories. An apology from the Premier will follow once we've had an opportunity to receive feedback from SSIS [Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society] group.

Our ministry continues to support the North through infrastructure funding as well, and supporting other ministries in their approach to our indigenous stakeholders' issues. Since 2007 our government has placed over \$129 million of infrastructure dollars into the North. This is funding new waste water treatment facilities, clean water supply projects, or lagoon expansions or increasing reservoir capacity, monies that have gone to virtually every community in the North during this time. More needs to happen, and it will, as we continue to help our northern communities to build capacity and continue towards improving services to their residents.

However I have also made it a priority to visit the North. And I have visited many of the larger communities more than once in the past nine months since I was appointed. I even stopped by to visit the MLA for Athabasca at his home in Ile-a-la-Crosse. So even he can attest to my focus on the North.

Our government has developed a new four-year mineral development strategy that creates an incentive program to encourage mineral exploration and will increase the amount of geophysical data that's going to be available. This will assist in opening up many more job opportunities for our workforce in the North.

In health care there will be an expansion to the remote presence technology which will continue to enhance health services to residents located in Stony Rapids, La Loche, Pelican Narrows, English River Dene Nation, and the Hatchet Lake First Nation.

We have a number of unique working agreements and arrangements with First Nations partners, including an improved power generation partner program that was recently announced that will help industry capture flare gas for power production. SaskPower and First Nations Power Authority have signed an agreement to source energy from flare gas power generation projects.

In Government Relations we're working towards completing a new municipal revenue-sharing agreement. We are currently wrapping up our consultations with our stakeholder partners — New North, SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] — where there was a great sharing of ideas and building towards a better long-term, predictable, sustainable revenue-sharing program.

Our municipal partners continue to be appreciative of the program that provides them predictable funding that is unconditional and their ability to apply where it is needed within their municipality. Together with the member from Saskatoon Northwest, the Minister of Education, and SaskBuilds, we've

signed a new federal IBA [impact benefit agreement] that potentially brings \$896 million into the province over the next 10 years to invest in Saskatchewan infrastructure projects. This will assist greatly in creating jobs and providing long-term infrastructure funding to meet the needs of all residents, from our cities to rural Saskatchewan to northern Saskatchewan.

As you will be introduced to tomorrow, we have reached a good spot, I believe, in regards to election dates and timing. After receiving constructive input from SARM, SUMA, and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, we'll introduce election dates that will provide predictability for our municipal partners. We are continuing to work on our planning and development Act pertaining to inspections, and continue to improve municipal services through changes in regulations.

Mr. Speaker, to wrap up, I am very proud of this government's achievements to date and the plan put forward in the Speech from the Throne. It identifies that we are on the right path, that we are providing a plan to meet the challenges of today and a path for the future success of this province. We are going to continue to fight for what is right for our residents, provide the right tools to encourage new development, and continue to make this province the attractive place that it has become for new residents, for new business, and renewed investment over the last 11 years of this government.

I support the Throne Speech motion and will not be supporting the amendments put forward. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. First off, I want to thank the people of Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland who gave me the honour to speak in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And I will touch on a few thank yous before I get into my main response to the Speech from the Throne.

Obviously, most importantly is my wife and kids. My wife, Leane, who's at home right now . . . I believe she's gone to sleep, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I can completely understand why, with the member from Athabasca there. I don't know how he could put anybody to sleep, but it happened, Mr. Speaker. And obviously I want to thank her for all of her support again.

As the Minister of Government Relations just alluded to, there's a lot of times where they are spending some time by themselves, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we aren't there. We travel, a lot of us, and it is difficult. It is challenging on the home life, Mr. Speaker, but you need to have that support at home to be able to do this, Mr. Speaker, this job. And she's very supportive of myself and my career.

As far as my kids, Mr. Deputy Speaker, since the last time I rose and spoke in this House my son's got his driver's licence, so that kind of changes things quite a bit. Now I have a whole new set of worries, Mr. Speaker. The good news is I don't have to stay up till midnight to pick him up. The bad news is I'm up till midnight worrying about where he is. And he's doing amazing at school, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He's taking advanced math and advanced science and I really wish I could help him on his

homework, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the equations that he shows me, there is absolutely no way that I could even come close to understanding what he's doing in grade 11 high school.

My daughter, Courtney, light of my life, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a beautiful young girl in the functionally integrated program at Holy Cross doing phenomenally well. She got her first, what I would have to say, her real job. She started working at the mall, called The Children's Place, a store that sells children's clothing. And she's working in there three days a week from 9 to 11:30. And it was absolutely amazing. You couldn't have smacked the smile off my face when I saw her working in there, folding clothes — with support and with some supervision, but she was working in retail and she was part of a team and she was so excited to be there.

And I can't thank enough the education system for being able to provide that opportunity to my daughter and a lot of other children that are in the programs that children that are experiencing disabilities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is amazing to see how they have developed over the years and how she has developed personally. And now she's developing professionally which is even amazing to witness.

My two stepdaughters: Keely, who took a year off from university. She decided that she wanted to go experience and was working two or three jobs, working retail, working in waitressing as well, and decided that maybe she should put her efforts and go back to school. And she's very excited and very enthralled in taking nutrition, wants to be in the sports nutrition business when she gets out. So I'm very proud of her.

She has very challenging classes. And she also has a learning disability, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and she's been able to get some supports from the University of Saskatchewan for her learning disabilities. And the support is amazing, everything from a note taker to be able to help her out to various other people in the class that just show her support. She's able to take some of her exams by herself, which helps her focus, but it is still a challenge for her. And I have a lot of respect for her taking on that challenge with that learning disability.

My oldest stepdaughter, Cassidy, who is now residing in Regina, which is great, and she's working with children that are having problems with addictions and mental health. And it is absolutely great to see that she has done a one-eighty in her life. She's gone from having some very challenging times in her own life to being able to help out other children that are having some challenging times in their life and being able to support them. She's worked herself into a role that she has a job now. She is the house mom: she does the cooking; she works with the kids; she runs them to meetings. She does everything, and she's absolutely fabulous at it. And we are so impressed that she has just turned her life around and gone from one side of having a lot of challenges herself to being able to help out other kids.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as tradition is, I want to thank my constituency assistants. I want to thank Debbs and Danielle, who keep everything . . . Sometimes being out of town you breeze in on Friday; you have a couple of meetings with constituents; you have a stack of stuff to go through, invitations, signing. And they keep everything on the go, back there for me, and I very much appreciated that.

My staff here in the office, Social Services, that I have the honour of representing: we've got Abby and Maria; we've got Kali and Emma; and my chief of staff, Morgan, who is just absolutely fabulous; as well as Dylan, who is on my comms. This is a young team. It is a very young team, and I experience the generational gap many times when talking about pop culture references or movies. They're very young but they're very diligent. Emma and Kali and Abby are just recent in the last six months.

And it's not an easy office to work in. You hear some very sad stories and you try to help out as much as you possibly can. This team that I have surrounding me keeps me on track and keeps me centred. We try to have some laughs in the office, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it is a very difficult place to work, but everybody in that office knows that their main goal is to help our clients and help them be successful. So I want to thank them for that.

I want to thank a couple of other people in the ministry, or I guess more on the side of the different files. We have our community living file. We have our income assistance. We have Sask Housing, finance, and child and family services. And these are the people that are on the front line. And it is a massive honour and it is very humbling when I get to stand up as Minister of Social Services and be able to represent them and the hard work that they are doing behind the scenes. Day in and day out, getting late calls, crisis management, emergency services that we have when there's fires, when there's flooding, Social Services is there. And we're trying to help out as much as we possibly can.

[21:45]

It is very difficult. I just heard the story of a gentleman that was working within Social Services and been here for 30 years. And he was at the foster family event up in Saskatoon and spoke of his first apprehension that he had to do in child and family. He was speaking about this story that was 25, 30 years ago and he was visibly shaken. This is not an easy task to do. He was upset at the time and he's still working through it because it is a very difficult thing that our social workers have to do in this province. It's not something certainly that they want to do. This is not something that somebody signs up and wants to go deal and be able to help out a family that is experiencing some very tough times. So my hat goes off to them, the utmost respect. I have the honour of meeting these people. I hear their stories. And, Mr. Speaker, in all honesty they're doing a job that I could not do. I could not do that and I really respect what they do, in all sides.

Not just in our child and family, but certainly in our housing side, we have some great assets within Sask Housing. And we're trying to utilize them and we're trying to get people not just into a house, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but into a home. We want them to create a home; we want them to create a life. And all we're trying to do is put the pieces in places so they can move themselves forward. And we want to be able to do that. And certainly housing is a big part of that and we're glad that we have some partners. We're just finalizing everything with the federal government as far as the housing strategy. So it's coming together, Mr. Speaker, and housing is a huge part of that.

On our community living, which is something obviously near and dear to my heart, the greatest, biggest hearts that they have out there is to be able to help those that are the most vulnerable.

These are the most vulnerable in our community. These are people with physical or cognitive disabilities. These are people that need the support of the community, and this is a true community effort. This is not the provincial government going in and fixing everything. This is working with community-based organizations and giving them the opportunity and the latitude to be able to do what they do best, and that's help people, Mr. Speaker.

Anyways, I'll get into a few things on the Speech from the Throne. As the member from Athabasca alluded, I won't be one of those ones that talk about the carbon tax too much, but I would feel remiss if I didn't, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is something that we certainly have been leaders in the country and it's great to see that former Premier Wall and his cabinet and now the Premier is taking forward on this. We were the first ones to step up to the plate and say that this was not good for Saskatchewan, and we also said it wasn't good for Canada.

And the needle's moving, Mr. Deputy Speaker. People are starting and other provinces are starting to open their eyes and be able to see what this actually is. This is not going to help in pollution reduction. This is not going to help out on the environment. This is simply a switch game of grab your cash and move it over here; take the heavy emitters; try to move things around.

And it's very depressing that the federal government feels that they have to do an advertising campaign that they're going to get more money in your pocket and that's how the people are going to vote for them. Mr. Speaker, that's shameful. That should not be done in politics. You should campaign on a platform, not on trying to put money into people's pockets, pull it out of one pocket and put it into the other pocket, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And it's been proven over and over again by a study group at the University of Regina that this is not going to do anything for pollution. This is not going to do it. If it was absolutely going to reduce pollution, why aren't they looking at our plan? They should be looking at our plan, Mr. Speaker, and other provinces are. Now Premier Ford is looking at this. We have Manitoba has joined on with Premier Pallister, is able to join on to this group and be able to say, hold on; we can do it better in our provinces. We don't need Ottawa telling us exactly how we should be doing things in the environment in our provinces. I think the stewards — the farmers in Saskatchewan, the ranchers, and all of the groups in SARM — to be able to work together, to be able to find out what's going to be the best plan for Saskatchewan and what's for our environment, Mr. Speaker. We certainly don't need a cash switch and bait that's going to happen over in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I wanted to touch on, and the minister from Government Relations touched on, was the Sixties Scoop. And it was also brought up from the member from Athabasca. We're very glad to be working with this organization. We are sitting down with the Sixties Scoop survivors. We have been meeting with them over the months. We are having talking circles, and I've had the opportunity to participate in one in North Battleford. And I'll be participating in a couple of more, Mr. Speaker, this weekend, to be able to sit and just listen. And it's very humbling, it's very eye opening, and it's very raw. There's nothing scripted. It's a matter of listening to what is being said by the group. And that's all it is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And

they're so happy that this process is going forward. Social Services has been an integral part of this, to be able to make sure that we are providing any of the information that we can as far as data or caseloads to be able to find this group so we can get as many people to these talking circles as we possibly can, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

A couple other things that I wanted to touch on that are in the Speech from the Throne here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is I guess one of our north stars is our balanced budget. And we have experienced some very difficult headwinds. We've experienced a downturn in the economy. We've experienced some headwinds from our federal government. We've experienced some headwinds from our provincial counterparts. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very hard for a commodity-based province to be able to get their product to market without rail, pipelines, or any other means that we can possibly get this out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm not sure how we export our product. We've done it on the rails for years. We need the pipeline expansion. We tried to go south and that didn't work. We tried to go in the Energy East where the pipeline was actually three-quarters built and all we had to do was be able to finish that so we can get our product and the product from Western Canada — that helps fuel the Canadian economy, I might add, Mr. Deputy Speaker — to tidewater. We can't do that. We tried to go through BC [British Columbia], tried to do that — can't. Now we had the federal government purchase the pipeline and there it sits with our cash, all of our . . . We all own that pipeline and it's doing nothing. It's bogged down in regulations. Nothing is happening on that.

So how do we expand our economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, without getting our product to market? It simply can't happen. So that's why we're standing up so diligently on getting our product to market. The farmers need it. Oil and gas need it. Agriculture is critical, uranium, any product, potash. We need to get this to our markets, and our markets are all over the world.

Saskatchewan has grown so much in the last 10 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we want to continue that growth, but we can't continue that growth if we're continuously facing these headwinds out of Ottawa. It's just not going to happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They've bogged us down and they've hamstrung us on this. There's nothing we can do.

So what do we do? We try our best. Our Premier was just in Ontario talking to Premier Ford there about increasing our trade. If we can't get it to tidewater, well let's see if we can get it internally, any way we possibly can to be able to get our product to market.

But you know that even with those headwinds that we face, the first time that this province has ever received a AAA credit rating, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . And we have that AAA credit rating right now, which allows us to borrow money to be able to invest into infrastructure, the same infrastructure that the Leader of the Opposition stood up today in question period and said, now is the time, when we're experiencing difficult times, to invest in Saskatchewan. And the government should be able to step in and do this. And then his next question, Mr. Speaker, was slamming the biggest investment that this government has done with the Regina bypass. He can't have it both ways.

He wants the government to invest in infrastructure and that, but not in that kind of infrastructure, another kind. I don't know where he's looking at. We've invested in hospitals. We've invested in schools. We've invested in highways. We've certainly invested in the most vulnerable. We've invested in our post-secondary. We've invested in our children, in our education on K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12]. We're investing. And yet they say, don't spend all the money. But they're asking for more on this. Mr. Speaker, it's very confusing and I think that they need to be able to sit down and come up with a plan — not a dream, an actual plan.

We have a plan, Mr. Speaker. We've had a plan on this side of the House for a long time. We started with a bold plan, a vision 2020, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh no, you want to talk? We'll talk about the classrooms. Nine new joint-use schools. Nine joint-use schools. Nine joint-use schools for the kids, the kids that are actually staying in this province these days, not the kids that were going across and you were sending all away in the 16 years you were here, where our greatest export didn't have to be on rail or pipelines. It had to be on cars and luggage because that was their greatest export was our generation that you guys sent out of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on about the trade challenges. They don't understand this because they don't understand the economy, Mr. Speaker. They never have understood the economy. Their idea of stimulating the economy is to create bigger government, more Crown corporations, and just control everything. They're not about the free market. They certainly haven't . . . I haven't heard anything about them about trade. I'd really like one of their members to stand up and say that they're supportive of some of the trade agreements that we have. How are we going to grow our province if we can't trade?

They haven't supported TPP [Trans-Pacific Partnership]. They haven't supported any of the trade agreements that we've been out there. They've just been dead silent on it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. How are they expecting to grow our province? On dreams? It's not going to work. We need some reality. We need some funds from our economy to be able to support those most vulnerable, to support advanced education, social services, health. They want more investment in everything but they don't have any way. So I guess the question to the opposition would be, are they just going to debt finance everything? Are they going to join, like the federal government, and just throw and say maybe some day the budget will balance itself?

They need to be able to find a plan, a concrete plan, not jumping back to something like their climate change, their climate plan. They're jumping back to something that they resurrected from 1949 when they electrified the province. Mr. Speaker, they want the voters to look forward and they're jumping back 60, 70 years to be able to find a plan? They need to do something better than that. The people of Saskatchewan expect better from the opposition, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Not anymore.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Well, not anymore. I guess they've kind found their little rut and they're stuck in there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we'll see, and things to come.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch a little bit about our health care because again they forget about this. How quickly they forget, when they had the privilege of sitting on this side of the House, they didn't do anything for the nurses and for the doctors. We had a nursing crisis. They throw around the word "crisis" like it's just any other word. Everything is a crisis. We had 1,000 nurses that were not in this province, Mr. Speaker. We needed to get those nurses in here. We needed to get the doctors. And we need to get the infrastructure and all of the people around them to be able to treat those in Saskatchewan.

They had the longest, the longest surgical wait-lists. And I know people that were on those surgical wait-lists that were just having to go out of the province. Or you know what? They had lowered our expectations in the province so much that we thought it was absolutely normal that you had to wait 18 to 24 months. You had to wait 12 months to see a specialist, then another 12 months to get into surgery. And then, you know, there was no recovery after that because there was no therapists. There was nobody to be able to help out. We moved that from dead last to first, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they forget about that. They absolutely forget about that.

And the children's hospital. How many times — and I'd have to look to some of my veteran colleagues here — how many times did the opposition, when they were in government, announce a children's hospital? Multiple times. Never saw a shovel in the ground. Never had anything allocated in the budget. And when we had the privilege of forming government we thought it was better that we take the shares that we had in a fertilizer company and we thought that was actually better to put that into a hospital.

[22:00]

And that hospital, I'm proud to say, is on time and on budget and is going to serve all the people of Saskatchewan. My children will never see that hospital, Mr. Speaker, because by the time it's finished next year they'll be old enough. But I am so glad that I can drive by that in Saskatoon and be able to say we put a children's hospital in this province when there was never one. There was only two provinces in this country that didn't have a children's hospital. Now we have a state-of-the-art children's hospital. We're going to attract the best doctors, the best clinicians to be able to have that hospital up and running. And it is going to be absolutely phenomenal to be able to see that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I can drive by and say I had a little part of that. We didn't announce it. We didn't talk about it. We actually did it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As far as education, I've touched on it a little bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the new schools, we had to build new schools. Why did we have to build new schools? Because we had an influx in our population because our province was growing. Our people were coming in from all over Canada, all over North America, and all around the world, to find Saskatchewan home. Why didn't that happen before? Why did we need to not have new schools? Because nobody was coming here. Why? Probably because they were on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and there was no optimism. There was no hope whatsoever for anybody.

My family and I came to Saskatchewan in 1988 because we thought there was a great opportunity in this province. We had lived in the big city. We had seen the life of southern Ontario.

And my family chose to come out here because this was a great opportunity for our future of myself at the time — and my parents knew for me, and if I chose to stay here, for their grandchildren — the lifestyle, the people of Saskatchewan.

But unfortunately our story was never told. Nobody ever told our speaker. The former premier would always say, we're always going to be in and out of equalization. We're always going to be a have-not province. We're always going to be . . . What kind of attitude is that? Would anybody raise their child and be able to say, I want you to be mediocre? I just want you to be mediocre. I don't want you to be the best you can possibly be. The NDP had us handcuffed for 16 years and we couldn't do anything.

And I chose to stay in Saskatchewan when I was a kid. I had every opportunity to move out of this province but I wanted to stay here because I knew the potential of this province. And all we needed was the opportunity. We needed that opportunity. And when we had the privilege of forming government in 2007, we have never taken that opportunity for granted. We continually go out and talk to our constituents. We continually talk to the business people, the farmers, the people on coffee row that are actually out making this province successful. We can't take all the credit for making this province successful; it was a team effort.

But what we had to do was we had to have some hope. And finally the people of Saskatchewan actually had some hope to be able to see, yes, we can be successful. We can have nice vehicles. We can do things. It's okay to be successful. And why didn't they want to do that before is because the expectations were so lowered by the government and then they would always just come in there, just under that, and go, aw, if we only had some other . . . if this only had of worked out. Instead of actually trying and working with other organizations, working with the business people, and trying to make things successful, they would always have an excuse on why they couldn't do it.

You tell me why they had the worst job creation record in 16 years? Didn't they have enough time? Why were all people leaving the province for 16 years? They didn't have enough time? They had money in the bank in 2005 and 2006, and they decided to sit on it. They didn't raise the seniors' income. They didn't do anything. They just sat on it.

Well we've chosen to invest that money, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the hospitals, in the schools, in our rural municipalities. We've done revenue sharing. This is a phenomenal thing. They used to get an allocation. They never knew what it was. They never knew what they were getting in their budget. The provincial government would just say, oh, here's what's left over. We're going to give this to the municipalities. And they wouldn't know.

Now we're actually planning with them and we're forecasting. And they know what's going on, Mr. Speaker, because we see them as partners, just like we see the cities as partners. This isn't all top down, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have extensive . . . I can tell you everybody on this side is meeting with stakeholders daily in every one of their constituencies, to be able to hear what is going on. And that shapes our discussions at caucus. It shapes our discussions at cabinet, and this shapes the government and where we need to go, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because we are the party that listens to people and actually sit down and talk. We're

not the party like them over there that just dictate, and this is what's best for you and don't worry, government knows best. We're just going to take care of it. You just let us run everything. We're going to do everything, and you guys just be happy with whatever we give you. That's not the new Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know I have to wrap up with my comments and I think I'm getting close, but I do want to say one thing. I want to be able to thank my cabinet colleagues for taking me under their wing as a rookie minister, except for the Minister of Health which just led me astray many times, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And former cabinet colleagues and members, the whole caucus has been very supportive of me in this role. I really appreciate their support. I'm trying to be respectful of their wishes, and try to understand what's going on in their constituencies, because it is uniquely different. And there are certain areas of this file where I have a very comfortable feel on and there are certain areas of this file where I need the input. And I'm always open for input, wherever that input comes from.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say a quick shout-out to my friend, certainly one of my mentors, the member from Lumsden-Morse who is in a battle. And it saddens me that he's not here because I, more than anything, I like to joke around with him. And I like to be able to talk with him. And better than anything, he has no problem with calling me out and I do appreciate that. But my friend is in a battle right now and I wish him the best. And I know he's going to be a speedy recovery and he'll be back amongst us very soon and he will be straightening me back out again.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with that I will be very supportive of the motion that was put forward by my friend, the MLA for Lumsden-Morse, seconded by the MLA from Martensville, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my honour to rise this evening to join in the debate around the Throne Speech. I too want to take this opportunity, after the member from Saskatoon Silverspring gave his love and his shout-out to the member from Lumsden-Morse who we know is in a battle right now. I'll take this opportunity, on behalf of the official opposition, to echo the sentiments that the member from Saskatoon Silverspring just echoed. And we too wish him and know he will have a very speedy recovery, and look forward to seeing him back in his chair enjoying question period, as I know he always does, again very soon, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I also want to take this opportunity since my first time on my feet this session, outside of petitions I suppose, to welcome our newest MLA, the MLA for Regina Northeast. It's great to have him as a member of the team. He's a wonderful addition to our caucus. He worked very hard to get to where he is, to get to be in that chair in this legislature. And frankly, we all worked very hard to make sure that he was in that chair this session, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we very much welcome him.

It's also nice, selfishly, to be able to share the workload a little bit with one extra person. But it's more than just that; it's always

great to have another person on the team. So I did want to take this opportunity to welcome him this evening. I know he will thoroughly enjoy the opportunity that being an MLA provides. And I know he sees it as the honour that it really is. When your constituents choose you, it's a humbling experience and it's certainly an honour.

In that light, I'd also like to thank again my constituents for allowing me to be here speaking on their behalf this evening. And my constituency assistant, Nathaniel, I do want to thank him for all of his hard work in the constituency, especially when we're in session and we're busy and it's difficult for us to dedicate the time that we normally do to our constituency and our good folks there. We know that our constituency assistants hold down the fort while we're here, not just for our out-of-town MLAs but our Regina MLAs as well.

And I'm probably guilty of spending more time with my constituency assistant than most people do. Not only do we work together in the constituency office, we also go to the gym together three times a week, barring unforeseen circumstances, and often will go to concerts together and spend some time together in the evening. We went to a Tragically Hip concert about a year and a half ago, on the farewell tour. And we're going to go see Kim Chi in a couple of weeks in Saskatoon together, which is the second place winner of RuPaul's Drag Race season 9, I think. So we're both pretty excited about checking that out in Saskatoon. So again I want to send my love to Nathaniel and thank him for his hard work and for putting up with me both during work hours and outside of work hours as well.

And since the member from Saskatoon Silverspring also took the time to thank his spouse, I'll thank mine as well for holding down the fort when I am here. I'd like to think that normally he misses me when I'm too busy at events and session to spend as much time with him as I'd like to, but frankly a new video game came out a couple days ago, *Red Dead Redemption 2*. It's apparently earned the most that any video game's ever earned in a single weekend. And he just sent me a link to that article, and I've learned more about that game than I ever cared to. And I know that he's not watching this right now because he's enjoying his time with me not at home so he can continue the adventures of whatever that cowboy's name is that he is being right now.

I know a lot of friends have lost good spouses to that game over the last couple of days, and I send them my condolences as I am experiencing a similar pain. We lasted a good month, I think. It was a nice month of marriage before that game came out, so we'll see what the rest of it looks like.

Moving on to the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this was the Premier's first opportunity to give his Throne Speech, to give his message, his vision for the province. I was looking forward to seeing what was in it. Frankly I thought it was somewhat lacking. I thought it could have been more inspiring. I thought it could have had more vision, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One thing that was really notable in the Throne Speech was that, although 18 issues, 18 things from the Throne Speech were highlighted in the government's press release, 11 of those 18 were actually not new initiatives, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They were repetitions of old announcements.

I do however, now that I have this time, want to acknowledge a

few good things that I did see in the Throne Speech. And I think it's important to acknowledge when the government is moving in the right direction, in particular around a few initiatives around interpersonal violence and sexual violence.

The first one is the expansion for the interpersonal violence leave to now include sexual violence. This is a positive step forward. It can help survivors of sexual assault, for example, to be able to access the 10 unpaid days' leave, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's not to say . . . And we will continue to push for the five paid days' leave that we do want to see implemented in that legislation. It's very important to survivors. It's what we're hearing still as a call for those who are working most closely with survivors of sexual violence, interpersonal violence in particular. Those who are running transition homes in particular have called for the need. They've seen the need for survivors being able to access that.

So acknowledge the good but continue to push for better, and I think that's our job in opposition: acknowledge the good but continue to push for better.

The other one is around Clare's Law, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is something that the Minister of Justice has mentioned in the media before, that he was looking into implementing. I've heard some concerns from some stakeholders around, oh, how this is going to be implemented, the discretion that's going to be . . . we're assuming is going to be given to police in deciding whether or not, and what information to provide. And also some concerns about putting the onus on a prospective survivor. That's a discussion we're going to have, I think, a more fulsome discussion when the legislation is actually tabled and we can actually see it. But frankly, if this new legislation helps one person, gets one person out of a dangerous situation or stops one person from being murdered, then it's a good thing and it's a positive step forward.

[22:15]

And I do want to acknowledge the minister on that, again acknowledging the good but continuing to push for more. We need to do so much more on this file. We're going to continue to push this conversation because we're not done, and without continuing to push for it, we won't get better. We won't be in a better place. We won't be able to provide better supports, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So just because I acknowledged something that's done that seems good and that is good, it doesn't mean that we're not going to stop to continue to push the minister to continue doing better.

One of those things is a sexual violence strategy. We saw nothing in the Throne Speech that would be a sexual violence strategy for the whole province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Also the domestic violence death review panel, implementations of those recommendations that have been made by the people who have done that work, who did very good work and who took the time to really study what was going on in those particular deaths and make recommendations for how those deaths could be prevented, that's a document that should not sit on a shelf, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those are recommendations that we should be looking at and we should be implementing. It's important for government to look for more than just what they can do that won't cost either them or business any money. There are going to be things in this area that will cost money, but it's important to invest to ensure

that we are doing everything we can to no longer be the worst province in Canada in terms of interpersonal violence, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There's a lot to talk about in this Throne Speech that's lacking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but another piece I did want to talk about is the Throne Speech's announcement about or the Premier's announcement that there will be some changes to trespass legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm focusing mostly on pieces of the Throne Speech that deal with my critic area. Of course we don't know the details of this legislation yet so it's hard to speculate on what this could be, but I did want to say that a particular concern of mine is that we heard about this potential change or this change to trespass legislation but we heard nothing about the meth crisis, the crystal meth crisis in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We are hearing about increased rates of crime, not just in rural areas but also in urban areas as well. In my constituency I hear a lot, I hear often from constituents who are concerned about the rise in property crime in Regina, the rise in car thefts, the rise in people going to backyards, stealing things. It's becoming more and more a pressure point, I'm finding, for my constituency, and I'm hearing from colleagues across on this side of the House that this is a problem across the board, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And we've heard that crystal meth has reached a crisis state in Saskatchewan, from police even. They acknowledge and recognize that one of the causes of crime is the rising rates of addiction in our province. We're seeing rising rates of gun crime in Regina, rising rates of gang violence in Regina, and the crystal meth trade is a big piece of that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was very disappointed to see nothing in the Throne Speech that dealt with that crisis. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll continue to push this government to ensure that we are doing what we can to stop this devastating epidemic, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Another challenge that this Throne Speech presents, and my colleague, the member for Regina Lakeview, expresses very eloquently every day in question period so far, that there was no commitment in this Throne Speech to restore the education funding, the remainder of the education funding that was cut in the 2017 budget. There's still a significant chunk of money, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was never restored back from that cut.

And we've seen a growth in . . . not attendance rates, but a growth in numbers of children entering . . . in school enrolment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in more new children coming into our school system. So when we talk about how we need to get to the numbers we were at, the financial numbers, the funding numbers we were at in 2017, that would still be a deficit for our school boards across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This is a very serious challenge for our schools in our province, and when we talk about crime and we talk about jobs and the economy, we also need to acknowledge and recognize — and I think it is universally recognized; I like to think it is — that education is crucial in terms of solving challenges around crime, around poverty. So when we're not making education a priority, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're not making our future a priority. We're not making the future of this province a priority.

Another thing I found lacking in this Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, was any real concrete measures for addressing the economic downturn we've seen in this province. There was no rollbacks of any of the PST increases we saw in the 2017 budget that we know have had quite a significant impact to people and businesses across the province, Mr. Speaker, and this is a time . . . And this was not done even though Saskatchewan people are having a hard time making ends meet.

And I think the percentage of mortgages that are currently in arrears is a strong indicator of how much people are really struggling in this province right now. Saskatchewan's percentage of mortgages that are in arrears is 0.78 per cent, which is over three times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, three times the Canadian average of 0.23 per cent. In fact, notices of intention of home foreclosures in Saskatchewan has increased 204 per cent in the last decade, which is climbing from 392 notices in 2008 to 1,192 notices in 2017, which is very . . . quite scary, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

With that, I'm cognizant of the time. I will be voting to support the amendment but I will not be supporting the government's motion. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It really is an honour for me to stand before this Assembly and talk about the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Obviously there's some people, like my colleagues have said, that they want to thank that give us this opportunity to represent our constituents, my constituents in Wood River constituency. I do want to thank my staff, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously before I do that, I just want to take this opportunity to thank the Premier for giving me this great honour and opportunity to be the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I just want to echo the sentiments of my colleague, and our thoughts are with the member from Lumsden-Morse that we just want to wish him all the best. We know he will recover. He's a fighter. He will be back, but our thoughts are with him, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to thank my staff. I really have to acknowledge them. My chief of staff, Ashley Anderson; Amanda Plummer, who is my comms person; Brady Peter is a ministerial assistant; and Courtney Renwick at the front desk as my administration. So I really want to take this opportunity to thank them for the work that they do on my behalf and keep me on the straight and narrow, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I also want to take this opportunity to really acknowledge a fantastic person who has been dedicated to agriculture for most of his career, and that's my deputy minister, Rick Burton. Rick has been phenomenal to work with and has really assisted me in a lot of things that I've done in my short time with meetings. And what I have seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the respect that he has amongst many of the organizations in the province, along with my staff as well. So I just want to acknowledge that and recognize those folks.

I do want to take this opportunity to also thank my constituency assistant, Sandy Kuffner, who has been with me since I've been elected. She runs the office at home which is usually four days a

week and handles many of the cases, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I want to take that opportunity to thank them.

Of course I do have to acknowledge my family; I really do. My wife, Lois, who has a career home back in Assiniboia and the work that she does but obviously giving me this opportunity to be here to represent the people of Wood River. And my children too, I do have to thank. Our daughter is here in Regina, Mr. Deputy Speaker. She has blessed Lois and I with . . . Her and her husband have blessed us with two girls, Olivia and Lily, and actually our daughter is expecting in the next few weeks so that'll be our third grandchild coming, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And the reason I want to mention them . . . and our son, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I found out a few weeks ago has been offered a job at the Royal University Hospital as a specialist. He's finishing up his degree in Calgary as we speak. He'll be done next year. He's been offered a position. It hasn't been formalized yet. He texted me tonight. He's very interested and he's probably going to take that position. So he's coming back to Saskatchewan also and I think that just falls in line with the graduate retention program. Our daughter is here working for Ranch Ehrlo here in Regina with children there, so we're pretty happy about that. So I think it just speaks to the graduate retention program and what it does and gives them that opportunity.

I know I don't have much time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've got a few minutes but I did want to thank a few people. I did want to obviously respond to the Throne Speech. The carbon tax issue I do want to talk about because it does have a great impact on agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When I hear federal MPs [Member of Parliament] talk about agriculture being exempt, it really does infuriate me that they would say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Yes, the fuel, they won't be taxing the fuel, but they'll be taxing everything else that comes on to my farm, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If I buy fertilizer, if I buy chemical, if I buy implements, farm equipment, will have a carbon tax on it. If I buy tires for any of my equipment, there'll be a carbon tax on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. For the grain that I haul off my farm, there'll be a carbon tax on that. When it's dumped into the elevator, there'll be an elevation fee and a tax on that by those companies. And when it goes in the railcar, there'll also be a tax on that. At the end of the day in agriculture, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the payer is the farmer and it always will be. And that's the system and the world we live in, and we still live in that world. And I just wanted to say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I also want to talk about . . . [inaudible] . . . It really is a lot of success stories that have happened in the province of Saskatchewan with agriculture. There's a lot of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but as colleagues have talked about success stories in farm manufacturing here in the province of Saskatchewan. And we really are a leading edge in the world as far as farm machinery manufacturing. It really just ties into the whole thing of carbon tax and carbon sequestration when we go to zero till and what we have done with agriculture equipment in the province of Saskatchewan.

When you look at the Bourgaults of the world, the Seed Hawks, the SeedMasters, as many of my colleagues have said, Brandt Industries, Flexi-Coil, Honey Bee, all these manufacturers are

leading edge in the world, not just in Canada or North America, but they really are shipping their equipment around the world. But it really speaks well of the technology that has developed here in the province of Saskatchewan. So those are obviously a lot of success stories, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have partnered with the private sector and with universities on new technology and new projects. The Food Centre of excellence in Saskatoon, I had the privilege of cutting the ribbon of that a few weeks ago and seeing the technology and what's happening with foods and what we're extracting from pulse industries on the protein side, to see new products being developed, to see a gentleman there from Nestlé North America saying that it's one of the best facilities in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I know I'm being cut short here but I just want to recognize that. But I will not be supporting the amendment, but I will be supporting the motion brought forward from my good friend, the member from Morse, Lumsden, and I will not be supporting the amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being 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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