



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

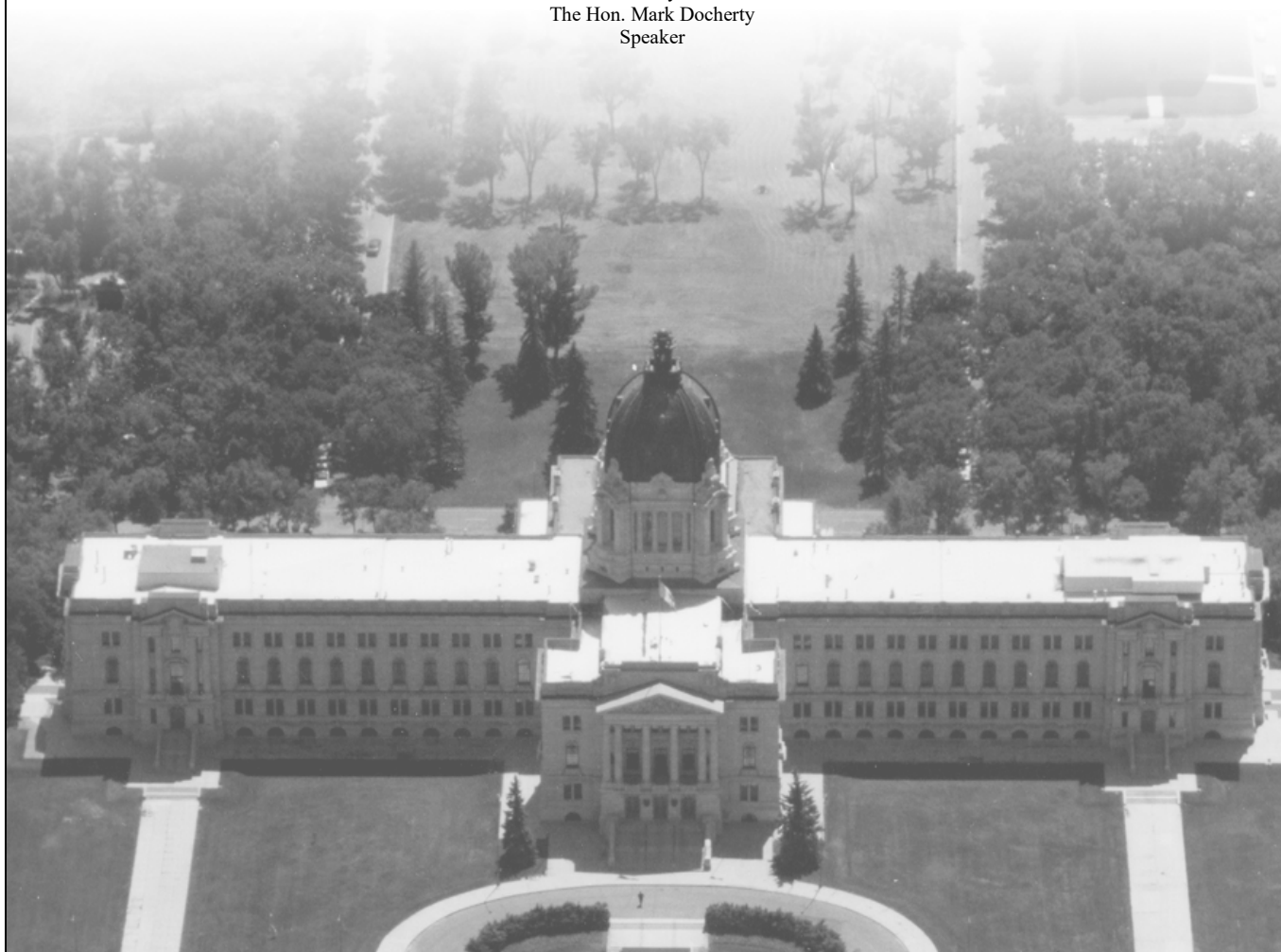
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Mark Docherty
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th Session — 28th Legislature

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Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Walsh Acres
Vacant — Saskatoon Eastview

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13; Vacant — 2

Clerks-at-the-Table

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — All right. Well welcome, everyone. All right, let's roll. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I would like to take the opportunity to introduce a couple of close friends of mine from the Leask area originally, although they do spend a fair amount of time in the La Ronge area. But it's Murray and Monica Kasun. They reside in Leask, Mr. Speaker.

They are retired now, but over the years have operated an agricultural equipment dealership in Leask, Mr. Speaker, and being a large part of not just the Leask community but the regional community, Mr. Speaker. They've worked very hard on fundraising efforts with respect to the health services, the health care infrastructure in Leask, Mr. Speaker, as well as the broader health care infrastructure.

And Murray and Monica . . . I think Murray, supported by Monica actually, was the treasurer for the fundraising committee for the hospital in the community where I live that services so many communities in the area. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, throughout those many years, these two individuals were a pillar of that effort, Mr. Speaker, and a pillar of why we have in many cases the health care infrastructure that we have in the area.

So I want to thank them for all that they have done for the economy, in expanding the economy here in the province of Saskatchewan, but also all that they have done in improving the communities in the regions in where they have lived.

And I learned yesterday that when they spend their time in La Ronge, they're just about four doors down from our Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Speaker. So it brings me great honour to introduce to the members of this House, Murray and Monica Kasun. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister of resources and energy.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery I'm very pleased to introduce a constituent of mine from Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota, Mr. Alan Thomarat. Alan has been the mayor of the village of Thode on beautiful Blackstrap Lake for the last 10 years. He's a passionate advocate for greater collaboration between communities, particularly when it comes to attracting business, creating jobs, increasing tourism and economic activity in the Blackstrap-Whitecap corridor.

Mr. Speaker, Alan has previously served as president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Saskatchewan's residential construction industry, as Chair and director of several boards including Sask Poly. He's now the head of Galt Resources

Strategy Group which helps businesses and local governments improve their operations and build partnerships — which is what Mr. Good Governance, as I call him, is all about. Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming Mr. Thomarat to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in your gallery, I'd like to introduce two leaders within our province. I'd like to introduce a friend, Dylan Morin, who's here today along with Greg McDonald. These two members are very active with respect to a committee called Transportation for All. This committee's working really hard to fill the gap and the void that so many were left with when STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] was shut down, Mr. Speaker.

Dylan is a student leader as well, and has given a voice to young people within our community. And certainly these individuals recognize that STC was a lifeline for so many within our province to access health care, and so vital, Mr. Speaker, for people living with disabilities. I understand that yesterday the Premier has committed to meeting with Dylan and this committee. That's very important. And of course we need to work to build back a public transportation system in the province. But I welcome Greg McDonald and Dylan Morin to their Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery this morning is a group of 20 grade 3 and 4 students from George Ferguson Elementary School. They are accompanied by their teacher, Ivy McKee, and as well as a chaperone, Ms. Hutzul. It's great to see this young group here this morning. Look forward to a chance to have a chat with them after routine proceedings. I'd ask all members to help me welcome this fine group of young students here today.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the rest of the members, it's with great privilege I get to introduce 16 grade 10 students from the Vibank Regional School out in Vibank, Saskatchewan of course. They're accompanied by their teacher, Kelsey Gottfried. Mr. Speaker, this is a regional school because it takes in the communities of course of Vibank, Odessa, Francis, and Sedley. I will be meeting with them also after routine proceedings and trying to answer any of the questions that they may have after watching our routine proceedings, which for most people when they watch them don't seem too routine. So anyway, Mr. Speaker, I'd like all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present

petitions today, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Sask Party's choice to harm our economy on top of things like the PST [provincial sales tax] on construction, but with the choice to kill the solar industry, Mr. Speaker.

This senseless choice, Mr. Speaker, is a direct attack on local businesses that have been growing and investing, that have been building capacity, Mr. Speaker. It's a direct attack on the hard-working people that have been counting on those jobs. It flips livelihoods upside down, Mr. Speaker, hurting our economy, and hurting our chances as well to reduce emissions in a very affordable and a very practical way, Mr. Speaker.

And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan urge the Sask Party government to act to address climate change by restoring the SaskPower net metering program and introducing the Renew Saskatchewan energy transition program.

This petition's been signed by concerned residents in Regina and White City. I so submit.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to reinstate the PST exemption on construction. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government had already hiked the PST to 6 per cent and applied it to everything from restaurant meals and children's clothes to insurance premiums.

But, Mr. Speaker, more specifically this exemption that was removed for construction contracts drastically impacted Saskatchewan's small- and medium-sized businesses similar to the impact we heard about in the previous petition to mine, Mr. Speaker. Yet another Sask Party government attack on small- and medium-sized businesses.

They've already been hurt by Sask Party government tax hikes and now they're forced to pass on this further exemption removal of rising costs onto their customers. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan families have been burdened by a decade of Sask Party utility rate hikes and tax increases and cannot afford yet another Sask Party government tax.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to stop saddling families and businesses with the costs of their mismanagement and immediately reinstate the PST exemption on construction and stop hurting Saskatchewan businesses and families.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this petition today come from Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Mr. Speaker, every day in rural Saskatchewan we are hearing from our ag community on how the carbon tax is affecting their lives. Not only are they dealing with a very challenging harvest and the stress associated, but now the bills are starting to come in. And the shocker is the exponential cost of the Trudeau carbon tax. You might think of it as a small number if you are a single consumer, but for our ag community it is often tens of thousands of dollars. These are the people that drive our economy and feed the world, and the Trudeau carbon tax is contributing to the emotional and mental health challenges our farmers are facing this year.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose an unfair and ineffective carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good citizens of Moose Jaw, Gravelbourg, Swift Current, and Mortlach. I do so present.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling on the Legislative Assembly to adopt a plan to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that Saskatchewan has the lowest minimum wage in all of Canada, the kind of leadership that we're not looking to this government to provide. We expect better.

They point out that a minimum wage shouldn't be a poverty wage, Mr. Speaker. They point out that a \$15-an-hour minimum wage will improve health and well-being and lift Saskatchewan workers out of poverty. They point out that a \$15 minimum wage will benefit local business, support local economies, and will put more money in workers' pockets that goes back into those communities.

Mr. Speaker:

In the prayer that reads as follows, the petitioners respectfully request and call on the Sask Party government to adopt a plan to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition, one of many, is signed by the good people of Regina. I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the Sask Party government to call by-elections in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview. And the people who are signing this petition want to bring to our

attention that the seats in this legislature are currently vacant for Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview. That's because of a loophole in *The Legislative Assembly Act* that by-elections are not legally required to be called in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview because the former MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] did not resign before August 6th, 2019, and in fact they resigned one month later; that unless a by-election is called, the constituents in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview will go without representation for nearly 14 months, Mr. Speaker. That's until the next provincial election is held late next year. But we know the Premier has the right to call a by-election, so these people are calling on him to call a by-election.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan urge the Premier to call by-elections in the constituencies of Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition, this page is from Regina Walsh Acres and this page is from Saskatoon Eastview, the people directly impacted by this bad decision of this Premier. I do so present. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm rising to present a petition calling for the government to save our swale. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: the Ministry of Highways is planning a four-lane high-speed highway around part of Saskatoon and through the northeast swale.

The northeast swale and the small swales of Saskatoon provide food and habitat to a number of endangered and declining species and many others not listed as endangered. They're part of our shared natural heritage and they include rare fescue grassland and high-quality functional wetlands.

The provincial government is neglecting its environmental protection duties to adequately protect wild species, habitats, and ecosystems of local, regional, national, and global significance. This includes failing to develop legislation according to the principles agreed to in the national accord for protection of endangered species, failing to uphold and honour the intent of *The Wildlife Act*, *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, and *The Wild Species at Risk Regulations* by not protecting endangered species and their habitats. I have more to say, Mr. Speaker, but I understand you would like me to continue with the prayer.

I will read the prayer:

They respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the provincial government to suspend planning for the Saskatoon freeway and development around the swales until a regional cumulative effects assessment has been completed; update *The Wildlife Act* and expand the list of wild species protected by provincial

regulation; recognize the swales as an important ecological habitat; designate them as protected areas; and ensure adequate long-term funding for research, management, and enforcement to protect the swales for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, the folks signing this today are from the city of Saskatoon. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina University.

Rock Cancer Fundraiser

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On September 26th the Conexus Art Centre was filled to capacity for Rock Cancer, a fundraiser in support of the Allan Blair Cancer clinic's new 4-D [four dimensional] CT [computerized tomography] simulator.

The evening included a gourmet dinner and live performance from Regina's own Garage Band. The Garage Band, Mr. Speaker, is comprised of many YQR Regina leaders: John Hopkins, Mayor Michael Fougere, Murad Al-Katib, Steve Compton, Frank Hart, and Dr. David Malloy.

Now we knew that the mayor was a pretty good drummer, and we knew that Dr. Malloy was a pretty good bass player, Mr. Speaker, but there were some pretty mean riffs by Frank Hart and Steve Compton as well. People sang along and danced to everything from "Mustang Sally" to numerous songs by The Beatles.

These guys came up with the idea to band together in 2018 to raise money for cancer after Regina champion John Hopkins was diagnosed with cancer. The Garage Band had a goal to raise \$1.5 million, but they actually were able to raise 1.75 which was helped through a \$500,000 donation from Conexus. To drive home the importance of these efforts, Mr. Speaker, at one point, all of the cancer survivors in the room gathered to the band's rendition of "Imagine" by John Lennon. You can imagine how moving that was.

The new 4D CT simulator at the Allan Blair Cancer Clinic here in Regina will help serve countless patients and improve the lives of so many. On behalf of all of us here I'd like to thank Murad, David, Mayor Fougere, Steve, Frank, and John who really did make a difference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Library Week and Education Week

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize both Library and Education Week here in Saskatchewan. The theme of this year's Library Week is Libraries: Building the Future. Education Week this year, the theme is Working and Learning Together. Weeks like these provide an opportunity to celebrate the dedication of all professionals — teachers, librarians, educational-support workers, library-support staff, along with students, parents, families, and communities that work so hard every day to instill a love of learning and support our next generation.

But, Mr. Speaker, recognition without support only goes so far. Appreciating the work that educators do without giving them the tools and resources they need cannot continue. Educators are tasked with one of the most important jobs in our province: educating the next generation. This can't be done while our classrooms are in crisis. It is time to acknowledge and address the issues that prevent the professionals we are celebrating this week from thriving in the career that they have chosen.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in celebrating Library and Education Weeks and applaud the fine work that so many across our province do in pursuit of educational excellence. And may we all in this Assembly do all we can, not just to celebrate these efforts but to materially support this critically important work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon University.

Opening of Jim Pattison Children's Hospital

Mr. Olason: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the opening of the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. In 2009 our government promised to build a world-class hospital where Saskatchewan children would receive exceptional care closer to home. Mr. Speaker, the grand opening of the hospital marked a culmination of a decade's worth of hard work and determination. This state-of-the-art facility officially opened to patients on September 29th when all pediatric and maternal patients moved from the Royal University Hospital and new admissions were accepted.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to developing our new children's hospital. This includes Jim Pattison, partners and donors from across the province and beyond, the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, the staff and leadership at the Ministry of Health, the Royal University Hospital Foundation, Graham Construction, and all contractors. Without them, this never would have happened.

Mr. Speaker, this facility will benefit Saskatchewan and families for generations and offer an excellent work environment for our medical professionals. More than 60 pediatric specialists, subspecialists, and surgeons are working in more than 20 specialties at the 176-bed hospital.

Everyone should be proud of this project and the important work being done to make Saskatchewan a better place. Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me in commending everyone who worked to make the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital a reality. Thank you.

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

Remembering Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, two men who were tragically lost as they served our country.

Five years ago on October 20th, Canadian people were

devastated to learn of the passing, of the loss of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent after he was targeted in an act of terror near Montreal. This attack was followed by a second on October 22nd when people from coast to coast witnessed the brutality at the Canadian parliament building that led to the tragic loss of 24-year-old Corporal Nathan Cirillo as he stood sentry at the National War Memorial.

As Canadians we must stand up to hatred and refuse to let hateful acts divide us. Now more than ever, we must focus on what unites us as Canadians because together we are stronger. Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent lost their lives protecting the values that Canada holds most dear. Their memory is a reminder to show gratitude to the men and women who have served, past and present. We must remember that the freedoms we enjoy were not earned without sacrifice.

So, Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of this Assembly to join with me in remembering Warrant Officer Vincent, Corporal Cirillo, and all of the brave women and men who have sacrificed in the service of our country.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope in Saskatoon

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last month I had the honour of attending the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope in Saskatoon. This year's Walk of Hope fundraiser raised almost \$80,000 to help those affected by this disease. Mr. Speaker, an estimated 3,000 Canadian women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2019 and the disease will take nearly 1,900 lives.

In our last budget, Mr. Speaker, this government increased funding to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to \$178 million. Dr. Laura Hopkins, our new provincial lead for the gynecology program that specializes in cancer care for women, was present to provide details on the five additional gynecologists, as well as her, who have been recruited to work here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Ovarian Cancer Canada has played a prominent role in drawing attention to this disease, supporting the women who are diagnosed, and raising funds for research. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to support Ovarian Cancer Canada by participating in fundraisers like the Walk of Hope. We remain hopeful that survival rates will rise as awareness of the risk factors increases among health care providers and Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking the Saskatoon Walk of Hope committee, led by organizer Catterina McDonald, and all of the volunteers for their dedication to defeating ovarian cancer. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Education Week

Hon. Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week Saskatchewan is celebrating Education Week and all of the outstanding efforts of each and every teacher, administrator, and educational support staff across this province who help our

children to learn, succeed, and truly thrive. This year's theme is Working and Learning Together, and is our way of acknowledging the crucial and collaborative relationship that strengthens our education system.

Mr. Speaker, the bond between our education staff and their students as well as the relationship with their parents, schools, communities, and elders is important to the future of this province. The students are not the only ones learning together, Mr. Speaker, but the entire education and teaching staff have a commitment to lifelong learning and are taking steps to develop and grow together.

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to have some of this country's most admirable educators and education staff whose heart it is to advocate for the needs of their students and truly go beyond just the Monday through Friday, but are there for our kids every day of the week. Their contributions to serve more than 190,000 students are immeasurable, and we are truly grateful for the passion and commitment that they put forth to help shape our next generation.

So thank you again to every teacher, administrator, and educational support staff. Your dedication makes a huge difference, and your service is very much appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Supporting Saskatchewan's Interests

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by quoting a Saskatchewan resident:

A leader would promote our interests within Confederation and work to make life better for people here in Saskatchewan. [It goes on to say] Saskatchewan's resource sector is key to our economic prosperity. A leader would get down to work with whoever is in power in Ottawa to ensure market access and competitiveness for those industries.

I have to agree with those sentiments, Mr. Speaker, but what is odd to me is that they were said by the leader of the Saskatchewan NDP [New Democratic Party].

That very same leader actively campaigned for the federal NDP in this last election. And what does the federal NDP and their leader in Ottawa think about those very same resources? What does he want to do to our industries? He opposed the Energy East pipeline. He actively opposes a TMX [Trans Mountain Expansion] pipeline. He said about it, and I quote, "I am firmly opposed to the pipeline. I've been opposed to it. I will continue to fight against it and it's absolutely one of my priorities." Just a day after this last election he said, "I believe that we have to fight Trans Mountain so I'll continue to fight it."

Mr. Speaker, he also wants to give provinces a veto over pipeline projects. These pipelines directly benefit Saskatchewan's industry, something this NDP leader claims to defend. Have to question his sincerity on that when he effectively campaigned against those things the last 40 days. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan NDP could either support his federal master and

party in Ottawa, or he can support Saskatchewan's interests. He cannot do both.

The Speaker: — All right. We welcome our school groups with us today. Thanks for joining us. Here's your reminder.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Safety in Classrooms and Funding for Education

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here we are for our first question period of a new session. Yesterday we heard a Throne Speech. We also heard this morning on the news that nearly half of Saskatchewan elementary school students say that they've been physically assaulted. This is the highest rate in the entire country. Educational assistants in particular see the violence in our classrooms first-hand. Fully 74 per cent of those who filled out the opposition's survey on education told us that they witness or experience violence in schools every week or even every day. And yet glaringly absent in the Throne Speech was any acknowledgement of the crisis in our classrooms, and there was certainly no mention of any plan to address overcrowding and its brutal consequences. When will this Premier get serious about education in Saskatchewan?

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I would first and foremost say that with respect to the students that are attending in classrooms and communities right across this province, it most certainly is incumbent on all of us in this Assembly to work towards and to ensure that each and every student feels safe in that classroom, Mr. Speaker, feels safe in their community, Mr. Speaker. That is the goal of the Minister of Education. That is the goal of the entire Ministry of Education. I know that is the goal of all of the people that are involved in delivering education, safe education, to the students in our classrooms across this province, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Education has met, most recently with a number of stakeholders in the education sector specifically, to the safety in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker. We continue with the investment and the supports for our classrooms across this province, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to continue to work with not only teachers across the province, not only our school division representatives, Mr. Speaker, but we'll continue to work with parents. We'll continue to work with school community councils so that we can ensure that not only our children have every opportunity to receive the very best education right here in their community in this province of Saskatchewan, but they have every opportunity to be safe every time they go to school.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, this government's failure on education has created an unsafe environment in our schools, and the members across are well aware of that. I want to share a quote with you, Mr. Speaker, from a Saskatchewan teacher who said this summer:

With so many cuts, it becomes harder and harder to do the job. This leads to feelings of helplessness, hopelessness. You put your heart into your job and you can't help students the way you'd like to.

If the Premier was listening to teachers, he'd know that his government's cuts have been letting our kids down. How is it that the Premier's Throne Speech, his plan for the entire year ahead, includes nothing new to address the crisis in our classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — It just simply isn't the case, Mr. Speaker. We are coming through a budget, Mr. Speaker, a tight budget, Mr. Speaker, here in the province of Saskatchewan, but a budget nonetheless that experienced the largest investment in education in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. Just under two and a half billion dollars was invested in the . . .

An Hon. Member: — Nothing new.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — There's nothing new? Mr. Speaker, there was new funding that was brought in mid-year a year and a half ago, Mr. Speaker, for supports directly in our classroom, Mr. Speaker. That was backed up by \$30 million being provided for further supports directly into our classrooms, Mr. Speaker. What these supports are amounting to, Mr. Speaker, in the case of . . . Speech language pathologists in our classrooms are up some 41 per cent. Occupational therapists are up some 26 per cent. Psychologists up 25 per cent. And English as an additional language, Mr. Speaker, is also up 34 per cent since 2011, Mr. Speaker.

These are important investments. They're important investments to ensure that the students — our children, that next generation — have every opportunity to be all that they can be in the Saskatchewan education system.

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

Mr. Meili: — Hundreds of dollars less per student, Mr. Speaker, under the time of this Premier — that's his record. Let's hear from another teacher who wants to talk about this Premier's record: "We are failing the students in our province, and as a teacher I'm worried about the future of Saskatchewan." Yesterday's Throne Speech tried to tell us that everything in our schools is just fine. There was no plan to address the increased crowding and complexity in our classrooms. There was nothing to deal with class size and composition. How is it that the Premier has no plan at all to address or even acknowledge the crisis in our classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the premise of the question, Mr. Speaker, is just not correct. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is this: we talk to teachers each and every day, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House and I hope that members opposite are, and the good thing is is that right now, today, Mr. Speaker, you have the opportunity to talk to about 1,200 more teachers here in the province of Saskatchewan than under the NDP because that is what we have added into our classrooms, Mr. Speaker. You have

the opportunity to talk to more speech and language pathologists. You have the opportunity to talk to more education as an additional language supports, Mr. Speaker, and you have the opportunity to talk to more educational assistants in our schools across the province.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue with our investment in education, Mr. Speaker. We are going to continue with our investment in not only the capital, the capital infrastructure in education, of which we have built 46 new schools across this province, but we are going to continue with our investment in the supports directly into the classroom, Mr. Speaker, because that is the way that we know that these children, our children, have every opportunity to be all that they can be, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to work with teachers, school division board members, Mr. Speaker. We're going to work with school community councils and, most importantly, we're going to work with the parents of our next generation.

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

Addition of New Members of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party is failing on education. And until the Premier acknowledges that failure, there's no way that it will be fixed.

Mr. Speaker, in 2016, just before the 2016 election, the Sask Party government chose to add three new MLAs to this Assembly. Can the Premier tell us why?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This has been discussed time and time again in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, as we went through the process of adding the MLAs into the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of reasons as to why that decision was undertaken at that period of time. Most notable, most notable among them, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that this province has undergone the largest sustained population growth, unprecedented population growth in over eight decades here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we had a Speech from the Throne that was delivered yesterday, Mr. Speaker, where we started to discuss where this province is going to go over the course of the next decade. And we are going to continue to set targets, most notably in the way of population growth, Mr. Speaker. We've set a target to further grow the population of this province to 1.4 million people by the year 2030, Mr. Speaker.

We won't be ashamed. We won't be bashful about setting targets, Mr. Speaker, and then making the necessary decisions through budgetary measures and other decisions it's incumbent on government to make to ensure that we are able to do everything we can to actually achieve those targets — growing our province, growing our communities, and growing our opportunity in Saskatchewan.

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

Call for By-Elections

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Premier chose not to answer the question I'll go back to the Minister of Justice who, back when the Sask Party chose to add these three new MLAs . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, please. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Premier chose not to answer the question, I'll return to the words of the Minister of Justice from the time when this decision was made. He said that we want to ensure that the people of our province are able to access their MLAs in a fair and reasonable manner. Mr. Speaker, the minister, the Premier, they pretend to believe in local representation, but now they're letting Saskatoon Eastview and Regina Walsh Acres seats sit empty, Mr. Speaker.

How can the Premier say that he supports local representation, that he thinks the work of MLAs matters, when he's letting people in those constituencies go without MLAs for over a year just because he's afraid to face the voters? Why does the Premier think that the people of those communities don't deserve a voice in this Assembly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the call for by-elections, if you will, in these two particular ridings, Mr. Speaker, these by-elections would cost in excess of a half a million dollars, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, both of these seats are in urban centres, Mr. Speaker. We have a commitment, Mr. Speaker, from MLAs on this side, all MLAs on this side, to ensure that the constituents of these constituencies, Mr. Speaker, are well represented, Mr. Speaker. We are being prudent with respect to the investment of the people of the province's dollars, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to be prudent with that investment, Mr. Speaker.

The constituents of these two constituencies I assure you are going to be represented, Mr. Speaker, by members on this side of the House. Mr. Speaker, I would hope as well members on that side of the House, they're out and discussing with constituents not only in those constituencies but other . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Okay. Crosstalk, enough of that. All right.

I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, this is following the practice, the laws that we have in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite had followed those same laws in years gone by. Why would it be any different today?

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

Status of Crown Corporations

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, my office has been doing casework for the member for Walsh Acres for years, Mr. Speaker, but they still deserve an MLA that'll work for them.

Back in the last election, Brad Wall put his hand over his heart when it came to our Crowns and told Saskatchewan people that they have nothing to fear, that our Crowns weren't for sale. But of course we've all learned that just wasn't the case, that we couldn't take him at his word.

Earlier this year our opposition NDP team uncovered documents that revealed that the Sask Party government secretly created a cabinet sell-off committee to explore ways to sell off up to 50 per cent of our Crowns. The independent Information and Privacy Commissioner's report revealed that selling off SaskTel was much further down the road than the Sask Party ever wanted Saskatchewan people to know — in fact two non-disclosures signed, Mr. Speaker, with potential purchasers.

My question to the Premier: why won't he just come clean with Saskatchewan people when it comes to his government's plans to scheme to sell off SaskTel and our valuable Crown corporations?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, good question. I thank the member for it. Let me be perfectly clear. SaskTel is not for sale. Bill 40 was passed in 2017; no secrecy about that.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, please. I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, Bill 40 was passed in 2017, which would allow for a minority equity stake in SaskTel to be sold. Mr. Speaker, we publicly stated that. It was done on the floor of this Assembly. If the members opposite want to read the newspaper, or the interweb as they refer to it, it's all there out in public, Mr. Speaker. Our government decided, after we consulted people, that wasn't on.

What did we do, Mr. Speaker? We repealed that bill in its entirety — no secrecy — done on the floor of the Chamber, done in the full light of day. They can read about it in *Hansard*. They can read about what's said in committee, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite know that. They can just accept it.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, after betrayal after betrayal on this front, Saskatchewan people won't accept another pinky swear from that government. And Saskatchewan people know better than to offer any faith in the Sask Party on this front. You know, the former premier clearly wasn't straight with Saskatchewan people about his plans with respect to our Crown corporations. And for good reason, Mr. Speaker, for good reason Saskatchewan people have lost all trust with the Sask Party on this front with our Crown corporations.

After we learned of the secret cabinet sell-off committee, we asked for all the minutes from the cabinet sell-off committee, the documents they had, and which Sask Party cabinet ministers were on that committee. The Sask Party blocked that request and didn't release a single document about their sell-off plans. Why is the Premier working so hard to keep his government's sell-off plans under wraps, to keep Saskatchewan people in the dark? Why won't he just come clean?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, this building is not under wraps. The floor of this Assembly is not under wraps. It's open, transparent. It's got a row of reporters up there that report everything that's said here, everything that takes place here, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite need to get something else. The fear tactics that the members opposite are trying to engage in didn't work for Cam Broten. They didn't work for Dwain Lingenfelter, and it won't work for that member opposite either, Mr. Speaker. It's something that's not on. I can say it, and I'll say it again: SaskTel is not for sale.

To further advance that, Mr. Speaker, we introduced a second bill to absolutely withdraw it so there's no chance that anything can happen with SaskTel, Mr. Speaker. Dead, done, finished.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the question was for the Premier of Saskatchewan, not to his go-to lawyer, Mr. Speaker.

[10:45]

They've clearly shown, clearly shown through their actions that they can't be trusted with our Crown corporations. They betrayed Saskatchewan people. If the Premier and his Sask Party government have nothing to hide, if they have nothing to hide, they'll simply release the documents today, in full, just as the independent commissioner has called for, Mr. Speaker. And they'll finally come clean about their secret plans and schemes to sell off SaskTel and our Crown corporations.

My question to the Premier is this: what did he have to say when that cabinet committee was struck at the cabinet table? My question to him is also, was he on that secret committee?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just going to be very short and clear for this member but also for the people across the province of Saskatchewan. SaskTel is not for sale.

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

Solar Power Net Metering Program

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, we were one of the last jurisdictions in Canada to introduce a solar net metering program and it didn't last very long. Without warning, this government scrapped the program, leaving solar companies and their employees in the lurch.

After weeks of uncertainty and layoffs, the Sask Party dressed up

a sow's ear as a silk purse and called it a replacement program. It isn't. Without a one-to-one metering credit rate, this program is doomed to fail. Will the minister and the Premier listen to the industry and the business owners whose livelihoods are on the line and bring back SaskPower's net metering program?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last dozen, more than a dozen years since the net metering program was started, over 2,500 customers have signed up generating a capacity of 35 megawatts, Mr. Speaker, once all of those programs that were accepted, particularly under the last year. Because in fact, Mr. Speaker, in 10 months we added 16 megawatts, Mr. Speaker, about the same amount that we added in the first 12 years of the program, Mr. Speaker. So we understand that it's been successful.

But one of the challenges with net metering programs, as all utilities are finding, Mr. Speaker, is that it reduces the revenue of the Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker, while at the same time not reducing the amount of money that needs to be spent on ensuring that we have a stable and strong generation, transmission, and distribution system. In effect, Mr. Speaker, it transfers those costs on to people who cannot afford solar panels, Mr. Speaker. So we believe that this program is fair. It's fair to people who have the ability to afford solar panels and it's fair to those people that cannot afford solar panels, Mr. Speaker, and it's sustainable for all. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, only the Sask Party could bungle a program like this in one of the sunniest places on the planet. The new program doesn't cut it and the minister knows it. The managing director of the Distributed Energy Association of Saskatchewan highlighted the reality, in other jurisdictions that went down this path, the solar industry has collapsed. Now that individual called this "... a disaster in lost jobs and opportunities for green energy across Saskatchewan." Now before it's too late, will the Premier show some leadership here and restore the net metering program to save jobs and save this industry?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite don't need to take my words for it in terms of the challenges with the net metering program that is faced by all utilities, Mr. Speaker. They only have to listen to a professor emeritus from MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] who was on provincial radio just a few days ago who said, and I quote, about net metering, about the one-to-one net metering program, Mr. Speaker: "So the more people that signed up for the net metering program, the more the cost rose for everyone else. Those costs have to be covered by somebody."

Mr. Speaker, is it the position of the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite that it is fair to shift those costs from people who can afford to put solar panels on their own roof to people who cannot afford it? Is that fair?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the minister is claiming that net metering would cost \$54 million over the next five years. But if the minister didn't like their previous program he should have looked for a better option and not a worse one. As he knows, Mr. Speaker, the NDP's Renew Saskatchewan plan is fairer, it lowers bills, creates jobs, and greens our power grid. Will the Premier make a real commitment to the renewable industry by seriously examining our Renew Saskatchewan plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we certainly have looked at Renew Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and we have found it wanting. Mr. Speaker, at the rate in which Renew Saskatchewan would pay for renewable power, we could install 325 megawatts of wind energy in this province, Mr. Speaker. Or we could go the Renew Saskatchewan path and procure the same amount of renewable energy through solar panels and we would spend \$520 million more under Renew Saskatchewan and get two and a half times less energy, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, we've looked at their plan. We don't think it is a well-thought-out plan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to embark upon adding renewables to the system through large-scale utility, Mr. Speaker, through large-scale utility solar, through large-scale utility wind, through what will be Canada's first geothermal power plant, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, while allowing people who can afford solar panels to, Mr. Speaker, produce their own power, reduce their own SaskPower bill, Mr. Speaker, have a green energy option while not passing those costs on to people who cannot afford it.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I understand that this minister never even met with renewable industry, so it's questionable about where he's getting the information.

I have a question for this minister: will he table the information that he just referred to in terms of the calculations that he is quoting?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member is incorrect. The member is incorrect. I have met with members of the solar community before the decision was made, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my office has met with members of the solar community, and I have made a commitment that I will meet. In fact the Distributed Energy Association has a meeting scheduled with me as well, Mr. Speaker.

As to the second question, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite need that much help writing their platform, I'd be happy to help.

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

Emergency Room Wait Times

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday's Throne Speech failed to address Saskatchewan's health care crisis. The

surgical initiative may be good news for the 23,000 patients currently waiting for surgery — if they actually follow through with it this time — but it provided nothing for our emergency rooms that are bursting at the seams. Now we hear about patients waiting in the hospital hallways for a week without a room. Once a key pillar of this government's plan, emergency wait time targets have been watered down to the point that they no longer exist.

It's clear that this minister is failing on health care. Why weren't emergency room waits mentioned in the speech, and when will we see a plan to get them under control?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, we recognize there's a serious problem at times during spikes in emergency room wait times, Mr. Speaker. There was a news story that I think the member opposite is referring to that was just unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. Hallway medicine isn't acceptable, Mr. Speaker. We've taken a number of corrective actions that we think are going to pay dividends to . . . In Saskatoon it was announced this summer that there'll be a 36-bed medicine unit established at Royal University Hospital while the capital project's underway, Mr. Speaker. There's a 22-bed interim unit that we'll be using. In Regina at Pasqua Hospital, a couple of years ago there was a 24-bed addition put in place there, Mr. Speaker.

We recognize that there's still problems. This problem isn't unique to Saskatchewan. Health ministers across the country are grappling with this, Mr. Speaker. There is other avenues that we have taken where you have community health centres. We have accountable care units, Mr. Speaker, that are beginning to show dividends. But, Mr. Speaker, we recognize the problem; we know we need to do better.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Chair.

Standing Committee on House Services

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to inform the Assembly that the committee filed its 12th report with the Clerk on June 20th, 2019 pursuant to rule 136(6). The report reflects the changes made to the standing committee's membership.

And so therefore I move:

That the 12th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It's been moved by the Deputy Chair:

That the 12th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Deputy Chair.

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to inform the Assembly that the committee filed its 13th report with the Clerk on September 16th, 2019 pursuant to rule 136(6). The report reflects the changes made to the standing committee's membership.

Therefore I move:

That the 13th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Chair:

That the 13th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Chair.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to inform the Assembly that the committee filed its third report with the Clerk on October 22nd, 2019 pursuant to rule 136(6). The report reflects the work of the committee for the period June 14th, 2018 to October 22nd, 2019.

Therefore I move:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Question of Privilege

Ruling — Intention to Deliberately Mislead the Assembly

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I have a statement by the Speaker in terms of question of privilege.

On October 23rd, 2019 the member for Regina Rosemont raised a question of privilege concerning comments made in this Assembly on May 2nd, 2017 by the minister of the Economy at the time. The case maintains that the minister provided false information to the Assembly in his response to a question concerning the potential sale of SaskTel by stating that "There have been no . . . [further] discussions as to what a transaction may or may not look like."

As evidence to support his case, the member cites the Information and Privacy Commissioner's *Review Report 119-2018* released on August 9th, 2019. The report was in response to an applicant's request to determine whether SaskTel appropriately applied *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* exemptions. It identifies agreements entered into on May 2nd, 2017 between SaskTel and a third party.

[11:00]

It has been recognized by the parliamentary authorities that if a member misleads the House deliberately it may be treated as a contempt. At the heart of this case is whether the member for Regina Rosemont has sufficiently established that the minister knew his statement was incorrect and that he intended to mislead the Assembly. I remind members that it is not the Speaker's role to determine if a contempt of parliament has occurred. It is a Speaker's duty to decide if there is a prima facie evidence to warrant a debate on the matter and a decision of the Assembly.

Before ruling on the allegation, I want to address the question of whether this case was submitted at the earliest opportunity. In accordance with rule 12(2) the case was first submitted on August 9th, 2019, which is the date the commissioner's report revealed the existence of specific agreements cited as pertinent to the member's privilege case. Subsequently the prorogation of the Assembly prevented a ruling on the matter. The earliest opportunity to resubmit the case was before 8 a.m. today. Therefore I find the member is in compliance with the notice provision of the rule.

In his question of privilege, the member states:

Minister Harrison's claim that 'there have been no further discussions' cannot be reconciled with the fact that SaskTel entered into nondisclosure and privilege agreements to discuss a potential sale that very same day. It is clear that Minister Harrison's answer was not consistent with the facts in the Information and Privacy Commissioner's report.

In the opinion of the member from Regina Rosemont, the mutual nondisclosure agreement and joint defence privilege agreement identified in the report provide evidence that the statements made

by the minister were false. The commissioner's report establishes that SaskTel and a third party had agreements and discussions about possible partnerships and a potential transaction. It is not clear that the exchange of information and negotiations referenced in the report were exploratory or a formal discussion on the sale of SaskTel, which is what the member asked about in question period on May 2nd, 2017.

An allegation as serious as contempt requires proof of a very high order. The member did not point to or provide persuasive evidence to prove this was a formal negotiation. Your interpretation of those discussions is a matter of perception. Your report does not conclusively prove the minister's comment was false and certainly does not provide evidence that the minister purposely provided false information with the intent to mislead the Assembly. I find the member's case has not achieved the threshold of evidence needed for me to find a prima facie case of privilege.

Before concluding this matter I would like to address the proposed motion in this question of privilege. There have been instances in the past where privilege motions proposed by both sides have not conformed to the rules. I'd like to clarify at this time for the record the intent of rule 12(1)(c). It states:

The Member shall provide to the Speaker in writing the following:

(c) a question of privilege motion, which the Member must be ready to propose:

- i. declaring that a contempt or breach of privilege has been committed, which includes a remedy for the problem; or
- ii. referring the matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges.

As outlined in this rule, there are two options in a question of privilege motion: declaring the contempt or breach of privilege has occurred with a remedy, or referring the matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges. The motion cannot provide both options. In the future, please ensure that all privilege motions conform to the rules of this Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lakeview. Why are you on your feet?

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I request leave to move a motion under rule 61.

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

MOTION UNDER RULE 61

Funding of Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the motion is to bring attention to the crisis in our classrooms. If leave is granted, I would move the following motion:

That the Assembly recognizes the Sask Party government's underfunding of public education has created a crisis in

classrooms; and

That the Assembly calls upon the Sask Party government to take immediate steps to address this critical pressure facing teachers and students when it comes to infrastructure, class size, and composition.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — The nos have it. Leave has not been granted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership of the Board of Internal Economy

The Speaker: — Next item of business, pursuant to section 67 of *The Legislative Assembly Act, 2007*, I hereby inform the Assembly of the membership of the Board of Internal Economy effective August 13th, 2019: Hon. Mark Docherty, Chair, Speaker; Hon. Jeremy Harrison, executive committee nominee; Hon. Paul Merriman, executive committee nominee; Everett Hindley, MLA, government caucus nominee; Randy Weekes, MLA, government caucus nominee; Carla Beck, MLA, opposition caucus nominee; Cathy Sproule, MLA, opposition caucus nominee.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise today to present this humble address to the Lieutenant Governor. I would like to start with thanking my family for their support over the years. It has been as much a journey for them as it has been for me. My kids grew up with me in politics attending meetings and rallies around the province. And I can remember one time, them standing outside of the mall in Saskatoon after everyone else had left because I was at a meeting. They used to always ask, Dad, why are we always the last ones to leave? Well, Mr. Speaker, it was because there was one more person to talk to or one more vote to get.

I'd like to thank my constituency staff, Jeannie Ball and Bonnie Farr. Jeannie has been with me for this entire political journey as well. In fact, her and her husband Garnet were part of my nomination team in 1990, and then Jeannie came to work in the constituency office when I was elected in 1991. And she's still working in my constituency office, Mr. Speaker, although I have to admit that she was rather anxious for me to retire because she wanted to retire, and she wasn't going to do so as long as I was there.

So, Mr. Speaker, Bonnie Farr has also worked for many years in my constituency office. I also have a third staff, a casual, Lynette Peet. And I would like to wish Lynette the best wishes and a speedy recovery on the fight against cancer which she is going through again.

I'd like to thank my entire election team that have supported me and helped elect me seven times in the last 29 years. They have put up with a lot and did a lot of work on my behalf to allow me to speak in this Chamber for the constituents of Cannington.

I'd like to thank the Premier for asking me to move this motion of support for the Speech from the Throne in 2019. I have participated in 29 speeches from the throne, but this is the first time that I have had the privilege to move the humble address to the Lieutenant Governor. It is an honour and a privilege.

At this time, I'd also like to offer condolences to the family of the Honourable Thomas Molloy, who passed away in office while serving as Saskatchewan's Lieutenant Governor. His term was far too short and we didn't get to know him well enough.

But congratulations as well to His Honour Russ Mirasty on his appointment as Lieutenant Governor for Saskatchewan. I do not often agree with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, but I agree with this appointment. This is an excellent appointment, and I look forward to working with His Honour Russ Mirasty.

I would also like to thank yourself, Mr. Speaker, for your guidance and patience with MLAs. We are imperfect humans. The institution of the legislature is important to the governance of this province, and you are our safeguard against personal and partisan self-interest. Former president of the Western Australian Council, which is their upper house, stated that at some point in time, politicians become parliamentarians.

An Hon. Member: — Eventually.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And yes, my colleague says, eventually. And I think you're well on the way to doing that, Mr. Speaker.

I would now like to contrast my first year in this legislature, 1991-92, with this, my last year in the Saskatchewan legislature, 2019-2020. In 1991 when I was first elected, I didn't have to wear glasses. I blame it on the lights in here, not on aging, Mr. Speaker.

When I was first elected, Saskatchewan's population was less than a million people, about 965,000. Today we are well over 1.17 million and growing, Mr. Speaker.

For the 16 years I spent in opposition, the population fluctuated a little bit above and a little bit below that million people, but it never moved beyond that. Our most important export at that time was our children to other provinces, mainly to Alberta. Our kids left and we had little in-migration. The NDP government of the day had no dreams of growth or even the desire to grow. It was non-existent.

I remember a member of that NDP government ridiculing our stated goal: our hope and our desire to grow the population by 10 per cent to 1.1 million in 10 years, which was the average growth rate in Canada at the time. This NDP member said it was statistically impossible to grow Saskatchewan. I am an agreeable person, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure all members of the House would agree. And I agree with that NDP member. It was impossible to grow the population of Saskatchewan under an NDP government.

Another NDP MLA offered that all the Saskatchewan Party does

is talk about grow, grow, grow. That statement is also true. We believe it is possible to grow Saskatchewan and become a prosperous partner in Confederation. As 2019 has shown in this Speech from the Throne, we have been able to grow by 17 per cent in 12 years, and we are not done yet.

The Saskatchewan Party government continues to believe in growth and prosperity for Saskatchewan. We believe that our first premier Walter Scott's goal of a Saskatchewan with 6 million people is still achievable. We have set our next goal as 1.4 million Saskatchewanians and 100,000 more workers, on top of our record employment, by 2030. Ambitious? Yes. But we can and will do it. A growing population and employment means we can more effectively provide the services people want and need. A growing province is a good thing, Mr. Speaker.

[11:15]

Saskatchewan is an export-centric province. We export about 70 per cent of our economic activity. We compete successfully around the world. We help feed the world with our crops, power the world with our energy, and supply the world with manufactured goods from our mineral resources. The Saskatchewan Party believes in producing and supplying our resources to those that need them and are willing to buy them.

This is in contrast with the NDP. One former NDP MLA told me it was better we leave our resources in the ground than allow one American to make a dollar's profit — typical NDP short-sightedness and a dog-in-the-manger attitude, not that different from the current NDP leadership which support no further pipelines to be built. This attitude strands our resources, forcing us to sell to only one customer at discounted prices.

The federal election of last Monday and the resulting minority Liberal government unfortunately means the move to shut down our resource industries will continue. Between the Trudeau Liberal inaction to allow the building of pipelines, which would provide us an opportunity to sell to the world, and the statements of their likely undeclared coalition partners, the NDP in Ottawa, BC [British Columbia], and Saskatchewan, we will not be able to trade offshore. Our resources will continue to be landlocked and discounted.

The hypocrisy of the federal Liberals and NDP is astounding. They ban oil tankers off the West Coast, blocking exports of Canadian oil and gas. At the same time, they allow tankers and the import of foreign oil on the East Coast and the St. Lawrence River to feed the refineries in the Maritime provinces and Quebec. I guess the question should be, is the East Coast less important than the West Coast, Mr. Speaker? Are the peoples and communities less vulnerable on the West Coast, Mr. Speaker?

And what of the oil being tanked down the West Coast from Alaska to the refineries in Washington state? Does this new tanker ban apply to those tankers? The Alaska oil goes to the refineries in Washington and is then pipelined to Vancouver to be used by people and businesses in the lower mainland of BC including those in Vancouver and Burnaby, the seat of the NDP federal leader.

How can this be, Mr. Speaker — oil from tankers and pipelines being burned in British Columbia? I guess it's okay because it's

not Canadian oil. Since it's not Alberta or Saskatchewan oil, it's therefore CO₂ free and those tankers and pipelines are guaranteed to never leak.

An Hon. Member: — Magic oil.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right. Saskatchewan will have little to no oil or gas moving west through British Columbia. However the Alberta and northeast BC oil that could go west would free up space in the pipes going east or south to markets. More oil moved offshore from either the west or east coasts would reduce or eliminate the discounts we currently suffer in selling our production. This would mean more jobs and revenues for businesses, more revenues for all levels of government paying for those services to the public such as health, education, and all those other things governments pay for. Unfortunately Monday's election result makes the changes needed unlikely to happen, unlikely unless the Prime Minister and the Liberal government come to their senses. But I'm not holding my breath.

While the Liberal government has talked a good deal about CO₂ reductions, they have achieved very little actual reductions of emissions. They have put a carbon tax in place to supposedly reduce emissions, but it's about wealth redistribution for Liberal projects rather than actual CO₂ reductions. And fact is, we had a reduction of Liberals in Saskatchewan; we're down one, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan we have actually reduced emissions of carbon with the carbon capture project at Boundary dam 3 generator. This CCS [carbon capture and storage] project has already removed 3 million tonnes of CO₂ from the atmosphere.

The former Conservative government invested in this project while the Liberal attitude is to shut down most of our thermal generation by 2021 and the remainder by 2030. We have the Prairie Resilience plan to reduce CO₂ emissions while maintaining our economic activity with renewables — wind, solar, geothermal — and efficiency measures. Some of these projects are with First Nations partners. As well, we have not closed the door on future CCS projects provided it is allowed by federal regulations and is practical and economical.

Oil and gas is an important economic generator in my constituency. Agriculture is the other major economic interest. Agriculture has been one of the bright lights in Saskatchewan's economy for the last few years. This year has certainly been a challenging year for farmers. It started with little to no moisture. In some areas it was even a drought. But farmers are always optimistic and they seeded their crops. We got rains in late June and July which grew good crops. However, the rains didn't stop, and we ended up with localized flooding. The rains and even snow continued into harvest, holding up this harvest, creating bleaching, sprouting, and weight reductions in the crops. And it's a beautiful day out there today and farmers continue to be out in the fields trying to finalize that harvest, Mr. Speaker.

I was down to Carievale in the southeast corner of Cannington on Saturday and there were snowbanks in the north ditches of the highway. Driving around the constituency and back into Regina for the session, there were many farmers still trying to get the harvest in. One farmer had 10 combines out in his field combining. Can you imagine the carbon tax he was paying to take off a crop that was worth less than it should be because of the weather? Weather that was no fault of his own.

This farmer and many others will be forced to dry their grain this fall. This means again paying the carbon tax on a crop worth less than it should be. One farmer contacted us in the last couple of days that said his gas bill for drying his grain for the last month was \$15,000. His carbon tax on that bill was \$5,500. Do the federal Liberals or NDP care? No, Mr. Speaker, they do not.

Once the crop is off, where will our farmers sell their production? Our biggest canola customer, China, has closed its borders to our agricultural products because of Liberal actions related to a Huawei executive. I agree that we need to meet our legal obligations within the agreements we have with our partners. However, what counter-actions and mitigation efforts were made to expedite a solution to reduce the harm to Western Canadian farmers? What efforts did the federal government institute to get our canola, pulses, cereals, pork, and beef moving to markets? None that I know of, Mr. Speaker. In fact they only just reappointed an ambassador to China after their appointee was forced to resign last winter, almost nine months later.

I guess it speaks to Justin Trudeau's admiration of the Chinese government's, to quote, basic dictatorship, as he stated on November the 9th, 2013. Perhaps his admiration is based on a desire to have his own basic dictatorship, because he certainly seems to ignore the basic needs of some of the regions within Canada, particularly Western Canada.

As I was typing this, Prime Minister Trudeau was doing a news conference about the last election. He provided nothing but platitudes for Western Canadians while focusing on the environment, with nothing concrete to do with the struggles of our resource and agricultural industries.

In the past few years, farmers have had trouble moving their commodities to market by rail, as other commodities have filled up the rail space. Because of the lack of pipelines, oil has been moving on the rail, taking engine power units which are usually hauling grain. We need to continue to be able to move our crops, potash, lumber, and other commodities to market. Oil and gas needs to move by way of pipelines, which are much safer than rail for these commodities. It is time to get a move on and build those pipelines, both west and east.

Health is always an important issue to Saskatchewan residents. During the 16 years I spent in opposition during the NDP time as government, we saw a major reduction in health facilities across rural Saskatchewan. And they even closed the Plains Hospital in Regina, which mainly served rural residents. They did not add a single long-term care bed in all that time, even though our population was aging as our young people left.

Since we formed government in 2007, we have added 13 new long-term care facilities including a new long-term care in Redvers in my constituency. Whenever I would visit that facility to visit the seniors there, the staff would take me on a tour to show me all the deficiencies in their facility. Their tours worked, Mr. Speaker, and we built a new long-term care.

We have provided \$1.6 billion of infrastructure investment in health since 2007. This includes five new replacement hospitals such as the children's hospital in Saskatoon, the new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford for mental health care. That particular facility was over 100 years old and was the

worst building in Saskatchewan's fleet of buildings and had been so for many years. Speaking of mental health, we have committed \$402 million in this year's budget for mental health and addiction services, an 80 per cent increase since 2007.

We have also increased funding to CBOs [community-based organization] across the province to support community needs. On Monday I stopped in and met with the board and staff of the Redvers Activity Centre. This CBO provides excellent services, with five group homes in Redvers Activity Centre for their clients. This CBO was active when I was first elected in 1991 and has continued to grow and meet the needs of Saskatchewan. There's that word "grow" again, Mr. Speaker. I talked with the Minister of Rural and Remote Health about some of the challenges their clients are facing that he might help to resolve. I have a commitment from him that he will look into it and that he will help.

One of the most visible new initiatives that the Saskatchewan Party introduced was STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service]. This helicopter trauma service is welcomed across the province for their life-saving efforts. Every community in southern Saskatchewan has a local story of someone saved by STARS. In the North we have beefed up the fixed-wing air ambulance by providing an additional aircraft.

STARS receives generous support from public donations as well as support from the Government of Saskatchewan, Nutrien and the potash industry, Crescent Point and the oil and gas industry. Without this generous support, STARS would not be possible. In fact this morning I just got a letter stating that STARS is announcing a \$1 million donation from Gord and Jill Rawlinson. Jill is the daughter of the late Chris Sutter from Redvers. Thank you to both of them.

[11:30]

While we have spent billions of dollars on capital projects, there is still much to do. We are planning new hospitals in Weyburn and Prince Albert, and I am sure the residents of those communities are anxious to get started on the construction. Having new health care facilities is great, but you still need people to work in them. Since 2007 we have hired 3,800 more nurses and 900 doctors.

I remember when my son, Nicholas, was in the Wascana Rehab in 1998-99 listening to the nurses being called to work back-to-back shifts many days in a row. Why was this happening? Well, when the rural hospitals and the Plains were shut down, there was no new positions created by the NDP in the rest of the system to absorb the movement of ill patients to hospitals that remained open. Consequently many of those nurses left for Alberta or the US [United States]. At the same time, the NDP government of the day reduced the training seats in the university for the training of nurses and doctors.

I remember a spokesperson for the health research council on the radio with me at one time who stated that the people in the communities whose hospitals had closed were now healthier, as the death rate had dropped in those communities. My question to him was if we closed all the hospitals in Saskatchewan, would we all live forever based on his statistics? Remember, there are lies, damnable lies, and statistics. And all of them fail to tell the

truth.

One of those health initiatives we need to pursue further is the use of nurse practitioners in those communities struggling to recruit a physician. Nurse practitioners can also perform on their own, and we need to support this change in providing more health care services.

I received the support from the previous minister of Rural and Remote Health due to a pilot project with a nurse practitioner in the community of Fillmore. Fillmore loves their new nurse practitioner and looks forward to another joining the practice, likely this summer as she graduates from her studies. Both of these nurse practitioners have family ties in the area, and at least one of them has a spouse farming in the community. The new Minister of Rural and Remote Health has agreed to go out and meet with the Fillmore community and their nurse practitioners. I'm putting the ministers to work.

Unlike some other political parties, the Saskatchewan Party takes the concept of fiscal management seriously. When our resource revenues crashed, we didn't just sigh or brag about new spending initiatives. We scaled back our expectations, reduced expenses, and found new sources of revenue. Through a combination of actions, we committed to balancing our budget in three years. This year we project a very modest balanced budget. Our fiscal prudence has resulted in Saskatchewan receiving very favourable credit ratings from the bond rating agencies. We have a AAA rating with one and AA plus ratings with the two other individual agencies. This gives Saskatchewan one of the strongest ratings in Canada.

In my budget speech this spring, I reminded the Minister of Highways that there was still highways in tough shape in Cannington. I would like to report, Mr. Speaker, as I speak, Highway 361 is under construction east of Alida. Thank you to the minister for listening to my constituents.

Saskatchewan is a trading jurisdiction, as I stated earlier. Last weekend I bought a backpack manufactured by Tag in Zimbabwe, Africa . . . You know, the member who has been heckling from the other side was once the minister of Highways, from northern Saskatchewan, and he complains bitterly about the highways in northern Saskatchewan. But while he was minister, he did nothing about it.

Mr. Speaker, last weekend I bought a backpack manufactured by Tag from Zimbabwe, Africa. And like all new purchases, it was covered in stickers and tags. And as I pulled the tags off, something caught my eye, and it stated, "trade, not aid." This is a sentiment I can support. Our resource industries, oil and gas, mining, our agriculture industries, do not need subsidies; they just need to be able to compete around the world and get their products to market. Build those pipelines and keep those trains and trucks rolling.

As I look at the other side of the House for their support in building a growing and prosperous Saskatchewan, I wonder about their prospects. In the last federal election, in this province, in the home of Tommy Douglas and the birthplace of the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] and NDP, they only received 19.5 per cent of all the votes cast. I look to the members sitting opposite and I say to you, look into your hearts. Do you

want to be a part of a team building and growing Saskatchewan? If so, come and join us and we will grow Saskatchewan together.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party government certainly has done a great job in rebuilding Saskatchewan. We have gone from a have-not province collecting equalization to a province paying into equalization. We have seen growth in population and prosperity unprecedented since the 1920s. We have rebuilt our health care system, our schools, social services, and our CBO sector. We have refurbished our highways, our parks, and our community infrastructure. Thank you for believing in growing Saskatchewan.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move a motion:

That an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor:

To His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

I so move, seconded by the member from Regina Rochdale.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Cannington, seconded by the member for Regina Rochdale:

That an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To His Honour the Honourable Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Regina Rochdale.

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased and honoured to be able to second this motion. Before I start to discuss the Speech from the Throne, there are some people I would like to thank.

I would like to thank my husband, Terry, who's been my biggest champion, who supported me in my decision to seek public office in 2007 when I was successfully elected, and has continued to I guess put up with me in a lot of respects, in that public office does require that we don't spend as much time with our families as we'd like to. But each and every one of us who choose to seek public office, we do it for a reason. And in this House, we do it

for a reason to make Saskatchewan better on both sides of the House. So I'd like to again thank my husband, Terry, for his patience but also for him being my biggest champion.

I'd also like to thank my constituency, Kelly Zazula. Kelly's been with me since just about the beginning, so she's had the opportunity to see the ups and downs of my consistency office but always is there to ensure that the constituents of Regina Rochdale are well served. And so I must thank her for it. We're one of the busier offices in the city of Regina, and so her capable competence, ability to meet the needs of constituents within our precinct is greatly appreciated.

And most of all I want to thank the support of the residents of Regina Rochdale for again sending me to this wonderful institution to be able to represent them in a very meaningful way.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne talked about growth. It talked about laying out a road map for the future of this province, and that's something the opposition has never been comfortable doing — setting targets, putting out objectives, what we need to do to ensure that growth is managed in a way that we are meeting the residents' needs.

I had a wonderful opportunity after the Speech from the Throne to visit with the Lieutenant Governor, His Honour Russ Mirasty, and his wife, Donna. And it was wonderful to see . . . I think we are so fortunate to have a Lieutenant Governor who is one of the most eloquent storytellers. I know when he was sworn in, just listening to him talk about his journey in his career and his life was so inspirational. But I also really appreciated how he acknowledged the importance of Donna in his life and how the two of them have travelled together. So it's been just a real treat to be able to visit with him yesterday.

And as he stood there in his formal dress, I looked down and he was wearing the most beautiful beaded moccasins, and he proudly displayed them to talk about his heritage. And it really kind of was very poignant to realize that in fact when we think about being grounded, what better way than for His Honour to acknowledge his culture, the importance of our Indigenous population, our Métis population in the province of Saskatchewan. So it was a wonderful visit with him. And you could see people were just so excited to be able to come up to him — he's so approachable — and congratulate him and Donna in his new role as the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan.

The Throne Speech was probably one of the most . . . It's very ambitious in that we are setting out a new path for Saskatchewan, in that encouraging growth to ensure that we have a strong economy. Mr. Speaker, when I have the opportunity to talk to different organizations, and a lot of women's organizations . . . And a lot of people say, well, you know, what are women's issues? Well I'll tell you what women's issues are. It's economy. It's having a strong economy to ensure that we have health care, that we have proper educational schools for our students to be instructed in, to have safe highways. We've implemented more passing lanes to ensure that when people are travelling on our Saskatchewan highways they do it in the safest manner.

So when we talk about the Saskatchewan economy, we talk about growth. Because to ensure that we're prosperous, this has to be well planned. And our Speech from the Throne really set forward

a very ambitious but very attainable growth plan of ensuring that we have more people choosing to make Saskatchewan home within the next decade.

[11:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne noted that over the past 12 years Saskatchewan has enjoyed remarkable growth. Now in order to sustain this growth we have to have a plan, and our government has put together a plan. And so 10 weeks from yesterday, Saskatchewan will enter the 2020s. And the government's goal is to ensure that Saskatchewan's strong growth continues, that all Saskatchewan people continue to benefit from growth, not just a few people at the top, but in fact to ensure that all Saskatchewan residents have the opportunity to be the best they can.

And the new growth plan will outline the government's goal for the new decades and the actions that we will be taking as a government. The growing province creates challenges, as I said, but we are up for that challenge. This government is not afraid to set targets. This government is not afraid to roll up our sleeves and ensure that the residents of Saskatchewan's needs are being met.

Our Throne Speech outlined a number of measures the government will take during the upcoming legislative session, and these include creating a fund of up to 10 million to assist Estevan, Coronach, and surrounding areas transition to new economic development opportunities for workers affected by the federally mandated phase-out of coal-fired electricity by 2030. Now, Mr. Speaker, the federal Liberal government really doesn't care too much what happens to those people in Estevan or Coronach, but we do. And so we're putting together a plan to help those people transition to new employment opportunities.

The federal government brought forward the federal carbon tax, which the previous speaker, the member from Cannington, spoke eloquently about of how it is adversely affecting not just rural residents but residents across this province. And we know that this area, Estevan and Coronach, will be adversely affected so we have to plan for something for them to be able to transition.

We also want to introduce and fund a plan to again reduce surgical wait times. Again, as has been stated, surgical wait times has always been a focus of this government. We have never ignored the needs, the health needs of the people of Saskatchewan. When the NDP were in government, they had no hesitation of closing the Plains hospital. And that again through . . . Really the Plains hospital was built and designed to service the rural people of Saskatchewan, and that showed exactly what the NDP thought of rural Saskatchewan. In fact they didn't think about rural Saskatchewan. They closed it. It was the newest hospital in the city, and yet that was the one they closed. And so we have, this government has always looked at how do we ensure that we provide the best health care possible for the people of Saskatchewan. And that has been undertaken by the new Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon.

You know when I have the opportunity to talk to residents in my constituency of Regina Rochdale, and there'd be new parents who have had children who were born with critical medical issues, and they have to be shipped off to the Stollery clinic in

Edmonton. That caused a lot of stress, a lot of heartache for those parents. Now thank heavens we have an air ambulance that was able to accommodate them.

But when we think of . . . That's the patient aspect, but what about the support aspect? What about the parents? What about the grandparents? What about their friends and their families who in fact really are there to support you in times of need? Now with a hospital, a children's hospital in Saskatoon, that kind of stress is going to be alleviated because it's within commuting distance for most people. So families can come and support the parents when their children are in need.

We also opened up the hospital in North Battleford. And again that was a 100-year-old-plus facility that was there. And if any of us took the time to tour that facility, it was an embarrassment. And it was an embarrassment in a lot of ways because the MLA from that area was the NDP, and he never did anything about it. When we formed government, that became a priority. Mental health is a priority for this government. And more and more people have the opportunity now to be able to access a beautiful facility that can service the people of Saskatchewan.

So when the opposition talks about that we're turning a blind eye to mental health issues of people in Saskatchewan, it is so untrue. In fact we have really laser focused in on what do we need to do to make sure that people in Saskatchewan receive the care and attention they need.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are taking measures to improve the safety and well-being of First Nations children and reduce the number of children that need to come under provincial care. Because there again, Mr. Speaker, the opposition talk about it; we're doing it. And this is a plan put forward by the Throne Speech, that we will be focusing on this and addressing it.

And the Minister of Social Services has made a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan that mental health, and that children in need and in care, this is being addressed. This is not just being pushed onto a waiting list, or this is not just being brushed under the carpet, but in fact these are needs that are being met. We're going to ensure that our children are being looked after in the most respectful way.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to be opening the new Regina bypass. Now this is the largest infrastructure project ever undertaken in Saskatchewan's history and it's pretty exciting stuff. Now it's not just roads and it's not just lights but in fact this is about the people of Saskatchewan. This is providing them safe access from the east coming into the city. When I had the opportunity to meet with people within White City, Pilot Butte, and that area, Indian Head, all of those commuters coming into the city, they just said it felt like *Chicken Run* coming into the city. Well the Regina bypass is now going to be addressing this. We have more and more traffic on our highways, so we have to pay attention to that. We have to ensure that our residents' safety and well-being is being looked after, and the Regina bypass is a perfect way of doing that.

We are also continuing the constitutional challenge of the federal carbon tax in the Supreme Court. Mr. Speaker, this past Monday I had the opportunity to work on the federal election. And I must proudly say, we've turned Saskatchewan blue from one boundary

to the other, and it was over . . . resoundingly. These weren't squeaker elections.

These people in Saskatchewan resoundingly rejected the federal Liberal carbon tax . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I wish the member opposite would pay attention to some of this because I had the opportunity to door knock in his constituency, and those people aren't that happy with him. So he may want to pay attention to this because they said to me, over and over again, we are so unhappy with the federal NDP and how they are not standing up for Saskatchewan. And we have members on that side have walked lockstep with Mr. Singh, their leader in Ottawa, that they have to realize that the people of Saskatchewan have great concerns about what was being imposed upon them. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make sure that that member opposite understands he's got some work to do.

Now when we're talking about the carbon tax, it's a punitive tax. There is nothing smart about that tax. In fact all it does is punish people, where we here have put together a plan. We are looking at technology to ensure . . . Like we've got members opposite running around waving their hands in the air screaming, there's a climate crisis. That's just ludicrous to talk about it in a crisis manner. Is there climate change? Do we acknowledge this? Absolutely. It's not a crisis. It's a crisis if you don't pay attention to it.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, this government is paying attention to it. And we're looking at how do we resolve some of our issues of the dilemmas is by using new technology. One of the things that was put forward in the Throne Speech was continuing to explore the potential for small modular reactors to produce emission-free electricity using Saskatchewan uranium. Now how smart is that?

Now do we hear the opposition saying, good idea, let's use some technology that we have to be able to ensure that we are going to be able provide emission-free electricity? No. A bunch of naysayers on that side, instead of going through the Throne Speech and really realizing that in fact there is some really positive work being done.

And, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we can be very proud of on this side of the House is implementing Clare's Law, which allows police to disclose information that could help protect potential victims of interpersonal violence. Now one of the things that is so disturbing is the high rate of interpersonal violence in this province. It's not a record to be proud of, and so, Mr. Speaker, we are addressing this in numerous ways to ensure that this is not a record that we continue to hold.

And one of the interesting things is, is that I had an opportunity to talk to the Speaker of Alberta. They're going to be looking forward to bringing Clare's Law into Alberta. So this is a really positive step, and it's something that we on this side of the House can be very proud of because it was this side of the House that put forward Clare's Law.

So we also want to amend *The Lobbyists Act* to address recommendations made by the Registrar of Lobbyists in his recent annual report because we have to ensure that all the rules and regulations are being followed.

And we also want to strengthen the enforcement of maintenance orders for child support payments. Mr. Speaker, that goes along with a lot of issues that I hear in my constituency, is that support payments are not forthcoming, which causes a lot of stress on the parent who is the major caregiver of a child. Do we ever want to see the breakdown of a relationship? Absolutely not. But we have to ensure that support payments that have been agreed upon are implemented.

So, Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that we are being very proactive. So we are looking to amend *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* to increase parental leave by eight weeks to ensure that employees who are entitled to the new shared parental employment insurance benefit have job protection while using the new leave benefits, and to extend employment leave to the individuals who are running for elections in First Nations bands because, Mr. Speaker, this is something that is really important.

And as we know, we changed some of the situation here in allowing what used to be called strangers on the floor. The member opposite is a brand new mom, and she has the opportunity to bring her child onto the floor. And, Mr. Speaker, this is how we move things ahead. We are always working to ensure that we are meeting the needs of people in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to plan for a growing province by keeping our economy strong, investing in important government services, and ensuring that everyone in Saskatchewan continues to enjoy the benefits of growth. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to be the seconder of the motion of the Speech from the Throne. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[12:00]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise this morning and enter into — oh I guess this afternoon, officially — and enter into the debate around the Throne Speech. Mr. Speaker, I have quite a few things to say about the Throne Speech, and at the end of my remarks I will be moving a motion.

But I want to begin as is customary by thanking, of course, the good people of Regina Douglas Park who give me the honour again this session to allow me to represent them in this House. I don't take that responsibility lightly, and I do very much appreciate it. And I think it's an apt opportunity to thank those who support us as well at this time, firstly our staff both in the caucus office and in our constituency offices.

My constituency assistant, who I often thank, is away right now. And currently covering for him is a casual that is well known on this side of the House, Mr. Don Jedlic. So I do want to thank him for providing my office some assistance while my constituency assistant is away. He does a lot of work for the member from Regina Elphinstone. And he's a very avid political mind, and so it's a huge pleasure to have him working in my office for this week, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to thank those who support me on the home front. In particular I want to thank my partner, Jared, who is actually

currently taking a short parental leave to allow for me to be here today and be here for this session, Mr. Speaker. It's exciting to have a three-month-old, and he is at home taking care of our baby Olivia right now. But it also creates an additional challenge in terms of getting around.

Everything's a little bit harder than it was before, that's for sure. But it's 100 per cent worth it. I sleep a little less than I did before. And I could tell you a whole lot about feeding schedules and sleeping schedules and daycares because they're the three most important things that are top of my mind right now, Mr. Speaker. And I can't thank my partner enough for taking this time to take on a lot of those duties, especially the all-encompassing daily nap schedule, Mr. Speaker, to allow me to physically be here, but also the mental space to be able to do the work that the people of Regina Douglas Park elected me to do.

I also want to thank our larger support network. We have a ton of friends and family who've helped us out. But in particular the grandmas have been very helpful, Bonnie Biden on my partner's side, and Donna Sarauer on my side, Mr. Speaker, as well as the grandpas, Brian Biden and Owen Sarauer, have been very, very helpful in terms of babysitting, especially when our newborn first came, provided a lot of help in terms of supporting us as new parents and helping us sort of get back on our feet after a wonderful miracle, but also a life-changing experience to say the least, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to thank the midwives of Saskatchewan. And I wish that the member for Saskatoon Riversdale was here because she's a huge advocate for the midwifery program in the province. I had the honour and good luck of getting a midwife for the birth of my child and I know that not everybody has that opportunity. Unfortunately, in this province if you want a midwife you can ask for one, but you go into essentially a lottery and not everybody who wants a midwife can get one. And the care that I got through the midwives who provided that to me, and in particular our main midwife, Tracy, was second to none. It was absolutely incredible. Our appointments were long and anybody who's had a baby who's been to the OB's [obstetrician] office will know that those appointments are often very quick. She answered all of our questions. She helped us through everything, and then she was there, actually physically there for the birth of our child.

And one of the things that's frustrating as an individual who's pregnant is that often the OB that you're given isn't the OB that will be delivering your baby at birth. And you get to know one person, but then somebody completely different could be the person who is providing that care at that crucial moment.

With the midwifery program actually, it's the midwife that has followed you through the whole pregnancy will be the midwife who gives birth with you. If not her or him, it would be the backup midwife who you've also had the opportunity to get to know. And I want to say that having the ability to know the person who is helping you deliver your child is a huge, huge deal and it had a very positive impact on me and my birthing experience. And I will sing from the rooftops to anybody who wants to hear it, the importance of midwifery care and how beneficial it is, Mr. Speaker, for our health care system and for new parents.

Enough about myself, Mr. Speaker. I do want to talk about the Throne Speech. I did want to talk about some of these personal things, both because it's important to thank those who support us, on the record, but also because this was a pretty uninspiring Throne Speech. So I didn't have a lot of positives to say to it, so I wanted to start off with some positive notes, Mr. Speaker.

The most unfortunate thing about this Throne Speech, I think, is that it really ignored the reality of many in our province. Instead we see a lot of classic back-patting from this government. And they're doing that, Mr. Speaker, while the foreclosure rates are on the rise in this province. Classrooms, Mr. Speaker, are bursting at the seams. They're at a crisis point, Mr. Speaker, and teachers are struggling, students are struggling. They're calling on this government to do more to help address this problem, and we didn't see any of that in this Throne Speech, shockingly.

There's also struggles in our health care system that our critic has done such a fantastic job of highlighting and will continue to highlight. We saw little to none of that being addressed in this Throne Speech, which is really a lost opportunity for this government because it's their opportunity to present a plan, a road map for what the next year is going to look like. It's a great opportunity for them to present something exciting, something forward-facing, and something that people can feel inspired by and want to rally together to work toward. I didn't see any of that, Mr. Speaker, or very little of that, I would say, in the Throne Speech. There are a couple highlights that we were happy to see but largely, like I said, it was quite uninspiring.

I want to just speak specifically about three back-patting instances that really came to light for me. The first one was with respect to crime. We are hearing more and more concerns around escalating violence in crime. Property crime seems to be a number one concern for a lot of people, not just in rural Saskatchewan, but in the cities as well, Mr. Speaker. All we saw in this Throne Speech was an outline of the provincial response team, which already happened. And the discussion about the gang strategy, which was announced last budget, which essentially, Mr. Speaker . . . If this government wouldn't have cut the funding for gang initiatives over the past decade, we wouldn't be in the situation as much as we are today.

So what we're seeing is the government today putting money toward something that we already had in the works a decade ago that was already providing supports. In inner city Regina in particular, Mr. Speaker, is one of particular that I have knowledge of that was actually working to prevent people from returning back to the gangs. This government cut that funding and now, 8, 10 years later, they're finally realizing that maybe we should be investing in these gang strategies rather than cutting them. So we're back further than we were before. It's very frustrating, Mr. Speaker.

If you saw the recent *fifth estate* episode about Regina . . . And I have a lot to say about that episode. Yes, I have a lot to say about that episode, but what I will say is that one of the police officers, in his interview, mentioned that a lot of individuals who are returning to the streets return to gangs because of the lack of programming and the lack of supports that are in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, this is not new information. This isn't something

that we're just starting to realize. This is something that CBOs have been working on for a long time, and when their funding gets cut, they're not able to provide those supports that help reduce recidivism and help reduce the crime rates, Mr. Speaker. But we didn't see any of that talked about in this Throne Speech.

Another thing we didn't see anything about in this Throne Speech was an acknowledgement of the crisis we are facing around crystal meth usage in our province. We have been calling for a crystal meth and opioid strategy, Mr. Speaker. You can speak to the members opposite who worked on the rural crime task team who heard from folks and heard about the problems around addictions and how that was resulting in higher rates of crime. So it's not happening just in the cities; it's happening rurally as well. But it is an across-the-board provincial acknowledgement that crystal meth addiction and addictions generally are helping to increase the rates of crime that we're seeing, in particular property crime, Mr. Speaker. But do we see anything addressing that in this Throne Speech? No.

The second back-patting I wanted to mention was on the new income support program, Mr. Speaker. And I will just touch on that very briefly because I know I have colleagues who are much more knowledgeable about this issue than I am. But what I will say, Mr. Speaker, is we saw in the Throne Speech a government applauding themselves for the new income support program when the reality is it's forcing many who rely on that funding into a much more dire situation than they were before. What it fails to mention is that utility bill costs are not covered anymore, Mr. Speaker, so more folks are in a more difficult situation than they were before. And I have colleagues who are much more knowledgeable about that so I'll leave them to talk about that before I put my foot in my mouth. But what we have been hearing across the board from constituents is that it is in fact resulting in more problems than it is solutions.

The third back-patting that I thought was very interesting and quite surprised to see in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, was around the federal infrastructure dollar partnership and listed the many projects that the provincial government is partnering with the federal government on funding. Now if, Mr. Speaker, you were paying attention to the news over the summer, you will know that there was a lot of frankly partisan games happening from the Premier and members opposite about that funding. They accused former MP [Member of Parliament] Ralph Goodale of using it for his re-election fund, which anybody who knows the work that that former MP has done for investments into this city, it was very disappointing to hear from members opposite, Mr. Speaker. And what that funding failed to mention or what that list fails to include, Mr. Speaker, is Regina's Maple Leaf Pool, which is in my riding and it borders the member for Regina Elphinstone's. And he and I both know how important that pool is to that community and how important spaces like that are to communities in the inner city, Mr. Speaker. That pool is so important that many people rose up in the community and spoke to city council when there was a threat that that pool was going to close and there wasn't going to be a new one.

[12:15]

Now the city has announced that they will be building that pool, which was great to see, but they also wanted to be a part of this partnership, and because the province refused to put Maple Leaf

Pool in their list of what programs they wanted to be a part of this partnership, the federal government cannot provide those dollars, which is lost dollars that the city of Regina could have had to build that pool.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that pool is still going to be built. They have to find the money and you can guess who's going to have to pay for that, Mr. Speaker. It's going to fall on the backs of Regina taxpayers through our property tax dollars, Mr. Speaker. So Regina taxpayers will have to pay more because the province was playing political games, did not want to add that as a project with the federal government. Mr. Speaker, this is one further example of several examples that we have seen, especially over the last two years, that this government more and more does not care about the city of Regina and does not provide supports to the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker.

There's three other very important things that weren't included in this Throne Speech. There was not one thing on suicide prevention. There was not one thing on reconciliation. And there wasn't anything on providing further supports, more supports, in the education system.

I did essentially a straw poll. I asked those who are in my social media feed what they were hoping to see from this government, what they wanted to see in terms of the Throne Speech, what they wanted to see their government provide as priorities for the next upcoming year. These are just a few of the things and, shockingly, none of these were discussed at all in the Throne Speech: tuition rates, Mr. Speaker; seniors' housing — I heard several times the concerns about affordable, accessible, adequate seniors' housing; public transportation; educational assistants; classroom sizes — nothing; an increase in the minimum wage — nothing; mental health supports — nothing; pharmacare — nothing; the importance of rooftop solar — nothing; and again the opioid and crystal meth crisis. Mr. Speaker, there was nothing in this Throne Speech about any of those issues.

So with that in mind, I would like to move the following motion:

That the words be added after the words "present session":

That this Assembly does not support the agenda outlined in the Speech from the Throne because it offers nothing new to address the crisis in our classrooms, address long waits in our emergency rooms, or restore the trust that was broken by the government's secret plans to sell off our Crowns.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the member for Athabasca that . . .

An Hon. Member: — No, not Athabasca. Sorry, it's seconded by Nutana. Sorry.

The Speaker: — Nutana?

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

The Speaker: — Okay, we'll go back. Moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the member for Nutana:

That the following words be added after the words "present

session”:

That this Assembly does not support the agenda outlined in the Speech from the Throne because it offers nothing new to address the crisis in our classrooms, address long waits in our emergency rooms, or restore the trust that was broken by the government’s secret plans to sell off our Crowns.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I’m very pleased to rise to second the motion that was made by my colleague from Regina Douglas Park and to certainly have the opportunity to reply to the address from the throne in what we heard yesterday here from the Lieutenant Governor.

I, too, want to start with a few thank yous. This will be my last reply to the Speech from the Throne so a bit nostalgic here today and reviewing what has happened since I entered this legislature in December of 2011 representing the good people of Saskatoon Nutana. And I’ve seen a fair number of changes, Mr. Speaker, over these last eight years, and I know that we’ll continue to see change in the next year before the election. But I think first and foremost I’ve seen a shift in terms of this government’s attitude because there was a lot of belligerence and swagger and now we really see a very tired government that’s struggling. So that was pretty apparent in the speech, and I will get to that in a few minutes.

But first I do want to do some thanks for the folks that have helped me get to this chair and supported me throughout my two terms here in the legislature. And first and foremost, I do want to thank my constituency assistants. I’ve had a few, Mr. Speaker, and they’ve all left me. I’m not sure if it’s me or . . . They all had different excuses for leaving. But first and foremost, I had Troy MacGillivray, who is actually back now in helping in the office. Then I had Deb Aitken, who ended up getting pregnant and moving so she left me. Then I had Lee Todd, who ended up moving to Alberta because his wife had a job there. And then I had Cody Gieni, who then got accepted to law school and then he left me. I’ve also had Jaime Nicklas help me out for a while, and my good friend Heather Pocock, who’s holding down the fort today in the office. So some really, really good people that have helped me in that capacity and helped serve the people of Nutana.

Saskatoon Nutana is a fabulous riding as I think everybody knows. But definitely the good people of Nutana are incredibly supportive, and they put me here and I think I’ve tried to do my best to represent them. But they really are a triple-A riding. I’ve often said this, that there’s a lot of academics, there’s a lot of activists, and there’s a lot of artists. And those three areas sometimes converge in the same person, but we definitely have a lot of people engaged in the political process in the riding of Saskatoon Nutana and I’m very, very pleased to represent them.

I also want to give a shout-out to the excellent folks that work in our caucus office. Those people work long hard hours to get us here on the floor of the Assembly and make sure that we have what we need to do our job. And so a shout-out to them, to all the chiefs of staff that I’ve worked with. And our new chief of staff, Adrienne King, I want to welcome her to our caucus. She’s been

a very welcome addition. And she’s a kingmaker so yes, we look forward to having her on the team as we head into next year’s election.

I definitely want to thank my family. I have two sons, both of whom are now living in Quebec, Mr. Speaker, through no coincidence. I mean it just so happened. My oldest son is teaching right now as a language assistant in a tiny community on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River, and it’s the community of Sept-Îles, Quebec. And he’s very, very engaged in politics. I’m very proud of him. He’s actually better read than I am in many cases when it comes to political issues, but he’s very passionate about it. He even got his students to make signs for the climate change. These are French-speaking students but they did it as an English exercise and then when the election was on, on Monday night, he actually went to the school and the kids sat together and watched the election. So I think he’s injecting some of his enthusiasm for politics into his students.

My other son, Sam, is currently in his fourth year of studies in math, of all things, Mr. Speaker. He did not get that from me. But he is studying at Bishop’s University in Sherbrooke, Quebec. So I miss them both and look forward to having them home over the holidays. Also, I have a young grandson who’s just over two years old and he also lives in Quebec, in Trois-Rivières. So a lot of connections to the good people of La Belle Province, and I certainly look forward to being in the same country as them for as long as I can imagine because I’m very proud to have that Canadian heritage from Quebec. My mother’s family came from Quebec and I’m very proud of the connections in our country amongst many cultures. So I look forward to seeing Canada grow stronger as we go forward.

I also want to thank my friends, Mr. Speaker. As someone who relies heavily on friends, I have some really great ones. And particularly I do want to mention Gord and Kerri and Heather and Shawna for all their support over the years and the encouragement because, as you know, trudging off to Regina . . . I mean there’s nothing wrong with Regina, but it does take its toll at times. So I’m very thankful for that.

And I’m also really, really thankful for the music, the role music plays in my life. As you know, and I’ve spoken about this before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I’m a big fan of traditional music and fiddle music. And I have some really great friends that I play in a trio with — Gordon Stobbe and JJ Guy — and we have a whole lot of fun. And we call square dances and we see families getting together to dance. And there is nothing like a good square dance to bring people together, all ages, Mr. Speaker. This is not an old people’s sport anymore. I see many, many young people that are . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh yes it is, he says. I’ll have to get Mr. Speaker out for a little square dance and we’ll see how it goes. I think he could do-si-do with the best of them actually.

Now one additional person I do want to speak about in terms of my influence, who influenced me for politics, is my father, Merle Sproule. And he passed away. It’ll be two years now that he passed away. But he was my biggest fan. And he instilled in all of us kids the love of politics and the love of democracy and how you represent, in your own way, the strength of our communities. And certainly being an MLA is one of the best ways of doing that, Mr. Speaker, and one of the most honourable ways of doing it. But Dad was involved on all levels of government . . . Thank

you very much. This cold is killing me here. I guess I won't be able to speak too long because of my cold. I'm sure you'll be disappointed.

Anyways, I wanted to talk a little bit about this Throne Speech. And, Mr. Speaker, I remember years ago when I first gave my reply, I looked up, you know, Wikipedia, what is the role of the Throne Speech. And really the role of the Throne Speech is to introduce the government's agenda for the following year. Now when I look through this Throne Speech, I have to go all the way to page 18 to find out what the government's agenda is for the following year. There's 17 pages of, as my colleague from Regina Douglas Park said, a lot of back-patting, a lot of revision, a lot of nostalgia looking back when oil was \$140 a barrel, which it hasn't been for five years now, Mr. Speaker. What I find is just the first 17 pages of this Throne Speech is actually quite banal. I find it is bereft of ideas and it's that looking back that this government is so pleased to do because they're having trouble looking at today, Mr. Speaker. And it's really, I think, irresponsible in some ways, but very disappointing.

On page 2 they talk about this . . . It's the strangest quote I've seen in a Throne Speech. They talk about the virtuous cycle of growth that has replaced the vicious cycle of decline. That's some really weird language coming from this government because so many of them will know that the growth in the economy began long before they showed up in 2007, Mr. Speaker. And it's just continuous amazement for me to see how this government seems to think that they somehow are responsible for oil getting to \$140 a barrel. Referring to it as virtuous, Mr. Speaker, is . . . I'm sure the Lieutenant Governor might have wanted to get his highlighter out and maybe scratch off a couple of words. And vicious cycle of decline, I don't know what that even means. Like how can decline and cycles be considered vicious and who was vicious? Like it's just one of the weirdest things I've ever seen in a Throne Speech and it really sort of jumped out at me when the Lieutenant Governor referred to it yesterday. So I'm not sure who's writing his speech, but I think there's a couple of adjectives there that are completely out of place.

One of the things we're hearing a lot of talk about these days, particularly after the most recent federal election, is the role of partnership between provinces and our federal government. And I was pleased to see in this speech a number of references to support and partnership that this province has established with the federal government. And in fact if anybody looks at public accounts and looks at the amount of money that comes to this province from the federal government through our income taxes of course, Mr. Speaker, we will instantly recognize the deep and continuous connections that our federal democracy has between the provincial and the federal level.

[12:30]

And I think it's good to remind ourselves, particularly in the rhetoric of the last few days, that our democracy and our federal system is one that has worked well for Saskatchewan for many, many years. And I think the other thing that needs to be commented on though is that there is a feeling of disconnect right now with the Trudeau Liberals and obviously that's being fuelled across Saskatchewan. And I think we need to be very careful to look for diplomacy and for reaching out in these days when so

many people are feeling cut off and disaffected.

And I'm also reminded that this government has actually, you know, refused to accept or cut themselves off from some federal funding when it comes to things like the pan-Canadian fund, that we lost out on \$65 million because this government refused to engage in the talk about reducing emissions in a meaningful way, Mr. Speaker.

There is lots of talk, in fact more talk than ever on reducing emissions in this Throne Speech than I've ever, ever seen in a Throne Speech, so I will credit the government for bringing it up. But if you look at it, it's a lot of hot air, Mr. Speaker, and it's also not reflecting the number of years that this government has sat on their hands and done really nothing to move forward the emission reduction agenda. And I think, given what we see again across the world, this is an important issue, and although they talk a lot about it — and the member from Rochdale talked about targets — we again are still waiting to see targets that we haven't seen at all.

And lots of talk about reducing methane, lots of talk about more wind power, lots of talk about opportunities in the green economy, and yet what we see is a government that's not ready to support, for one thing, SaskPower and its needs when it comes to creating a green economy in Saskatchewan. Nowadays you see a lot of articles about how the green economy is actually outstripping the oil and gas economy, and if we don't get on this wagon, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be left in the dust. And it is quite concerning that this government hasn't taken it more seriously, that they have not worked with SaskPower to ensure that they're in a position to be able to move forward on this agenda as well, and to create the jobs.

We've heard lots about solar companies that are now having to shut down their operations and stopping those jobs in a time when we desperately need those new kinds of jobs and that new economy. You look at the folks from Coronach and Estevan, and I applaud the government for finding funding to help them move forward when we see the federal government imposing a reduction on coal emissions. That's laudable. But again we don't see that being carried through in the green economy generally, Mr. Speaker. And Lord knows, the time isn't now; it was a few years ago. But we need to address this pressing issue. And it is a pressing issue. I think pretty much anyone could agree to that.

What's missing? I find there's a few things, and again, my colleague from Douglas Park alluded to that and I know that others in my caucus will. But I was looking for some sort of mention of the northern part of our province. Northern Saskatchewan is in need of our support as a people, and we need to ensure that those economies, the green economies, are continued in Northern Saskatchewan so northerners will be able to support themselves.

And we know there's a heavy reliance on the resource sector right now in Northern Saskatchewan. We need more than that. We need a government with a vision to bring that forward. We haven't seen that, Mr. Speaker, and it's a huge disappointment for me to fail to even hear the North even referred to when you have 17 pages to pat yourself on the back. Maybe it's because there has been nothing that this government can pat themselves on the back when it comes to the treatment of northerners in

Saskatchewan.

Relations with First Nations. I'm always looking for an acknowledgement of the reconciliation efforts that are being made across Canada and the role that provinces play in that. Not one mention of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Calls to Action. No sort of plan in terms of how those Calls to Action are going to be implemented at the provincial level. And it just didn't exist in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's very disappointing.

Also in the North and across Saskatchewan we are seeing tragic examples after examples of people taking their own lives, and unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, many of them are young people. They're taking their own lives. And we've called on this government for a suicide strategy at a minimum. And again, nothing in the Throne Speech, which is a huge disappointment I think for members on this side but certainly for the people in the communities that are suffering.

And, Mr. Speaker, I lost a brother to suicide 20 years ago, and I can tell you the devastation that families deal with when they lose a loved one. And if I think of a small child not having hope and taking their life, that is one of the biggest, I would say, crimes of our time — when young children don't want to live. And if that's not being mentioned in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, there's something seriously wrong. And we will continue to call for those supports for the families and for those young people who have no hope. Because who are we as a province if we can't support our children, Mr. Speaker? And that's a huge fail on the part of this government, and I call on them to treat it with the seriousness it deserves, Mr. Speaker.

Crystal meth and opioids. Again, my best friend's son lost his life to a fentanyl overdose in April of this year. The loss to that family is incredible. And many of us, and I know many people opposite as well, know of friends and family members who have lost their lives to the tragedy of fentanyl and then the opioid crisis that we're in. And where is this government on this issue, Mr. Speaker? We used to talk about HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] as a crisis. It's been eclipsed by crystal meth and opioid use, and yet we hear nothing from the members opposite in terms of how they're going to assist those families and those individuals who are struggling with those addictions. It's reprehensible, Mr. Speaker.

Other things that we were hoping to find is — actually there's quite a few — but in terms of legislation, what's not there, Mr. Speaker? Big money. Mr. Speaker, you know that it's time to get big money out of politics. We know that 80 per cent of the people in this province do not like the current system for money for elections, 80 per cent. And they like throwing those kinds of statistics around, but that's one they've completely ignored. And we will continue to call to get big money out of politics, to level the playing field, and return democracy to this institution, Mr. Speaker.

Also, \$15 minimum wage. We have the lowest minimum wage in Canada and that was not reflected in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, and I wonder why. What is it that this government, with all the hope that we have in this province, that it's possible that they're continually continuing to hold people at poverty levels when it comes to the work that they do? Shameful,

Mr. Speaker, and we need to see this government step up to the plate and put people first, Mr. Speaker, because they're not. They're not putting people first. They're not putting people who just want to make enough money to put food on the table. They're not. It's not even in the Throne Speech.

What else is missing? I've already mentioned the suicide strategy. We were also hoping to see changes to the elections Act so that we won't end up in this weird four-and-a-half-year cycle where members can pop out of this Assembly, hop into federal politics, and leave their own electorate abandoned for more than a year, Mr. Speaker. It's a simple change, a simple legislative change that's required. And because this government can't get their four-year cycles right, we end up with two four-and-a-half-year cycles. That created an opportunity and the negative effect of having people unrepresented for 14 months. It's disappointing to say the least.

We look in this Throne Speech for ideas on health and how to deal with the crisis in our health for the workers, and yet we still have a lack of ambulances. Imagine if your mother was sick and she called an ambulance and couldn't get one because they were all sitting in the bay at the hospital, Mr. Speaker. Nothing in this Throne Speech to address that issue.

Now one last comment I want to talk a little about is the response of our Premier to the results of the election and his decision to send out a letter — and he says it's to the Prime Minister, but there was no name at the top so I'm not really sure who he was sending it to — raising, stoking the fire of discontent in the West, Mr. Speaker. And if I think anyone has a gas can when it comes to this problem, Mr. Speaker, it's the Premier of Saskatchewan. He is the one who's raising the flames and stoking fear, and I think that's irresponsible. His neighbour to the east in Manitoba is showing the diplomacy that's needed to connect us to the rest of Canada rather than causing division and fear, Mr. Speaker.

It's a time for diplomacy and I think we need to heed the message of the rabbi who spoke to us yesterday. And one of the things he said, and I wrote it down, is he said our job here is to unite all in peace and freedom. And I think that uniting talk, that diplomacy that's needed, is woefully inadequate and lacking in the Premier of Saskatchewan right now. And I think that's something that we're going to learn to regret and we'll live to regret, Mr. Speaker. The time for unification is now and there are ways to do that. And you need to show the diplomacy and the statesmanlike skills that we need desperately in Western Canada to make sure that we continue to look after each other as a country.

I always think of Shakespeare and there was one quote, I think from *Macbeth*, where all the world's a stage. And Shakespeare said, this is full of sound and fury, and signifying nothing. And, Mr. Speaker, in my view that letter that the Premier wrote was full of sound and fury but it signified nothing. It did not do anything to bring us closer together as a nation, and our province, I mean, even our own province is split about this. So I'm calling on our Premier to be the diplomat that we need in these times when we see divisive efforts being made all across Canada, North America, Europe.

I had the fortune to be in Scotland a couple weeks ago. The whole Brexit debate is tearing those people apart, and you can feel the pain when you talk to people about how that's going. We don't

want that here, Mr. Speaker. And so I think calm heads need to prevail. We need diplomacy. We need statesmanship. And that's what I'm calling on our Premier to do, because if now more than ever, that's required, Mr. Speaker.

So I am very, very pleased to support the motion that my colleague . . . I'm seconding the motion that my colleague raised. I don't support the motion that was introduced by the government side. And I call on this Premier to have the courage to show that diplomacy that is so necessary right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to be able to reply to the Throne Speech. Yesterday the Speech from the Throne was given, and I personally thought it was a very encouraging speech for our province.

Mr. Speaker, before I get into the contents of the Throne Speech, I would like to take a moment to thank some very important people in my life as well as update you on my growing little family. Mr. Speaker, every one of us in this House know that we cannot do the job we do alone. It really does take a team. So I would like to start off by thanking all of the wonderful support staff I have around me. I have my constituency assistants, Rosalie and Susan, who do a fantastic job. I was lucky enough to inherit them from the former member from Estevan, Doreen Eagles. She certainly trained them up good, and for that I am very appreciative.

And I would be completely remiss if I did not thank my family: my parents, Stan and Jolene Wicks, who are so supportive of me. You know, sometimes I don't share everything with them because they get so defensive. But for me it's just another day at the office, and I can thank my parents for giving me the tools I need to handle the job we do as elected representatives. It's not always easy, but if you do your job to the best of your ability it is always rewarding.

And then there's my partner, Bart. Most of you have had the opportunity to get to meet him, and some of you have gotten to know him on more of a personal level. For those of you who may not know him, he endearingly likes to call himself my arm candy. I guess there could be worse things to be called, but all joking aside I truly appreciate how he holds down the home front when I am here in Regina or travelling on the road.

And last but not least, my children. I call them my children, but they're young adults with jobs, families, and homes of their own, all right here in Saskatchewan. It truly is hard to believe that they are as old as they are. First off I have Miranda, my oldest daughter, who you all know is married to the nephew of the member from Saskatoon Centre. Jon is his name. Well I'm happy to announce that they have expanded their family with a handsome little man named Bowen. He was born in May of this year, so that makes him 5 months old now. Miranda's on maternity leave from teaching grade 1 in Saskatoon and Jon just finished his journeyman carpenter designation. He also has an education degree. His goal was to be able to teach shop at a high school. Well I guess God does answer prayers. He got a full-time job in Blaine Lake teaching all of the classes he wanted. They

call Martensville home.

[12:45]

Then there's my middle daughter, Mercedes, who is with her fiancé, Jay. Yes, I said fiancé. They recently got engaged and they are planning a New Year's Eve wedding in 2020. I thank them for that so now I don't have to figure out what I'm going to do on New Year's Eve next year, although I think the cost of my New Year's Eve has just gone up exponentially. They have a beautiful daughter, Jordan, who is 11 months old. So Mercedes will be going back to teaching grade 8 next month. But never a dull moment, because we just found out she is expecting another child in April of next year. They call Estevan home.

And last but not least, my youngest, a son, Wyatt. Wyatt farms with his dad and grandfather on a farm near Outram which is about 23 kilometres west of Estevan. Wyatt is 24 and still single, but I'm happy to announce that he just moved out of his dad's house and will be living in Outram which is only about 1 kilometre from where he grew up. So I guess time will only tell if he actually did move out or if he's still going home for meals. But I am happy to report that as of this week they have finished their harvest, and they are just having to go out and finish some low spots this week. So that's pretty exciting for them.

But I guess I should get going on the matter at hand, and that is the Throne Speech. I said earlier I thought this was a very encouraging speech. And in the environment we are living in politically, we need something to be optimistic about. One of the quotes from our Premier regarding this speech is, "Our government will continue to plan for a growing province by keeping our economy strong, investing in important government services, and ensuring everyone in Saskatchewan continues to enjoy the benefits of growth."

First and foremost our government will continue the constitutional challenge to the federal carbon tax in the Supreme Court. When we talk about keeping our economy strong, getting rid of this pointless tax that does nothing to actually reduce emissions is essential. This tax is adding unnecessary expense to industries that are already under pressure. I just told you about my son who farms with his dad and grandpa. A tax hike like this could cause our next generation to seriously consider not farming.

So the example I'm going to give you is in agriculture. This has been an exceptionally hard year for farmers, especially during this harvest. Mother nature has not been kind but the weather is not something they can control. Our farmers are taking off their crops, and because of the conditions they're having to use their grain dryers much more than a normal year. So their utility bill is already higher than normal because of this excessive usage, but to top it off, to add a carbon tax on top of that, it's adding over an additional 20 per cent on some of their gas bills that I've seen. Truly is unacceptable and a tax that does absolutely nothing, to make life less affordable for these farmers. All it does is add costs.

Farmers are already doing their part to help out our environment with something called zero-till farming as well as other practices they use. In fact our agriculture industry has already sequestered 12 million tonnes of carbon in recent years. This tax that will do

nothing to actually reduce emissions. I believe that is supposed to be the goal of the carbon tax. So I fully support that our government continue the constitutional challenge in the Supreme Court because all a carbon tax is doing is making life less affordable for our citizens.

Now don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker. I don't want you to think I don't care about our environment as our government does care about our environment, as well as myself. Mr. Speaker, this plan includes commitments to reduce annual emissions from electrical generation, decrease methane emissions from upstream oil and gas production, and implement output-based performance standards for large emitters.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to run the carbon capture and storage unit at Boundary dam 3 which will reach its three millionth tonne of carbon dioxide removed from the atmosphere. I believe this is a great example of one of our commitments to the environment while still keeping our economy strong. Carbon capture and sequestration has been a huge success within our province. Did it come with some growing pains? You bet it did, Mr. Speaker, but I would expect nothing less from a first-of-its-kind technology in the world, technology developed right here in our backyard.

Currently this technology is still quite expensive to build out and operate, but costs are coming down. One way for these costs to come down is by having other countries use the technology. So when I read an article yesterday that North Dakota is considering this technology for their coal-fired electricity plants, I was very encouraged. As we look to the future, it's clear that if we are going to operate coal plants in the province of Saskatchewan, we will have to have this technology on any remaining units we plan to keep open in the future.

There are many things that need to be taken into consideration as we move forward. We will continue to watch regulations around other sources of fuel and power generation, on things like natural gas. We will continue to have SaskPower look at small modular reactors. It will take time for this analysis to be done, but I look forward to the analysis to be completed in the coming years to see what our electrical grid will look like, moving forward. Of course this is with the inclusion of other sources of power such as wind, solar, or geothermal, just to name a few.

The federal government's decision to accelerate the phase-out of conventional coal-fired electricity by 2030 will negatively affect over 1,300 workers in Saskatchewan's coal-producing communities. In the meantime, for my community, we have two units that will be shutting down in what is not the so-far-away future: a 150-megawatt unit in 2021; and another 150-megawatt unit in 2024. There will be fairly immediate and significant job losses as well as substantial negative impacts in the very near future to my community. And then there will be a 300-megawatt unit in 2029, and another 300-megawatt unit in 2030, if they are not abated.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to support our communities. That is why our government will assist the communities of Estevan and Coronach, as well as the surrounding areas, to transition to new economic development opportunities with the creation of a fund of up to \$10 million that will be directed by the impacted communities. I'm really happy to say that after working closely

with my colleagues, the decision was made to set up this support for these communities.

So while the member from Nutana can call our Throne Speech bereft of ideas, irresponsible, and disappointing, I would like her to tell those people that this is disappointing. It would also not have been possible if we were not able to work with these municipalities. So I would like to thank them for their co-operation. When you have regulations that are being made and enforced from a federal government down to a provincial government, which is directly shutting down an industry, it is important to work with municipalities to find a path forward.

Mr. Speaker, these are the kinds of results that can come from working on a common goal. And this is just in its infancy; all of the details have not been worked out yet. We will be setting up a committee made of members from the communities of Estevan, Coronach, surrounding areas, and the ministry. This committee will be setting the parameters and guiding the path forward. And I want to be clear that this will be something that will be what is in the best interests of all of these communities, and ideas that will be put forward by them.

The types of things you can expect to be funded by this fund is economic development initiatives to improve the local business environment, municipal investment to attract initiatives, hosting investment delegations or going on outgoing investment attraction missions, community development planning, and strategy formulation, just to name a few things. But once again, the goals will be set locally. So as we move forward, I look forward to the work that this committee will do, and I'm interested in what types of diverse economic development can be garnered. And I'm very proud to be a part of a government that supports their communities.

Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister said just a couple of days ago that he has heard our frustration, is willing to work with us. Well I hope he is looking at the complete picture when he does this. If the intention is to shut down coal by 2030 with units that have no CCS, that would mean that we would have a 300-megawatt unit at Shand that will literally be a stranded asset because the useful life of this asset is actually good until 2042. This is an asset that has been bought and paid for by our Saskatchewan taxpayers. I truly hope he means that he will be listening.

And I would hope that members opposite would take a different view of these communities. The Leader of the Opposition, recently as this spring, is quoted as saying it is time to move away from coal. Needless to say, this is not the type of attitude that my constituents or my community members appreciated at all.

Well I think it's time to move on to another subject, but I hope you can see why I feel it is important to talk about this issue that I am so passionate about. These are my communities. These are my constituents. These are my family members, these are my friends that we are talking about here. They will all be greatly affected by the decisions that will be made.

Mr. Speaker, the last time I stood here at a Throne Speech I had the privilege of being the Minister of Highways, a role that I enjoyed immensely. As a first-time minister I had the opportunity to move into an office that had a group of professionals in David, Robyn, Bonnie, and Sean that helped ensure I transitioned and

truly learned what the job of being a minister was. So I want to stand here today and thank them for the guidance that they have given me. It was truly invaluable.

As well, I want to thank my former deputy minister, Fred Antunes, for the leadership he brings to the Ministry of Highways and the leadership he brings to the team around him. It was a true pleasure working with him. You can only be as good as the team around you, and I know I could not have been as successful in my role as Minister of Highways without my team. So I extend a thanks to all of them. I know that Minister Ottenbreit has been left in very good . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . oh, the member from Yorkton has been left in very good hands.

I am pleased to see that in our Throne Speech we are going to continue to work on the safety of our road networks. With the additional funds that have been placed there for intersection safety, it will make a difference to all of our provincial roads. When we announced this program last year I was happy to see it embraced by the citizens of our province. We encouraged municipalities and residents to let us know if there were intersections of concern to them that they felt needed attention. Nobody knows an intersection better than the person that drives it on a daily basis.

What we heard from these individual residents and municipalities, they sent us letters, they called us, and they let us know what intersections were important to them. So between the lists that had already been developed by the Department of Highways and the input from our residents, there is a good list to work with. The types of improvements have a large range; they go right from small things like fixing signage or line painting right up to illuminating intersections or even adding turning lanes where it's necessary. As this project moves forward, I know it will make our road network safer.

And the one project that was most exciting in my role in Highways was the Regina bypass. In the Throne Speech we talk about infrastructure and our investment in infrastructure. Well the Regina bypass is the largest investment in infrastructure in our province's history. And I am happy to say that it will officially open next Monday, October 28th, on time and on budget, Mr. Speaker. We've already seen the benefits of this project that has already been opened up on the east end a couple of years ago. Now the time has come that the entire project will be opened. And I am not sure if you will be there for the grand opening, but I sure know I will.

But more important than the opening is the fact that this government is not afraid to invest in important infrastructure projects across this great province we live in. Over the past 12 years our government has made a massive investment of \$30 billion in Saskatchewan infrastructure: 13 billion through executive government to projects like hospitals, schools, and highways, and long-term care facilities; and 17 billion through Crown corporation capital projects. SaskTel is making a great investment right across our province in rural areas. They'll be happy to know that by the end of 2020, 103 rural communities will now have new small cell sites in place.

I can see that my time is coming to an end, but I just want to wrap things up by letting you know that it has been an absolute true pleasure to be able to stand here today and speak to a Throne

Speech that I can wholeheartedly get behind because it truly is the direction this province needs to be going. It's positive and it's great. So I look forward to our upcoming session and the work that will be done on behalf of not only my constituents but all of our constituents. So I'm in full support of the Throne Speech, and I am not in support of the opposition. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being 1 o'clock, the time of adjournment, perhaps the members would like to know when the House will reconvene. We will reconvene on Monday at 1:30 p.m. This House stands adjourned.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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Premier

President of the Executive Council

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor

Minister of Advanced Education

Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Minister Responsible for Innovation

Hon. Lori Carr

Minister of Government Relations

Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis
and Northern Affairs

Minister Responsible for the Provincial
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Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Central Services

Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre

Minister of Energy and Resources

Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

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Water Corporation

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