



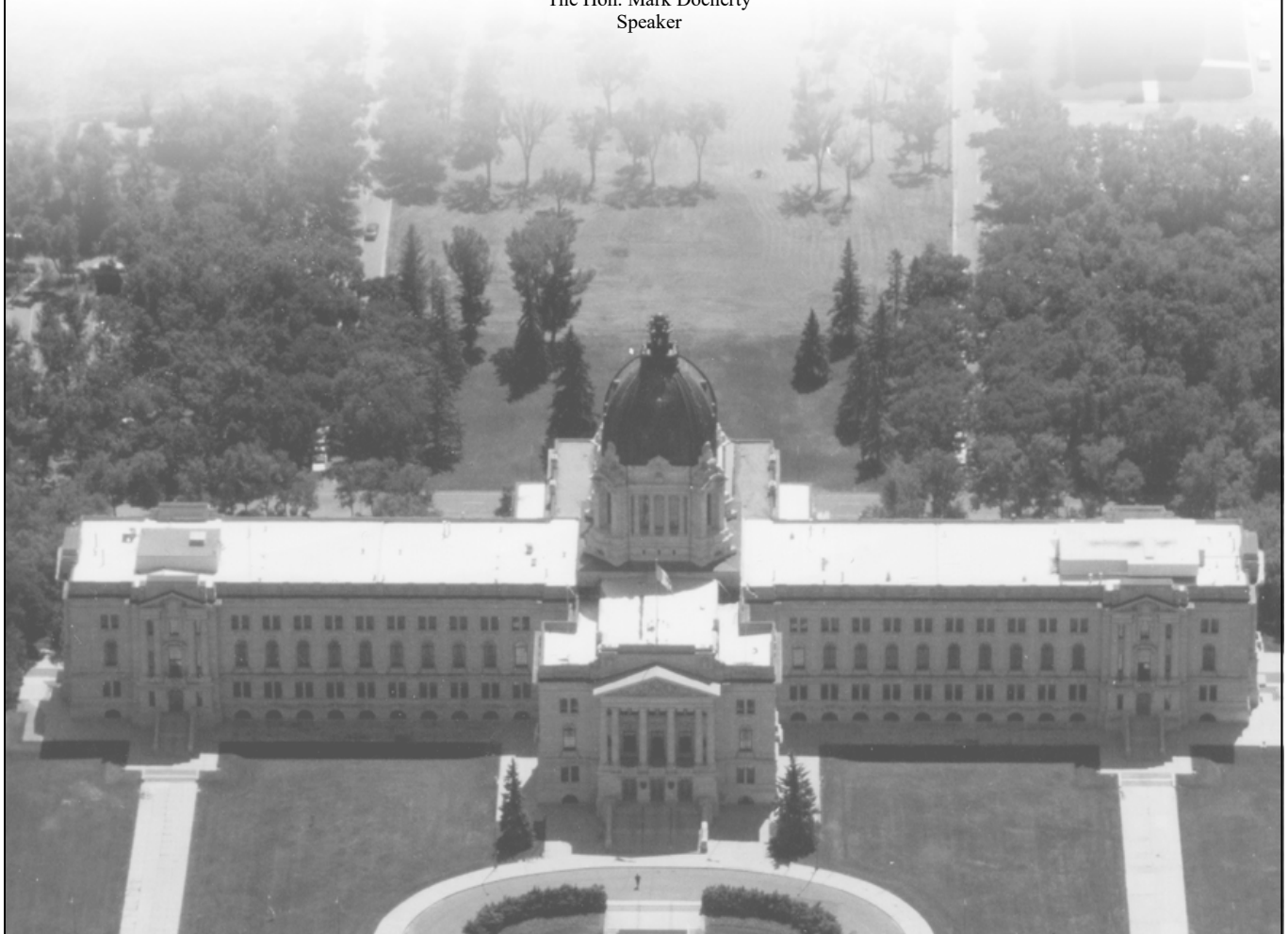
FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being 7 o'clock, we will continue with the business before the House: the reply to the Throne Speech, both the main motion and the amendment.

I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. D'Autremont, seconded by Ms. Ross, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Ms. Sarauer.]

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[Applause]

Mr. Dennis: — Am I done already? It's a great honour to stand up today and support the Throne Speech. It's been a busy year in our province, and as we look to the future of our province, we look towards another decade of growth.

But before I start with my speech, I'd like to, Mr. Speaker, thank a few people back home. I'd like to thank my new constituency assistant, Gladys Zavislak. She just started last year. I had a retirement, long-time Carol Sleeva. She decided to get away from me, so that was good I got Gladys Zavislak.

Along with that I hired two casual assistants, Deb Gabora and recently a young gal named Jess Kwas, a young gal that decided to stay in Canora and in our province. And it's great to see young people in our province, and nice to have her on board.

With that, I'd also like to thank my executive: my president, Sean Wilson; vice-president Syl Hrynkiw; secretary Gladys Zavislak; treasurer Daryl Stevenson; my membership chair, Melissa Johnson; and provincial council rep, Kris Cherewyk, as well as many of my directors too as well. I'd like to thank them.

I'd also like to thank all my constituents. Over the last three and a half years I've been out and about around my whole constituency and going to various events, and it's been really rewarding. I've been to a lot of grand openings and ribbon cuttings. And it's just nice to see our farmers are doing well, although this year was kind of a little difficult year. But from what I'm hearing, they got most of the crop off and it's looking average or slightly below. So you know, they can't have a bumper crop every year, but hats off to them and to all my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank the support of my children over these last three and a half years. I've got two of my daughters in town here: first of all Jasmine and her husband Shane, along with Lewis, my four-year-old grandson who I just

went to his hockey game this weekend. First time I saw him on skates, and I just didn't realize how much fun grandkids were, I guess. When I was young and having my kids, I was in business and playing sports myself. I didn't really appreciate my own kids and love them as much as I do this one. And then in November of last year, after the Throne Speech, I had another grandson, Oliver. And unfortunately from my indications, everybody says he looks like me. So things aren't that good for him right now off the bat, but I think he'll grow out of it. Anyways, it's great to have them supporting me.

I also have my daughter Jade, who works at the corrections in Regina here, and her partner Jason. They're great to have in the city, and it's always good to have them around.

As well, I've got my son Carson. He's living in Melville, still in Melville. He's on his eighth year there. And he's working at the golf course and took on a new career in the wintertime. He's the icemaker at the curling rink. So it's good to have him. In fact, the last couple years we curled together in the men's bonspiel, so it's nice to see that he's slaving and sweeping all my rocks, so that is good.

Last of all, I'd really like to thank my wife, Lorri, and all her support over the last three and a half years. She was a nurse for 30 years and a nurse practitioner for the last nine. And she just announced that she's retiring end of November, so it's kind of nice she made that announcement. I think I was the last to know in our town. So I don't know if she wanted to let me know that she's going to have a little more time on her hands. She actually said that she might even come into the House. She hasn't been here since I got sworn in three and a half years ago, so I might be able to entice her to come down here too as well. So we'll see. I'm sure she's got better things to do than follow me around anyway.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to welcome the new Lieutenant Governor, Russ Mirasty, and offer my condolences to our former Lieutenant Governor Thomas Molloy and his family.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of a new decade of growth is exactly what we have done as a government over the last 12 years, and we will continue to do so. We have had some good years, and recently we've had some years with some difficult decisions, but we had a three-year plan to get back to a balanced budget. In '16-17 we had \$1.2 billion deficit and made some difficult decisions to reduce the dependency off resources and balance it with consumption.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you, although we had some tough decisions in '17-18, I'm proud to report that we have balanced the budget this year while still investing in our people and our province of Saskatchewan. This, of course, while keeping our AAA rating.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our economy is one of our number one priorities and it's showing signs of improvement. Our population has grown by over 160,000 over the last 12 years. There are now more than 83,000 additional people working in our province today, while under the NDP [New Democratic Party] they had the worst job creation in Canada. Also from '96 to 2007, the province's population dropped by 22,000 people under the NDP.

Saskatchewan has seen strong job gains for the last 14 consecutive months; in fact last month in September more than 13,000 jobs were created than the previous year. In September our unemployment rate was at 5.3 per cent, which was the fourth lowest in Canada and below the national average of 5.5 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the targeted mineral exploration incentive, TMEI, is leading to increased activity in our province and creating significant opportunities for the future mining investments. This new incentive has created 110 new exploratory drilling operations.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to expand and provide new incentives and introduce new oil- and well-drilling and production incentives as well. We will continue to invest in technology, which will include the new Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive which will be critical in growing our Saskatchewan economy.

Mr. Speaker, education continues to grow in our province, and we're excited to continue investing in the future of our children. I am proud to say that I became the Legislative Secretary for Education last fall, and one of my first jobs was to do a review of the libraries. And I toured around for several months and did a review and report on the library. And it was quite interesting to just tour around the province and find out all the people that use the libraries, the needs. And it's kind of a community hub in our province.

And I was proud to report — reviewed and put in a report — and the government decided to continue on with the libraries, in fact show a minimal increase to help funding and look at better ways to keep developing our province and libraries.

Mr. Speaker, last month 191,000 pre-K to grade 12 kids started school in 770 schools throughout our province. This is an increase of over 27,000 students or 17 per cent from 12 years ago. At the same time our funding to Education has increased by 34 per cent while investing in school, nearly five times higher.

While we invested in schools, we have built 46 new schools and 23 major renovations at that time. Some notable investments in my constituency are, in 2008 they did a Norquay School project of 1.1 million; 2009, Kamsack Comprehensive roof replacement at 225,000; 2010, the Canora Junior Elementary roof of 160,000; 2014, Canora Junior Elementary, we put new modulars in there at 900,000; 2017, the Sturgis School amalgamation renovations; 2018, we reroofed the Norquay School; and in 2019, the Preeceville School renovation. We will continue to build and renovate schools as our province continues to grow.

Since 2007 we've invested over \$10 billion in post-secondary education and student supports; \$406 million to the graduate retention program to serve 70,000 grads in our province. We had \$55 million in scholarships to approximately 48,000 students. What a great job to keep our kids from leaving our province and investing in our future in this province.

Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to invest in health care. Our health care budget for 2019-2020 was over \$5.5 billion. And since 2007, over \$1.6 billion has been invested into the health care infrastructure. And also since 2007 we have hired 3,800 more nurses and nearly 900 more doctors practising in our

province. We will continue to recruit and build on our medical professions.

We have built five new hospitals as well as 13 long-term care homes. This year we have announced two projects: the Weyburn Hospital replacement and the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital redevelopment.

The new psychiatric hospital in North Battleford was opened earlier this year. It is a state-of-the-art hospital housing 188 mental health beds, and also support for the correctional facility with 96 beds for offenders living with mental health challenges.

The new long-term care facility in Swift Current and North Battleford hospital using the P3 [public-private partnership] method will save the government over \$100 million over the life of its contracts, and the money will be invested in front-line services.

Mr. Speaker, I attended the opening of the world-class facility last month in Saskatoon, the Jim Pattison Hospital. This approximately \$285 million facility is home to more than 72 physicians, and many of the children will receive the necessary care in their home province. I was at that opening, and I honestly, I look across there and I didn't see anybody from the other side over at this hospital opening so it's . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well something so important shouldn't need an invitation, I don't think. I don't think something like that should need an invitation.

But anyways, our government will continue to invest in mental health and addictions, which is a growing concern in our province. We will be investing a record of 402 million this year, an 80 per cent increase since 2007. Families need better supports and an increase in mental health and addiction beds. We will also work on reducing wait times for our children and youth in psychiatry and also adding front-line workers.

Mr. Speaker, as our province continues to grow, we will work on trying to reduce surgical wait times in our hospital. I am proud to say that our government has renewed a 10-year agreement with STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service]. Since 2012 STARS has transported over 4,500 individuals who required attention. Mr. Speaker, this of course is near and dear to my heart, as in 2014 my son was one of the trauma victims. In our hometown, had a rollover, and through STARS they airlifted him. And proud to say that he is recovered fully and doing good.

Mr. Speaker, we have recently launched our MySaskHealthRecord, which will give Saskatchewan residents 18 and over easy access to their medical record information.

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to invest in our highways for safer travel for people of Saskatchewan. In the last 12 years we've invested \$9 billion in highway infrastructure, repairing and replacing over 14 000 kilometres of highway and over 280 bridges.

Today I had the pleasure of being at the Regina bypass opening. This project will provide driver safety and reduce the number of serious accidents and fatalities, which is huge for our province. It is the largest infrastructure project in Saskatchewan history, and it opened on time and on budget. There are 12 intersections,

40 kilometres of new four-lane highways, 55 kilometres of service roads — all designed for improved traffic flow throughout the area.

[19:15]

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that in my constituency they are now building passing lanes on Highway 9 from Canora to Yorkton and Highway 10 from Yorkton to Melville. With increased traffic flow, my constituency will welcome the safety of these passing lanes. I know they work.

This year my constituency will also invest in bridge replacements on Highway 5 over the Assiniboine River and Highway 47 north of Willowbrook. There is also paving between Canora and Yorkton and paving on Highway 9 near Usherville and paving on Highway 16 near Springside. A total of \$23 million is invested in my constituency alone.

Mr. Speaker, public safety for the people of Saskatchewan is very important. While Saskatchewan's crime rate has fallen since 2007, our government remains committed to reducing crime and keeping people safe. I was privileged to be part of the crime reduction committee which toured the province to evaluate crime across the province. It was a great experience and I had an eye-opener for all of us on the committee, I think.

After the recommendations, I'm happy to see the implementation of the PRT [protection and response team] to reduce crime, particularly in rural areas. Since the launch of PRT, there are now more than 300 front-line officers working in the rural areas of the province, which has increased over 40 per cent since 2011. We will continue to support programs such as crime watch and others. This brought together highway patrol officers, conservation officers, RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], municipal officers, all together for better visibility in rural Saskatchewan.

Special units such as children internet exploitation units and the police and crisis teams have been formed to battle against drug and gang activities. Mr. Speaker, since 2007 we've provided municipalities with over \$150 million for front-line workers. We will continue to support the gang violence reduction strategy and continue to expand crime reduction teams in Regina and Saskatoon.

We're committed to public safety on our highways by strengthening traffic laws against impaired and distracted driving in our province, and we are continuing to strengthen those. Our province is also committed to a trespassing law to provide safety for our rural residents. We'll also continue on the intersection sightline cleanups to improve driver safety. This is a five-year, \$100 million commitment to our province so that we no longer have any disasters in our province, hopefully.

Mr. Speaker, since the launch of PRT in April, conservation officers and RCMP have assessed more than 1,300 PRT-related actions. The PRTs are now equipped with automated licence plate readers funded by SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance]. These help officers by alerting the vehicles are stolen or connected to crime and if the driver has been suspended.

Mr. Speaker, our government is also committed to supporting

Clare's Law, aiming to reduce domestic violence in our province. This legislation provides a framework for police to disclose relevant information regarding abusive history to partners who may be at risk.

Mr. Speaker, with a strong and growing province, there is a need to protect the most vulnerable in our province. This summer our government launched the new SIS program, the Saskatchewan income support program. This program will achieve independence by keeping more money in the pockets of those on this program.

Mr. Speaker, this spring our government has signed three new agreements with the Saskatoon Tribal Council. This will create stronger relationships in hopes of a better life for Indigenous children in care and their families. This agreement will work with the 17 First Nations agencies to deliver better services and hopefully reduce the number of children in care and reduce their time in care.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year we have also transitioned over 150 people in the Valley View to various communities of choice throughout the province. These residents will enjoy more accessible communities. And our government is committed to increasing funding for transit assistance for people with disabilities program, and we'll continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is a beautiful province, and our 36 provincial parks welcome nearly four million visitors per year. Over the years we've invested over 127 million in capital investments to improve our campgrounds, boat launches, showers, and washroom facilities. This is a growing industry that will continue to build on our economy and attract people to our province for the years to come.

Along with the beautiful parks, Saskatchewan continues to attract world-class events such as the one that I attended this weekend: the Tim Hortons Heritage Classic at the Mosaic Stadium in Regina, a world-class facility. And it was a great time. And the Winnipeg Jets won, so that was a little added bonus . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Winnipeg Jets won, and that was a little added bonus.

Next year Saskatchewan will play host to the Scotties Tournament of Hearts in Moose Jaw, the Juno Awards in Saskatoon, and the Grey Cup in Regina in 2020 which I think our Roughriders will be there again.

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to stand up against the carbon tax. Our Premier and Minister of Environment have presented a great plan: the Prairie Resilience climate change strategy to help reduce greenhouse gases. The plan commits to reducing 12 million tonnes by 2030 and by reducing emissions from electrical generations by 40 per cent. The federal government's decision to phase out coal-fired electricity by 2030 will negatively affect over 1,300 workers in Saskatchewan coal-producing communities and are NDP supported.

Mr. Speaker, studies have shown that the carbon tax will reduce the provincial GDP [gross domestic product] by 16 billion by 2030, at the same time only reducing the emissions by one per cent. A recent poll indicated that 88 per cent of people are against the federal carbon tax. Allowing this tax will hurt our economy,

industry, large and small businesses, agriculture, and communities.

Mr. Speaker, with the growth of our province over the past 12 years and our future growth over the next decade, we are committed to building connectivity to further increase SaskTel rural coverage across Saskatchewan. Work has begun on 15 new cellular sites, investing over \$50 million. We are continuing to provide rural communities with reliable cell service and high-speed internet services in a four-phase plan. One hundred and three rural communities will receive new cell sites by the end of 2020 and half of these sites are already in service.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 12 years our province has seen growth to our population and our economy. Our new decade plan of growth will soon be released, and we will continue to build our province and continue to grow with the people of Saskatchewan for the future of our children. We will not go back to the way of the NDP where people left our province and we were dead last in health care, longest waiting times. We lost 450 nurses, 173 doctors, closing 52 hospitals, including . . . The worst one was the Plains hospital here in Regina.

Education — they closed 176 schools and got rid of 400 teachers, and they complain about our education record. And their infrastructure was deteriorating roads that were never built and closing facilities.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will be supporting the Throne Speech and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well I'm humbled and always honoured to stand in the Assembly as a representative of the people for Saskatchewan Rivers constituency. There are a great number of people who I represent in this area and gave so much of themselves in this great province, and I'd like to recognize some of the former people that came before me to represent Saskatchewan Rivers constituency. And one of those is MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Daryl Wiberg. He came from the same area where I was raised, the Wiberg family, who have volunteered and helped in their community for decades. So I need to thank those people who came before me that shaped the province and paved the way for those who will benefit from their labours.

I also want to thank and appreciate those in my office back home. Marcus Abrametz looks after the main office at Red Wing, and Donna Barr is in the office when Marcus is out and about. And we have a satellite office at Big River. Jason Beebe is a constituency assistant there, and I want to thank him for looking after Big River and area. So their personalities and their loyalty to this great province has helped make the quality of life better for myself as well as the constituents and the rest of Saskatchewan. So it is much appreciated.

In regards to my supportive family, my husband, Doug, our four children and their spouses, and our . . . How many is it now? Nine? Eleven? Eleven grandchildren. And it's climbing so quickly. There's even twins in there. They're 10 and under. So there's a few of them who like to see Grandma when she comes

home. So I can't say enough for their patience and helping where needed in my many aspects of life and their unconditional love.

And thank you to the caring, hard-working, empathetic, and creative constituents who have entrusted me to be their voice and take their concerns forward. They're a good bunch of people that help me out as well as my executive.

Saskatchewan Rivers constituency borders the beautiful North Saskatchewan River to the south and the Prince Albert National Park to the north. And this diverse and large area includes numerous cultural and ethnic groups such as the French-speaking communities of Albertville and Debden and the predominantly Ukrainian-settled Meath Park.

The hamlet of Elk Ridge consists mainly of seniors while many war veterans have settled around the village of Paddockwood. The logging town of Big River still operates a saw mill, and the district of Lakeland is known for their tourism surrounding Emma and Christopher lakes.

The great volunteers that we celebrated recently at the Lakeland Citizen of the Year ceremonies at the Christopher Lake Legion Hall were Margaret and Harvey Boettcher. And they were honoured for their years of dedication and service to the surrounding area of Beaton, Forest Gate, and Lakeland. They make our communities a better place to live.

The village of Love with a population of 50 is nestled in the boreal forest in the RM [rural municipality] of Torch River. And it is known worldwide for its unique postal stamp, a teddy bear holding a heart. The postmistress continues to serve the community during wedding or Valentine's season when twice as much mail comes through hoping for that very special stamp. While the post office has been serving the community since 1935, it was in 1984 that the first Love stamp was created.

And I also have been privileged in going to the village of Love and area to pick mushrooms. And it was a great success this year because it was very wet.

Now according to the census, approximately 3,500 urban residents live in Saskatchewan Rivers constituency, which would be nine villages, two towns, one hamlet, one resort village, and one national park with the Stanley Thompson masterpiece golf course, the Waskesiu golf course, built in 1935.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was pleased to visit the Star Diamond exploration site at Fort à la Corne forest in our constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers. The tour included seeing the world-famous trench cutter sampling rig, which bores up to 250 metres below the surface. The on-site processing plant was manufactured and tested in South Africa before being shipped all the way here. There were a lot of people from other countries working there, as I detected South African and English accents, so we're using their mining expertise in this very cosmopolitan mining camp.

[19:30]

Star Diamond and partner Rio Tinto began trenching operations this past spring. These trenching operations will determine the vitality of a possible mines investment at the site, so we're very

excited here in Saskatchewan Rivers at the prospect of a possible diamond mine operating. Saskatchewan is also a great trading partner internationally and will continue to work with other countries.

In our beautiful riding of Saskatchewan Rivers we continue to upgrade and add additional campsites to provincial campgrounds. Candle Lake saw a multi-use trail improvement, a new service centre, water treatment plant upgrade; while Emma Lake will have a replaced entry kiosk; and the Great Blue Heron Park will receive a new service centre. Waskesiu Lake, Debden, Meath Park, and Deer Ridge will have upgrades to SaskTel, increasing capacity and thus improving quality of life in this area of our riding when we're driving on the highways.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we embark on the new legislative session, let us be inspired by the optimism and hope of all Saskatchewan citizens. Their caring, empathy, and integrity shines daily as they go about their business of working, taking care of their families, and volunteering for their children's sporting events and other passions.

Quality child care for families is addressed in this Throne Speech, acknowledged by your government as an important part of a healthy family lifestyle. The First Contact Panel Protocol will alleviate the number of children coming into care and the length of time the child is away from their biological family.

Mental health and addictions is also addressed by the government. It's heartbreaking for the families and front-line responders, health and social service personnel, who deal with the Saskatchewan citizens in crisis. It's difficult for families sometimes even asking for help, so our government wants to make access easier and more timely. Recovery and healing is a long process and we are grateful for the health and social service personnel for their patience, compassion, and understanding.

I had the privilege of attending the Prince Albert foster appreciation night. After visiting with a few of the parents, I had greater appreciation of the love and patience they give to each individual child in need. I was a foster sister many years ago as a child to two sisters from Cumberland House. Gloria and Priscilla will be forever remembered by myself with great memories, and I feel they probably taught me much more than I had realized as a young girl. But the need for stability and comfort shown by my parents, I finally understand today.

Saskatchewan is funding and investing in more mental health and addiction services, more supports and front-line health care workers, reducing wait times for child and youth psychiatry, and increased support for Family Service Saskatchewan for walk-in mental health services. The quality of life improved in Saskatchewan is something we've talked about for years, so I'm very pleased to see there's more police officers, more child care spaces, more schools, more funding for education. We increased funding for the transit assistance for people with disabilities program and this fall will implement the disability strategy with the new accessibility Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the start of a new school year means more than 190,000 pre-K [pre-kindergarten] to grade 12 students have returned to the classrooms here in Saskatchewan. In my community of Red Wing, six of my nine grandchildren — aha, I

have it, nine — six of my nine grandchildren have descended on Red Wing elementary school, and I am proud of our dedicated teachers, bus drivers, administration, and maintenance staff who work together to ensure that these young minds receive a high-quality education while arriving safely off our grid roads and highways.

My parents attended one-room schoolhouses before becoming farmers and owners of several successful businesses, and what we offer today and ensure all students would amaze them. Saskatchewan school divisions now have the opportunity to offer robotics and automation classes for their students, ensuring classrooms are meeting the needs of 21st-century students. Inclusion, diversity, and acceptance are working well in our schools. My grandparents would be delighted that Saskatchewan — the land, the country that they came to for a better and a safer life — has opened up so many opportunities for their great-grandchildren. The challenges we face today are much different than the physical hardships of great distances, food and shelter, and wild animals that they had to face. We are much better equipped today through technology, resource management, and medical advancements, to name a few.

Saskatchewan is now home to Canada's national synchrotron light source facility located on the grounds of the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. Research at the synchrotron has ranged from viruses to superconductors and has also been noted for its industrial science and its high school education programs. We are on the world stage with international teams working on research such as cancer biomarkers to developing innovative secondary education programs.

The Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive is the most aggressive investment tax credit for start-ups in Western Canada. Close to 80,000 students are enrolled in Saskatchewan universities and tech colleges this year. Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions have an increase in operating funding by more than 50 per cent since 2007. It's a new decade of growth and it will benefit all Saskatchewan people.

Sask Rivers constituency will see paving on Highways 3, 63, and 55 between Prince Albert and Meath Park; west to Spruce Home on Highway 355, to east of Sturgeon Lake First Nation. There'll be more lighting on intersections for enhancing safety.

In nearby Prince Albert, a new multi-purpose recreational facility will be utilized by many residents of Saskatchewan Rivers constituency and will benefit by the healthy aspects of sports. Also in nearby Prince Albert, Victoria Hospital, the redevelopment project will be entering the final planning stages and will benefit Saskatchewan people. Over 1.6 billion has been invested into health care infrastructure in Saskatchewan since 2007. And because of this, 20 additional major capital projects have been funded for Saskatchewan communities and their families.

Agriculture has always been and continues to be one of the key drivers in Saskatchewan Rivers constituency for the economic growth and for what the families want and need to give to the rest of the world. October is Agriculture Month in Saskatchewan and a time to highlight our connection to food. This particular harvest has been very challenging, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we stand behind our farmers' struggles.

We will continue to embark on trade missions and connect with the global markets promoting our food and our fertilizer. Currently Saskatchewan exports two-thirds of products to over 150 countries across the globe. We will work on increasing agriculture value-added exports to the tune of \$10 billion by 2030.

For these reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and because I am so proud of being a Saskatchewan citizen and what we stand for, it's with a positive attitude and optimism that I look forward to Saskatchewan's future. And I will support our government's Throne Speech, but I cannot support the amendment. Thank you.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise tonight and enter into this debate on the Throne Speech. Always a good start to the session, the fall and the spring as we listen to the government set out its plan. And of course, it's always one that we take seriously in terms of taking a look and reviewing this.

But what I want to do, right on the way before I start, is to thank a few people that I should be recognizing, as many people here have done of course, the people in their own ridings. And of course, Saskatoon Centre I think is the best riding in the province. But I understand that others may think they have the best.

But I have over the course of the years grown more and more fond of our neighbourhoods, our communities, our downtown which is so vibrant, home to many festivals, where there's the jazz festival. Meewasin Valley Authority just celebrated its 40th anniversary. All of those things really make Saskatoon. And in fact, you know, they talk about the jewel of the prairies, the Paris of the prairies, and really, truly it is. And so I am very proud to represent that.

Sometimes though, I think I represent an area that has sort of two solitudes. Of course 20th Street, I represent a big chunk along with my colleague from Riversdale, where we have real challenges in terms of poverty, employment, disabilities, addictions. That is a real challenge. And it's not only there but seems to have found its way more and more there. But then when you get along Spadina Crescent, the river, it's a beautiful place and it truly is, the churches and the Bessborough. So it's a wonderful place to represent, and I am very proud to bring their concerns here to the House.

I also want to make mention of the people who help me here. You know, of course we have our staff in the caucus office, and I have to tell you as well — and we'll do this more as the year goes on — but I wanted to say a shout-out to the librarians and the people who work in the library to do the good work and the good research.

And of course finally, my family who has been with me all these years. And of course, as the member before for Saskatchewan Rivers, how they have grown. Now I have four grandchildren all over Canada, right from Corner Brook, Newfoundland to Toronto. None in Saskatchewan yet, but we wait and see what may happen there. But we have children here. It's hard when you call them children when they're in their 30s and 40s though. But

of course when I started they were just finishing high school and entering university. But they have been with me and stood with me all this time through thick and thin, and I really appreciate that so much. So a big thank you to them.

I want to take a moment though before I get into the meat of this thing before us, and that's really to talk about the two people who aren't here tonight, the two people who should be here, and it's very important that we should have had these people in the House. And of course those are the members who should be here representing Saskatoon Eastview and Regina Walsh Acres.

This House is incomplete, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because those people should be represented. And we're having a full sitting here starting with the Throne Speech, going into budget, and this is completely unacceptable. Completely unacceptable that we would allow a situation like this to happen because of a loophole, a simple loophole that we all recognize, we all know that most situations in terms of a length of a period for a government is 48 months. And we're here we're sitting with a situation where it's going to be 57 months and these folks have deliberately created that situation.

So why didn't they do the right thing when they were doing that and recognize the intent of *The Election Act* was that of no by-elections will be called in the last six months of that term — the last six months, you know. And so this is their taking advantage of a loophole. We don't know why. The Premier the other day, when asked about it, he started saying it was because it was urban and then he stopped. Now I don't know whether he was starting to realize that he was out on a limb because he was saying it was urban, and I don't know where he was going with that. What could he possibly be meaning by that? But then he shifted gears. He shifted gears.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know that those folks over there have bent over backwards to include three more MLAs because it's important to be represented. And it was fine, we know what the costs are. They are high, but they could live with that. They could live with that. But all of a sudden, something happened on the road. They found that by-elections are just too expensive. And Walsh Acres and Eastview, they're just going to have to suck it up.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know what a couple of members on that side of the House have said in the past about this situation. And I'd like to quote from the member from Cannington back in 2004 when this same situation arose, and I quote, "And I think that's just . . . [unacceptable] that a seat should be vacant for one whole session." Now he's changed his mind, he's changed his mind. He's flip-flopped.

[19:45]

Now let's see if the member who represented Thunder Creek but now he's Lumsden-Morse, but this is what he said, and I quote:

Generally speaking the people of Saskatchewan would agree that it is simply wrong to let people remain unrepresented in this Legislative Assembly which exerts so much control over their lives for any more than six months.

These folks are going to be unrepresented for up to 14 months.

What happened here? Did he change his mind as well? Did he change his mind as well? What happened? What were they drinking over there? What Kool-Aid were they drinking?

And, Mr. Speaker, the third quote. Now he's no longer in the House, so it's Mr. Wayne Elhard. But Mr. Wayne Elhard said, and I quote, "The fact is that the people have a right to expect representation in the provincial legislature. They have a right to expect it in a timely manner." There you go.

Now we heard a member earlier go on and on about the political correctness and the right to free speech and all of that, but when it comes to be represented in this House of democracy, no way. No way. That's got a price tag and the people of Eastview and Walsh Acres are just out of luck.

So I wonder what that member who went on and on and on and on about free speech and political correctness has to say about this. Did he stand up and say, you know what, really this is a loophole; I know it's going to cost some money, but that's the price of democracy. And in fact the people of Regina Walsh Acres and Eastview have already paid for this. Why are they being singled out to say it costs too much money? And yes, you have paid. You've paid for it through your taxes. But you know what? The rest of us are going to enjoy our benefits that we get from democracy and you folks aren't.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day for democracy. This will be a sad session when people like the member from Cannington who shouts from his seat that he's changed his mind. I don't know why he would, why he would, 15 years later. Maybe we'll hear another speech about that but this is, this is a problem, Mr. Speaker. And I think we really have to think about this carefully as we reflect in the next 64, 63 days. Where are those two folks? I mean I, you know, you might say they didn't contribute much before and we're not going to really miss them. Maybe that's it. Maybe that's why the member from Cannington changed his mind. Will we miss these folks? I think we will. I always believe everyone in this House does contribute in their own positive way. Everybody does.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know the time will go very quickly here, but I do want to talk a little bit about some of the things in the Throne Speech that were important. And I have to say to the government that, you know, when they talk of the 1,000 new jobs, that's a laudable goal. We will wait and we'll see if that happens, 100,000.

But I have to tell you, I have to tell you a couple of news stories that keep coming back to haunt this government, and I think that this speaks to their mismanagement. If we get to 100,000, then right on. Right on, and I think that will be good news.

But of course, we heard this spring about, again, the film industry here in Saskatchewan. Heartbreaking that Saskatchewan film industry's operating revenue slashed in half over the last decade. And, Mr. Speaker, here is a prime example, prime example when we have a building just over there on College Avenue ready to go, and yet these folks refuse to do anything with it. Could that be part of the 100,000 new jobs here in Saskatchewan? Are they still ideologically sticking their heads in the sand saying, no way, that is one place, that is one place we won't go is to film — the film industry where we see things happening in Winnipeg, things

happening in Vancouver, but not here in Saskatchewan when we had all the right ingredients for a really exciting industry, and these guys cut the legs out from under it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other headline that I read this summer, this one was about Mosaic: laid-off Mosaic miners urged to find another job. Four hundred unionized positions lost from Colonsay site set to close. Now I don't know how permanent this layoff is, but these folks, these are real jobs, real good jobs that support families. And they support families in their ridings, in their ridings over there. Some live in Saskatoon and Regina.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've got to make sure we manage our resources well right now. And they've got to be sustainable and that's really key. They can't be just jobs that come and go. We know there will be lots of opportunity because there will be lots of retirements. We understand that three-quarters of the openings that will happen in Saskatchewan in the next five years will be because of retirement. And I know a couple people here that will be retiring. So it'll be two or three or four of us who will be creating some new jobs. But they're not new; they're old jobs. At any rate I really think this is important that we do the right thing.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] convention was this past weekend. And people came up and were asking, so what about those 100,000 new jobs? What are they going to be in? What are their sectors? And they said, we sure hope that what they're doing is filling the shortfall that's happening in education and in the health sector because too many short shifts are happening. Too many short shifts are happening that these folks won't fill because they're too concerned about their budgets.

And what's the ramification of that? We have too many injuries. We have too many people in health care who are hurt because they're trying to do the job of two people. One person doing the job of two people and, Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough. And we know that there's opportunities right now to create work and that is to fill the holes that are happening in health, in education, education particularly around teachers and educational assistants to make sure that our kids are getting the best education they possibly can.

But I am worried about this, Mr. Speaker. And I understand there's a grand plan about to come down any day now. I think it's mid-November that we're going to hear the Premier's economic strategy that we're all waiting for. But I have to tell you, I sure hope it's a little more thought out than that grand plan called Enterprise Saskatchewan.

Whoa, let's go back and talk about Enterprise Saskatchewan. Now I don't know if the member from Cannington has changed his mind on that one, but here we had a reorganization of economic development in Saskatchewan. We have Premier Wall coming and saying, this is the way we're going to create sustainable work in Saskatchewan. We're going to recreate the economic development zones we're going to all call enterprise zones. And boy oh boy, we're going to catch this . . . This province is going to be on fire, creating all sorts of work, creating all sorts of work.

And it was interesting that the Premier, the new Premier, when he comes in, what's the first bill he assigns? I was trying to think.

Did it go to the hall of fame or the wall of shame? What was it? The hall of shame or the wall of shame. It doesn't even exist anymore. That legislation was quickly erased. It wasn't even left there for, you know, for the archivists or for people to take a look at in the future to say, so what were those guys thinking? They made sure they shredded that pretty darn quick. So, Mr. Speaker, just forgive me if I'm a little . . . I have to see. The proof will be in the pudding. The proof will be in the pudding.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do want to speak just a couple minutes about the accessibility Act. I'm looking forward to that, particularly what was happening at the national level and how the bill was passed federally. I am looking forward to see how that comes together.

Ironically this government just a couple years ago cut STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], probably the greatest accessibility tool in this province. And yet they cut that. They cut that. Is this a signal that they may be thinking about that? STC was a way to create connections between all the people of Saskatchewan because they had a way to get around. And now with that gone, they've seen the light. I don't know what they were doing. And so all of a sudden they've seen the light, and they're going to create an accessibility Act, and that's out of their disability strategy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, do you remember what year that disability strategy first came around? Do you remember? 2015. Four years ago, Mr. Speaker, and we're finally getting around to the accessibility thing. Four years. It was actually started in 2015. Now it must be election time, because this thing seems to come up just before the election. It came up just before the last election. Now we are facing another election and it's coming up yet again. Wow, and we won't see the results of this until, what, four years from now in 2023. But I am looking forward to it, and I think it's a good thing and needs to be done.

And I did talk today a little bit about the Saskatchewan income support program. You know, I think that it's important to be innovative. I think that you need to always be trying to do your best work, especially to help the people who are most vulnerable in our society. But I tell you that we are hearing more and more and more concerns around the housing.

And today when we had 60 to 70 people meeting at the Lighthouse to talk about what's going to happen in these months coming up, the winter months. It could be a real tragedy. We haven't seen this . . . Now we did see it a few years ago where we had people freezing to death. There was one gentleman that I was questioning the Minister of Social Services, but he had frozen to death. His house where he was living was a cab of a semi trailer, and it was just too cold. He couldn't live there, and he died.

So I don't know what's going to happen this winter, but I've got a bad, bad feeling because what they're doing is with their direct payment particularly around rent. Many, most people can handle that but some cannot, particularly those who are dealing in addictions or mental health challenges. This is going to be a real challenge for them. And we are setting them up for failure, and I think this is something that we're going to have to watch. And, Mr. Speaker, I hope I'm all wrong on this and that there won't be a problem this winter. But I tell you many, many people are very

concerned about this — whether or not they'll be able to pay their utility bills, whether or not they'll be able to pay their damage deposits, whether or not they'll be able to pay their rent. So we are going to have to watch this one very closely.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in hearing that the Throne Speech talked about fixing or dealing with the lobbyist rules. And this is a very important issue, fixing the loopholes in the lobbyist recommendations. Now there are basically two. The commissioner is calling for the elimination of the 100-hour act. The minister has thrown out or raised up the flag pole maybe 30 hours is better. But the commissioner says, 30 hours, you might as well call it 100 hours because one phone call from a very influential person maybe is a half an hour, still under the 30 hours. So it should be taken right down to zero. So we're going to be watching very, very closely. Are they following the commissioner's recommendations or are they playing very loose with this as well? And the other one, of course, is recording non-profits to register too. So we'll be watching that very closely.

Mr. Speaker, as well, we've seen particularly this year, the fiasco of Pinehouse and dealing with Privacy Commissioner recommendations. This has been probably the biggest embarrassment of a municipality in many decades, a municipality who has refused to deal with the requests from the Privacy Commissioner to come forward with information. Now we understand that it's turned into an inquiry, and we look forward to the results of that inquiry. We understand that will come this fall.

But the Privacy Commissioner made a recommendation this summer that I think is very worthwhile. And while they're fixing or doing their ethics redo, they should include this. And that is, and I'll quote from the article today to make sure we get it . . . Not today. It was from this summer. But this is from the *StarPhoenix*, when he talked about the Privacy Commissioner “. . . is pushing for legislation that would require any public body to appeal to the courts if it disagrees with a recommendation from his office.” He calls it a reverse of what's happening right now.

An individual has to take the government to court if they disagree with the ruling. And to an individual, that can cost between 10 and \$15,000. Now I think it was again the gentleman, the MLA who was speaking earlier today about free speech and political pressure, political correctness. What does he think about that, where it costs 10 or \$15,000 for an ordinary citizen here in Saskatchewan to take the government to court to find out what's going on? How is that transparency? How is that accountability?

[20:00]

So the Privacy Commissioner says, let's flip it around. Let's make the government, who actually has deeper pockets than many of us, and say, you prove that you can't, that it would be in the government's or the public's best interest not to share that information. Will they do that recommendation? Will they follow that recommendation? We'll be looking forward to hearing more about that. So, Mr. Speaker, I'll watch that very closely as well.

I want to talk, and I'll just say two things briefly, the mental health suicide strategy — scant mention. The opioid and meth crisis, we really need to focus on that. We really do. That's becoming a much bigger issue. Even, you know, I was talking to

people, working people who were dealing with pain and then becoming addicted. This is an issue. This is a real issue about addictions and how addictions can happen without the . . . You know, we used to have this idea of a drug addict, and now we're finding out that we're all very susceptible to this when we're dealing with pain. And this is something that we need to take very closely, watch very closely.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just talk about one thing that I want to congratulate the minister on and this is, I'm going to call it Janna's law, and I'll explain to you in a minute why I call it Janna's law. But on page 18 it talks about the "Further amendments to *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* to extend employment leave to individuals who are running for election to a First Nations Band Council." And I say, right on. That's good. This is about time. This is a good thing.

If you're familiar with this legislation, it is section 254 of the employment Act. It talks about leave for us to run for public office, whether it be at the federal, provincial, or municipal level. I would say in our whiteness, we have forgotten that there are Indigenous elections. This is an oversight for many decades. And I just want to say congratulations to the government for correcting this. This is an oversight, and I think this is in the spirit of truth and reconciliation that we are correcting this.

Now I would say that — and I have talked to the minister about this — that I said to him, you know, this is something that I raised three years ago with you. And the reason I raised it was because a woman named Janna Pratt raised it with me at an SFL convention. She is an Indigenous woman who wanted to run for her band. And she worked for the Crowns but could not do that, or it would be hard for her to do that. She'd have to give up her position at the Crown to run for her band office. And she felt that was too much for her family to overcome, where the rest of us have the luxury of having that protection.

And so she asked me if I could do something about that. I wrote a letter to the minister November 14th, 2016. And this is what I said. And we talked about several concerns, but I said, "(2) We are suggesting that section 254 of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* should be amended to include Indigenous elections, Métis, and First Nations, and this should require some consultation, though it cannot be rushed." And the reason for that is, I don't know all there is, and I don't know if anybody over there would say they know all there is to know about Indigenous elections. So we need to make sure we do the consultations in the right and thorough manner.

Now in the Throne Speech it talks about being elected to a First Nations band council, and I hope that the wording in the legislation and the amendment will be much more broader so that it would be appropriate for First Nations and Métis and Inuit people. I don't know all the circumstances. The legislation that covers the MLAs just refers to a provincial election. It doesn't say the legislature or anything like that. It talks to federal, provincial, and municipal levels. That's the language of the Act.

And so that allows a much broader interpretation because I think most employers . . . And I know my employer has a certain pride of having one of its employees be elected. I think that's something we should be proud of. Any employer should be proud that one of their employees sought election, no matter what party

it was, to serve the public good.

And so I think that's something that needs to be looked after. And so I'm going to refer to it as Janna's law because it was Janna Pratt who brought it to my attention. It wasn't my idea. It was Janna Pratt's idea. She was much more on the ball. The minister tells me that other people have consulted with him and that's fair enough. Good ideas happen. Many people are thinking about that and thinking about the omissions that we have created and let sit too long. And so I am really excited about that and look forward to seeing that legislation.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I am worried about what's happening in terms of our classrooms. I am worried about what's happening in our health sector, our emergency rooms. I am feeling that the government is not paying enough attention and is resting on its laurels, being a bit cavalier when they talk about things since 2007. We know particularly the last five years. The first seven years there was a lot more resource revenue. Things were much easier to do. These last five years have been much more challenging and you can't wash them all in the same tub, you know.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think these folks have to really focus on what's really important, what people are talking about in my riding — health and education. That's what they're really concerned. They're concerned about what's happening in the emergency rooms. They're concerned about addictions. They're concerned about suicides. They're concerned about the classrooms. They're concerned their kids are not getting the best education that we should be getting in a province like us.

So what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, too many people are feeling this government, this Premier, is letting the people of Saskatchewan down. So I am proud to support the amendment. I think this is the right, right thing to do. I would urge all members to vote to support the amendment. I will be. And I won't be supporting the main motion. Thank you.

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

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's always tough to follow a reasonably good comedy act, but I'll give 'er a go.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, as many others, it's a pleasure here tonight to talk to the Speech from the Throne. I'd first like to start off by thanking a few very important people in my life. First of all and foremost, my wife, Valerie. Thank you for continuing to stand by and support me and make it possible for me to be here today. That's kind of a . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, I guess that's all right. You keep our day-to-day operations running with such ease and grace, and I could not have done this without you.

I'd also like to thank my two constituency assistants: Cheryl Hume, who works full time, and Maureen Paron, who is the part-time office lady. Now these two ladies had extra duties this year with the PNWER [Pacific NorthWest Economic Region] summit in Saskatoon as I was the president, so we had lots of work to do. And I'll talk a little bit more about that.

I also would like to thank the people of Cut Knife-Turtleford who

have supported me and who I am privileged to represent as a member of the Saskatchewan Party.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this summer in July we hosted the PNWER Summit, and there was over 500 regional legislators, business leaders, academics, and policy makers gathered in Saskatoon on July 21st to the 25th. Attendees participated in 23 working-group sessions, 6 keynote plenary sessions, and 6 policy tours over the course of the five-day summit.

On the Sunday on the opening of it, myself and Mayor Charlie Clark did the opening ceremony. Mayor Clark showcased the dynamic and innovative industries of Saskatoon and the importance of relationships across the region. People have a strong history of working together here in Saskatoon, and it is the same spirit that is critical to the vision behind PNWER. So I thank His Worship for that.

The first morning, on Monday morning, the breakfast session keynote featured the past US [United States] ambassadors reflecting on US and Canada relationships. And the ambassadors that took part in this were the US Ambassador David Jacobson, Canadian Ambassador Michael Kergin, and US Ambassador David Wilkins. And that was moderated by Scotty Greenwood from the Canadian American Business Council. And it went over very well.

At noon hour, Mr. Speaker, the Premier was the keynote and he was followed up by the Honourable Bob McLeod from the Northwest Territories. When the Premier spoke, he spoke of Saskatchewan's focus on international trade to create jobs and opportunity as well as the need to continue engagement between Canada and the United States at all levels. Following him was Premier McLeod, who I should mention at this point and time did not seek re-election in the Northwest Territories election that just happened here a month ago, and so now is retired and is going to follow his grandson around playing hockey. Premier McLeod spoke about the economic vision of the Northwest Territories and strengthening the role of the Arctic in Canada and North America as a whole.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we had an award presentation at the noon-hour keynote and this award was . . . Each year PNWER recognizes a person who has gone beyond their own interest to build trust and co-operation across the US-Canada border. The award is named in honour of PNWER's founder, former Washington State Senator Alan Bluechel. So I'd like to read from the quote from here, and the quote is:

Lyle Stewart, the MLA for Lumsden-Morse in Saskatchewan and former minister of Agriculture, minister responsible for Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, the minister for Enterprise and Innovation, received the Pacific North West Economic Region's Alan Bluechel Award. He was honoured with this award for his exceptional service to both Canada and the United States during his service as Saskatchewan's first president of PNWER.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that same day on the Monday afternoon we went out to . . . I should say that I was the Co-Chair along with Patrick Kole from Idaho, and we co-chaired the ag session. And we went out to the Ag in Motion site at Langham. And they were good enough to hold their equipment and their showcase over for

us, and we were out there for Monday afternoon. Great weather. It was hot and we got to see all the equipment, and it was very, very well done. So we thank them once again for that. That evening we were hosted by the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] and they had a great reception for us out at the U of S. And Peter Stoicheff, the president, hosted us and did a very, very good job. And it was well attended. Lots of people there.

On Tuesday morning we started out with, I guess you would call it a . . . It was vice-president of international trade and regulations for NASCO [North American Strategy for Competitiveness] and it included some people: Phil Lamarche, director of transport operations; representative Gael Tarleton from Washington State Senate; Vee Kachroo, senior vice-president of operations for Canpotex; Robin Silvester, CEO [chief executive officer] of Port of Vancouver, and David Miller, Canadian National railway. The panellists spoke about challenges and needs of the region as it moves forward and into the future. They also elaborated on the steps and solutions that can and should be taken to ensure that our regions continue to grow in a competitive and challenging global market that we have today.

We then moved into the noon hour keynote, and I must say it went over very well. And it was to do with Asian markets. And I'll just quote from here:

Asia is moving at a speed and scale unlike any other, and the Pacific Northwest has the resources and ingenuity to tap into this market. This is an opportunity for the U.S. and Canada to work together to access the Asian . . . [markets].

Victor Thomas, vice-president of the prairie region for Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, moderated the plenary luncheon. The panel focused on capturing Asian markets, featuring Murad Al-Katib, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of AGT; and John Stackhouse, senior vice president of the Royal Bank of Canada.

Just to quote a little bit from Murad, he said, "In ten years, our region will serve an agricultural consumer that is completely different than the consumer that we serve today . . . It is about 'niche' on a large scale." Murad Al-Katib speaking on capturing Asian markets at the PNWER Summit.

And John Stackhouse:

We have to find new ways to commercialize technology which goes hand in hand with the skills revolution. We need the technologies developed here in Canada, if we are going to have the cutting edge skills to go with them.

John Stackhouse on diversity is a key component of economic success.

[20:15]

At that same noon hour luncheon we have another award that was given out, and it's called The Hot Potato Award. And Colin Smith, past president of the Engineers and Geoscientists of BC [British Columbia] and PNWER's Private Sector Council co-chair received The Hot Potato Award, which is given to an individual who has helped reduce tensions between Canada and

the United States. Colin Smith was instrumental in getting the Victoria, British Columbia sewage treatment plant built that had been the source of contention for decades between BC and Washington, and now has remediated because of Colin's efforts. He has been instrumental in representing the private sector interests of Canada and over 40 states visited in his tenure. In addition, he has chaired the PNWER finance and audit committee for the past seven years and actually is still looking after that.

That evening, on Tuesday, we had a celebration at the Western Development Museum. Delegates came together at the Western Development Museum and in the evening wandered the streets of 1910 Boomtown before sitting down to experience two stirring performances from First Nations and Métis groups. The Grammy-nominated Young Spirit singers, a Cree drum group and singing ensemble, gave a powerful performance that highlighted traditional styles of dance from First Nations and Indigenous groups. The delegates were then swept up in the high-energy performance of the Asham Stompers, a group that combines the richness of the Métis Red River Jig with First Nations square dancing. And it went over very well.

We had close to 400 people there at the Western Development Museum. There was just one little hitch. The air conditioning went out and it was probably the hottest day we had all summer. But it went over very well, and the bar did very good.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, delegates at this year's summit were invited to participate in several informative policy tours that highlighted the major industries and issues in Saskatchewan. The policy tours took delegates to Ag in Motion, the largest agricultural trade show in Western Canada; the University of Saskatchewan's Canadian Light Source and Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization-international vaccine centre; the Meewasin Valley Authority and Wanuskewin Heritage Park; SaskPower's Gardiner dam; University of Saskatchewan Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence; the Nutrien Allan potash mine; SaskPower's Boundary dam 3 and carbon capture facility. And they all went over very well.

On Wednesday, which is basically the last day there is . . . The Boundary dam event took place on Thursday morning, but we started out the day with a round table that was moderated by Colin Robertson from Canadian Global Affairs Institute. It featured Goldy Hyder, president and CEO of Business Council of Canada; Scotty Greenwood, CEO of Canadian American Business Council; and Ted Alden, senior fellow, Council on Foreign Relations. So that was good.

And then that evening, the closing reception was at the Remai Modern art gallery and that was put on by APEGS [Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan]. We had a good turnout there, and it turned out very well.

At noon hour on Wednesday was when my duties kind of came to an end and I turned the gavel over to Senator Mike Cuffe from Montana. And I would just like to read what Senator Cuffe had to say:

Senator . . . Cuffe was elected by the PNWER Delegate Council to serve as the 2019-2020 PNWER President. Cuffe has been involved with PNWER as a member of the Delegate Council since 2013 and currently serves as

Co-Chair of the Border Working Group. Cuffe has previously served as Co-Chair of the Workforce Development and Forestry working groups. He was elected to serve as vice president during the PNWER Annual Summit in Big Sky, Montana in 2015.

When asked about his vision for his term as PNWER President, Senator Cuffe said, "We will approach our opportunities and challenges with a positive mindset. We are a nuts and bolts operation at PNWER that gets things done. We help develop solutions, and we make things happen. We are a diverse group with many competing interests, personalities, and political factors, but in our region, we have many common interests and can find common ground to stand on. PNWER attracts those who care about the region and [those] who believe that our region grows better and stronger together."

I would just like to also say about Senator Cuffe, Senator Cuffe has been a real stalwart on aquatic invasive species. I've had the opportunity to travel to Ottawa twice with Senator Cuffe and speak with Fisheries and Oceans. And we really didn't get anywhere, but we had nice meetings and that went good. But I will say that last year the federal government put in \$68 million into the invasive species portfolio, and all we were asking was that they do national advertising across Canada all year round about aquatic invasive species.

In the US they've acquired \$16 million from the federal government. And the four states of Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington match the dollars that the federal government gives them, and they are doing an excellent job. In Canada we get nothing. The 68 million went for Asian carp and sea lamprey in the Great Lakes. And there's many other plants and that that come in there, but as far as getting any help, we get absolutely nothing.

So I'd just like to close on the PNWER file by thanking a few people.

An Hon. Member: — Oh, don't go, Larry. Come on. Keep it coming, Larry.

Mr. Doke: — Okay. Hang on. Just a few thank yous on the PNWER file. I'd like to thank Trade and Export personnel who worked tirelessly on the summit, especially Lisa Harder, who was my counterpart there and did a very good job. My Co-Chair, Shawna Argue from APEGS, on the summit did a great job and I want to thank her.

There were 25 MLAs that attended and took part in round-table discussions, and many ministers took place, so I really thank you for that. The host committee was made up of 32 people, a lot of them from Saskatoon: MLAs, sponsors, and whatever. So I want to thank those and, most of all, our sponsors. Without the sponsors we never could have hosted the summit. And our sponsorship team was made up of Alan Migneault and Victor Thomas. And they did a great job, so they should be thanked for that. That was the PNWER conference and it was a total success. The next conference next year is in Big Sky, Montana, and I'd like to see a lot of MLAs there too. Maybe the member from Athabasca could take part for a change, but I doubt it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, since 2007 Saskatchewan has grown by more than 160,000 people. Today more than 1,170,000 residents call our province home. More of our young people have chosen to stay in Saskatchewan, and we have welcomed new residents from every province and territory and from 170 different countries around the world. They have come here because of opportunity, opportunity created by a strong and growing economy.

In June of this year the number of people working in Saskatchewan hit an all-time high of nearly 593,000, up 83,000 new jobs since 2007. I'll repeat that for the member from Athabasca. That's up 83,000 new jobs from 2007.

The new growth plan will set specific targets and provide a road map of how Saskatchewan will achieve those targets. Those targets will include 1.4 million people living in Saskatchewan by 2030 and 100,000 more people working in Saskatchewan by 2030.

Saskatchewan exports two-thirds of what it produces to over 150 countries around the world. Over 100,000 Saskatchewan jobs rely directly on or indirectly on exports. Expanding our exports will be a key pillar of our growth plan. Much of Saskatchewan's exports growth will be driven by our strong agriculture and resource sectors and the thousands of Saskatchewan people working in those industries.

In addition to maintaining a competitive environment for mining in our province, we will encourage new mineral exploration to support the discovery of emerging and undeveloped commodities such as base and precious metals. Saskatchewan has some of the best and most cost-effective conventional oil and gas opportunities in the world, with a stable and competitive royalty structure. Our government remains committed to supporting the growth and diversification and innovation of the energy and resource sector.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to talk a little bit now about the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency and the SAGD [steam-assisted gravity drainage] plants that are now operating in my constituency. And for those who don't know what SAGD is, I'll give you the *Reader's Digest* version. Steam-assisted gravity drainage, known as SAGD, is an enhanced oil recovery process where a horizontal producer is drilled at the bottom of the reservoir. Overlying the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well if you'd listen you'd find out. So anyway, overlying the producer by 3 to 7 metres is a horizontal steam-injection well. These wells are commonly called the well pairs. Fluid movement is established between the injector and the producer through the following process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my constituency I have new developments from a company called Broadview Energy Ltd. who have taken out seven permits and are going ahead with their first permit, which is in the RM of Reford by Wilkie, and we look forward to that starting up. They hope to be producing close to 20,000 barrels a day when they have all their projects up and running. So we're looking forward to that.

The second one is Serafina. Serafina Energy has one plant at Vawn, has one plant at Meota, has one plant at Meota East, and two more that they're getting ready to start on. Serafina is a small

company, breakaway employees of Husky, and have formed this company and are doing extremely well:

The Serafina Edam facility achieved production in 2016, and has exceeded nameplate production capacity of 6,000 barrels per day, demonstrating production capacity of over 8,000 . . . [dollars] per day.

So they built the plant to do 6,000 barrels a day. It went as high as 9,000. Now it's kind of levelled out at 8,000 barrels a day:

This facility was recently expanded to a nominal nameplate of 7,500 barrels per day and has achieved production of over 9,000 . . . Edam was fabricated using a modular, repeatable facility design, enabling efficient construction.

So these plants are all built in modules. They move them in. They'll do these zones for, they're thinking, 20 years. They'll be able to move out of there, and they'll be able to move back again once the formation fills again:

Meota West [project] was our second repeatable facility to be constructed and achieved production in 2018. This facility has a nominal nameplate capacity of 7,500 barrels per day and is currently producing over nameplate capacity. [It's doing about 10,000 barrels a day.] Serafina's development of Meota West demonstrated top tier cost efficiency, construction duration, and production . . . timing.

As I said, the Meota East, they hope to be putting steam in, I think, next week and they should be producing oil in January. So we'll have those plants all going.

The last one of course is Husky. Husky now has 17 SAGD plants in the Lloydminster, Edam, Spruce Lake area, Paradise Hills, and St. Walburg. I've been very fortunate to have a fair bit of Husky Energy development in my constituency. We have two at Rush Lake, two plants there. We have a brand new one at Dee Valley that's up and running about four months ahead of schedule, and then we have five plants total in the Edam, Vawn area.

So, high employment. These plants take 2 to 300 people during construction and they run about 18 months to complete. Full-time jobs afterwards, depending on the size of the plant, but a 6,000-barrel-a-day plant will employ about 12 full-time people. So they are extremely important to the region. These people buy houses. Some of them even live in The Battlefords, but mostly in Edam, Turtleford, and all the way up the line. So it has worked out extremely well. They're very engaged in the communities. They support sports and whatever is needed within a community, so they're very well received.

Saskatchewan's energy resource sector has remained strong in spite of lower oil prices, lack of new pipelines, and challenges from our own federal government like a costly, ineffective carbon tax. Saskatchewan's court challenge to this intrusion on provincial responsibilities will continue in the Supreme Court of Canada, supported by the provinces of Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Quebec.

While our government continues to oppose this tax grab, poorly disguised as an environmental policy, it also continues to take real action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the

implementation of the Prairie Resilience climate change strategy. The plan includes commitments to reduce annual emissions from electrical generation, decrease methane emissions from upstream oil and gas productions, and implement output-based performance standards for large emitters.

[20:30]

Benefits of growth. I'd like to just talk about that a little bit. Saskatchewan's first growth plan released in 2012 stated that our government does not seek growth simply for the sake of growth . . . Oh he's leaving. Well, Nutana's listening and Cumberland's listening. That's good. So we're all right.

The purpose of growth is to secure a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people. Not only does a growing economy mean more jobs and opportunity, it means government has the resources to improve important government services for Saskatchewan residents. Over the past 12 years this has meant more hospitals, doctors, nurses; more schools, teachers, funding for education; lower personal income tax, Saskatchewan people keeping more money; better highways.

And speaking of highways, right where I live we have new passing lanes on Highway 4, out of The Battlefords — very, very good job and well needed there. High traffic area with no rail lines any more. We have all the pulp coming out of the North. We have all the grain that comes to the inland terminals, and we have heavy-haul oil through there.

Well I should say, on the oil, that most of Husky's oil is through their own pipelines, but Serafina, everything they do is truck. So it's a lot of trucks on the road and a lot of them go through North Battleford. Some of it goes to Regina. Most of it goes to Lashburn and Lloydminster.

There's more child care spaces, more funding for post-secondary education, and 70,000 students benefiting from the graduate retention program.

So, Deputy Speaker, I'd just like to make a mention of another thing that's been a hot item in our area. And I sat on the crime committee, which was chaired by my good friend from The Battlefords. And you know, some of the things that come out of that have been good, but there still is a challenge out there. So I would just say that a strong and growing province keeps all of its citizens safe.

With the increase in the number of RCMP officers and the launch of the protection and response team, there are now over 300 more front-line officers providing service in rural areas of the province, an increase of 40 per cent since 2011. Other important initiatives such as Saskatchewan crime watch will continue to be supported by our government, and our government also continues to support front-line municipal police officers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to just talk a little bit about people. I'd like to talk about a constituent of mine, well actually a family, Monique and Martin Detillieux. Their history is . . . Well, I'll just read you the history. This is a true Saskatchewan story. As soon as I can get the page here. The 20th anniversary of Cavalier Agrow was held on July 18th, and the Premier and myself attended this. Martin and Monique are very good friends

of mine, and I would just like to give you the history of their business.

Martin Detillieux began his love of agriculture at a young age, being raised on a mixed farm in Domremy, Saskatchewan. He began his employment in the agricultural industry in 1981, moving to the Meota area in 1986 to become manager of the Pioneer elevator at Cavalier, Saskatchewan. His wife, Monique, was also raised on a mixed farm in Hoey, Saskatchewan. After high school she attended U of S and graduated with a degree in agriculture, majoring in agronomy. They were married in 1992 and have raised four children: Mitchell, Mikayla, Madison, and Mason.

After the closure of the Richardson Pioneer elevator at Cavalier, Martin and Monique decided to stay in the area with their young family and opened an independent agriculture retail business across the road from where the vacant elevator was situated. They converted an old home into an office. Cavalier Agrow was started in March of 1999, offering seed, chemical inoculants, and agronomic guidance, adding a liquid fertilizer plant in 2000. In 2003 they rented a portion of a building and branched out into the town of Medstead, building a liquid fertilizer plant in 2005. With business well on its way, land was purchased on the outskirts of Medstead, and a chemical shed and office were built in 2010.

They saw opportunity in Meadow Lake with the closure of the JRI [James Richardson International Ltd.] facility. The JRI facility was purchased by Cavalier Agrow in 2006 and reopened its doors to the relief of many rural farmers. In 2011, with elevators still closing, Cavalier Agrow then branched out into Spiritwood area, building a new facility just north of town. The majority of locations offer dry and liquid fertilizer, chemicals, seed, inoculants, and full service including field equipment rental, fertilizer delivery, dry fertilizer floating, custom spraying, and agronomic advice.

And 2012-2013 saw the building of a brand new office and facility at Cavalier, putting the small town, now basically non-existent, back on the map. There are few people that can say they actually own a town. The 20,000 square foot building houses a two-storey office, complete with large conference room and a smaller board room, full-size kitchen and gym, a parts and equipment store, a fully equipped shop, a heated shed, as well as a cold storage shed.

Currently Cavalier Agrow employs 30 full-time staff, Martin being the president, Monique being the director of finance. Both are still very involved in the everyday function of the business. Another 10 agronomy apprentices, summer students, are added during the busy months from May to August, giving an opportunity to university, college students to get a real feel for the independent business in Saskatchewan.

Martin and Monique are passionate about agriculture. Where large companies were pulling out of small town Saskatchewan, they saw an opportunity to help rural Saskatchewan stay alive by opening four locations where businesses had left. They are passionate about their staff. Martin and Monique have always made sure that every staff member became a member of their own extended family. But mostly they are passionate about their children, making sure that their children were raised in rural

Saskatchewan. And there's a future for their children in Saskatchewan by showing them that hard work and perseverance pays off.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd just like to mention their core values:

We will always conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity.

We will strive to be recognized as a trustworthy company in all that we do and demonstrate genuine concern for our customers.

We will treat all staff, business partners and clients with respect.

We will strive to be positive role models and mentors to our co-workers and help each other "make a difference."

We will be governed by Cavalier Agrow 4 Rules in all recommendations to farm customers: Sound Agronomics, Value to the Customer, Long-term success of Cavalier Agrow, and Never Confuse the Order.

We believe the greatest asset we have is our relationships with our clients, our staff, and our business partners.

We will always be accountable for our actions and decisions.

We will continue to expand our knowledge.

We will strive to provide an environment that is safe at all times for staff and clients. We will always be active members of the community.

I would say that Cavalier Agrow is probably one of the number one supporters for all events through pretty much from Meota to Spiritwood and around in that area.

Mr. Speaker, sound management of Saskatchewan taxpayers' dollars has been and will continue to be the foundation of our government's plan for a strong and growing Saskatchewan. This spring our government completed its three-year plan to return the provincial budget to balance after a sharp downturn in resource prices left a billion dollar hole in the province's finances.

This past summer the three major credit rating agencies, Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and DBRS [Dominion Bond Rating Service Ltd.], affirmed the province's high credit ratings, which were among the strongest in Canada. In its August 7th affirmation of Saskatchewan's AA credit rating, Standard & Poor's said, "We believe that Saskatchewan's credit worthiness is supported by the province's strong financial management."

I was going to talk a little bit more about the new fisheries Act, but I think I've said enough about Senator Cuffe and PNWER. PNWER has been working on the invasive aquatic species, I think this is their 13th year that they've been going on it. So it's been a big thing for them.

Let us be mindful of the vision of our province, of how far we have come and how far . . . There is still much more work to be done on behalf of the people we serve. Saskatchewan today is a

strong and growing province. Our government's committed to ensuring that strong growth continues, that all Saskatchewan people continue to enjoy the benefits of growth, and that the 2020s are a new decade of growth for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as one of the lame duck MLAs, I would like to say that until the last day of our term, we will keep quacking for our constituents. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech and definitely not the amendment. Thank you.

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to speak to the Speech from the Throne while representing people from Regina Pasqua. Mr. Speaker, this is my third Speech from the Throne I am speaking to since I have been elected in 2016. And I would like to say thank you to all my constituents for giving me this opportunity to serve and represent them on this floor. It is an immense honour, and at the same time it's a great deal of responsibility.

I would like to say thank you to my family, especially my mom for her prayers, and thank you to all my brothers and sisters for their support in my life. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say thank you to my wife, Attia, for her help making my job easy, getting me ready for my work everyday. And she has been working part-time, Mr. Speaker, in Massey School and also working full-time at home. Me and my wife together, we've been married since the last 20 years, Mr. Speaker, and we are raising three boys.

My eldest one, Ayaz, is in grade 12 in Campbell Collegiate, and he's also on the Campbell football team. And Kashif is in the same school, in Campbell, in grade 9, and he is very busy in squash. And my wife's job is dropping him in the squash court and the school and picking them up, and quite busy. And my third boy is in grade 5 in French immersion in Massey School, also very busy in the squash court as well.

Today, Mr. Speaker, my youngest son, Arsalan, had a presentation in Massey School. The presentation is about the federal election and the promises made by Andrew Scheer, the leader of the opposition Conservative Party. And he emphasized two main parts of those promises: scrap our carbon tax, and build a pipeline and create more jobs, Mr. Speaker.

And my son, actually he called me just a little while ago. He said, well Dad, you make sure that you mention this, that I had the presentation. And, Mr. Speaker, he actually made his presentation by himself. And about a couple of days ago I was totally surprised that when I asked, is your presentation ready, can I take a look? And he said, yes, I mentioned carbon tax and pipelines. I said, wow, that kids learn that, they see that, how he's really a Saskatchewan boy, Mr. Speaker, of course.

And I also would like to say thank you to my constituency assistant, sayyid Waqar Bukhari, for his excellent service to my constituency office and to my constituents. Mr. Speaker, a great deal of help there as well, keeping me updated about the contemporary concerns about Regina Pasqua, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to say thank you to him for his friendship as well, Mr. Speaker.

I also would like to say thank you to this great team I'm working with. It's a great privilege, great honour to work with this team, the best team in Canada, Mr. Speaker, and the best leader we have in Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, we just went through a federal election. This election, what I have experienced is totally different. I have not seen this type of election where a Prime Minister, the sitting government, receives a message from Saskatchewan and from Alberta at the same time. And he acknowledged that message, that I hear the frustration from Saskatchewan and I hear the frustration from Alberta, Mr. Speaker. And our Premier said yes, the frustration is real. And of course it is real.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government policy is what is affecting our economic strength and our economic growth, where our farmers are suffering the most by paying more carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. It reduces our family incomes, affecting quality of life, Mr. Speaker, because that carbon tax is being imposed by the federal government, Mr. Speaker. And moreover, they are blocking and seizing our products reaching to the global market, Mr. Speaker.

[20:45]

Mr. Speaker, it's hurting our economy and it is hurting our employment. The money could have stayed in Saskatchewan if we had a pipeline and more jobs here. And, Mr. Speaker, the more ironic thing is the NDP is supporting those federal policies, knowing the effects that it's hurting our economy and ignoring the economic interest of our people, ignoring the growth of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this federal election the Prime Minister acknowledged the message from Saskatchewan, and there was no single statement came out from NDP leadership, showing no interest at all for Saskatchewan. Our leadership stands up for Saskatchewan. Our leadership stands up for Saskatchewan interests, protects our jobs, and protects our economy, Mr. Speaker. Our leader wants the Prime Minister to re-engage with Saskatchewan, to rethink about the carbon tax, to re-evaluate equalization, and allow our product to the world market, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP would like to give veto power to one of the provinces on this pipeline. What is ironic, Mr. Speaker, is knowing the fact that Canada imported more than \$19 billion oil from outside. And we have abandoned those oil in Saskatchewan and in Alberta, and they do not let us pump that out.

Mr. Speaker, I do not understand who the NDP is working for. Mr. Speaker, our south side of the border, the Texas oil companies has doubled their export of oil and now they are exporting their oil in more than 20 countries, Mr. Speaker. They need to understand that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP is supporting foreign-funded pipeline protests and they've been doing that. And it's very clear who they are working for and who is standing for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

From the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan for the next decade as we set the goal for a strong economy and we have road mapped how to achieve it, Mr. Speaker. Exactly the same way we had the plan for a strong economy in 2007 and for our

economic growth, plan for investment, plan for job creation, and we had record investment in health, education, highways, and job creation, Mr. Speaker.

In health, Mr. Speaker, in the last budget, 2019-2020, the operating budget increased up to \$113 million compared to the last year, Mr. Speaker. And the total budget is \$3.6 billion for the first time in the history of Saskatchewan. And since 2007, Mr. Speaker, promises made and promises kept. This is the record of our government, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan was one of the provinces out of all those 10 provinces that never had a children's hospital. Now we do, Mr. Speaker. We doubled the investment in hospital projects including the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital — 176 beds. It was on budget and on time. It was opened just a couple of months ago, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford, 188 mental health beds and 96 care beds was completed in 2018, Mr. Speaker. Wigmore Regional Hospital, Moose Jaw, 121 beds completed in 2015. Humboldt District Health Complex, 34 beds completed in 2011. Rawlco centre for mother baby care at Regina General Hospital in 2010. Dubé Centre for mental health at Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, there is a long list and if I include long-term care beds, the list is very long, Mr. Speaker . . . And I can hear that member from Saskatoon Centre, Mr. Speaker. There are more coming up, for his information, Mr. Speaker. There's more coming up. And we are on the final stage of the Weyburn hospital, replacement of that. And we are on the final stage on the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital redevelopment project, Mr. Speaker.

And compared to what he knows, that member from Saskatoon Centre there, is how many hospitals they closed. Fifty-two hospitals when they were in the government. And 176 schools were closed. And where those teachers went and where those students went and who caused that, and who caused that school congestion in our schools, Mr. Speaker?

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a . . .

[Interjections]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Wilson): — Excuse me. Would the member . . . I recognize the member.

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to give a little bit more information. It's 9,000 more doctors working since 2007, and it is the shortest surgical time in Saskatchewan compared to when they were in the government. The longest surgical time, they had it, Mr. Speaker. Three thousand, eight hundred more nurses working in Saskatchewan compared to their record, Mr. Speaker. We all know that. And the people of Saskatchewan do not want to go that way, Mr. Speaker, and we know that all, Mr. Speaker.

And we invested a record amount in education and in advanced education, Mr. Speaker. Moving forward, 46 new schools were built and 23 major school renovations. Mr. Speaker, we increased 34 per cent since 2007 compared to an enrolment for 14 per cent

more students in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, since 2007 the number of students with intensive needs has increased by about 38 per cent. During that same period, funding for intensive-needs support has more than quadrupled from \$64 million to \$285 million per year. This year nearly 80,000 students are enrolled in Saskatchewan universities and in technical colleges, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, operating funding for Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions has increased by more than 50 per cent since 2007.

Mr. Speaker, we had invested more than \$9 billion in highway infrastructure over the last 12 years repairing and replacing 14 000 kilometres of Saskatchewan highways and 280 bridges. And today we opened the Regina bypass, which was on time and on budget. And it is the largest transportation infrastructure project, and it is the largest transportation infrastructure project in Saskatchewan history, Mr. Speaker, with 12 interchanges, 40 kilometres of four-lane highway, 20 kilometres of resurfaced four-lane highway, and 55 kilometres of service roads, all designed to improve the flow of traffic around Regina and reduce the amount of large truck traffic through the city of Regina.

The project is about improving driver safety and reducing the number of serious collisions, particularly at highway intersections that have now been replaced with a much safer overpass. Mr. Speaker, I do not find one single reason why NDP are opposing this project.

Let me refer this. When I was this morning at the Regina bypass opening along with members from this side of the House, and there was one member from Regina Nutana was there at the opening. And, Mr. Speaker, White City Fire Department Chief Randy Schulz said, and I quote, "Since the first phase of the bypass opened, we have not used our jaws of life." Today he said that. I quote, Mr. Speaker. And the member from Saskatoon Nutana, he witnessed that. As the fire chief came up to the podium, the first thing he said, what a glorious day today. You know what he said? And he asked all the audience to repeat with me, what a glorious day today, Mr. Speaker. And he repeated it four or five times and . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, she definitely did it, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when he repeated it, I can imagine that. I can imagine that, the feeling of the first responder on the crash site, and then go to the door, knock and tell the relatives that your son or daughter or your relative or your loved one has passed away on that highway, on that intersection.

I felt it there, Mr. Speaker. And my understanding, the White City fire chief was very excited for the elimination of those dangerous intersections from Balgonie, Pilot Butte, and from White City, Mr. Speaker, which took the life of a few students. And there was one of the moms that her son passed away on that intersection, left home and she . . . [inaudible] . . . It was very emotional for that mom, Mr. Speaker. And those intersections have been replaced by over- and underpasses. Now the families are safer, Mr. Speaker, on those intersections.

Mr. Speaker, our leadership stands up for the people of Saskatchewan. As the people of Saskatchewan, more than 88 per cent, they oppose the carbon tax. And our Premier stands up for those people and opposes the carbon tax and asks the Prime Minister, come and sit at the table and let's revisit the carbon tax

policy. Let's revisit the equalization. Let's revisit. Let's allow us our product to reach our global market.

Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax is costing Saskatchewan taxpayers billions of dollars and having very little lower emissions, and that's according to the secret memo from the federal Finance department. Carbon tax would cost Saskatchewan people \$260 million this year, rising to \$1.3 billion by 2022, Mr. Speaker, and \$4 billion tax over the next five years, and the NDP is supporting that, Mr. Speaker.

And I would like to quote from the NDP leader, that when he said on March 4th, 2018, "I think carbon pricing is a model that works." Wow, Mr. Speaker. That is not the voice of Saskatchewan people. That is not a representation of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will stand up to protect Saskatchewan jobs, industries, and communities.

As an export-based economy, a carbon tax makes us less competitive in global markets. We are taking every step to protect Saskatchewan trade-exposed industries. Our industries are already taking action to reduce emissions. We will continue these efforts through our made-in-Saskatchewan climate change program, reduce emissions by up to 12 million tonnes by 2030, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — You're doing great.

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, we have very good policies, Mr. Speaker. The immigration policies, Mr. Speaker, over 123,000 immigrants have arrived in Saskatchewan since 2007, adding to our record-high population — 1,174,462 people living in Saskatchewan now. That represents 53 consecutive quarters of population growth, the longest sustained period of population growth in Saskatchewan since Statistics Canada started to record this data in 1951.

[21:00]

Mr. Speaker, in 2018 approximately 15,500 new residents arrived to communities around the province. Employment rate for new immigrants was 79 per cent in Saskatchewan, compared to 71 per cent nationally. Newcomers from over 180 countries have settled in over 430 communities in all the corners in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to say, and we have a very good plan and we have the road map to achieve those plans. I would like to oppose the amendment, and I would like to . . . in favour of our Speech from the Throne. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Wilson): — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm not sure of the proper . . . Deputy Speaker. Been a while since I've been up doing a reply to the Speech from the Throne, so I'm going to take a little bit here to thank a few people. And I'd like to start off my speech with just passing on my condolences to the former Speaker's family, the Honourable Thomas Molloy, who passed away last year. And I want to pass on my congratulations to the new Lieutenant Governor, Russ Mirasty, His Honour. And I want to wish him well in representing the Queen for our province.

Now this is the part where occasionally I get emotional, but this year I'm going to try and tone it down. But I'm going to start off with thanking my family. So everybody gets up here when we do this Throne Speech, and the most important people that we do this for is our family. So I want to reach out, and I want to thank my boys. Some of them have moved on, but the one with the three kids, Dylan, he's probably not watching tonight. And I know the kids will be in bed but, you know, I've got three wonderful grandchildren that Dylan's helped expand the population of our province, so I want to say hi to Jordison, Jaxton, and Attica. You guys, you make this job worthwhile doing.

We on this side of the House actually have a positive outlook for the future of our province, not the doom and gloom and the sky is always grey that we hear from the other side of the province, or the sky is falling like Chicken Little.

Yes, there are some issues we have to work on to make this the best place in Canada and the world — which I actually think it is — but to make it even better for our children, all our children, all our grandchildren. I know even the folks on the other side of the House actually got into this for the right reasons. They may have lost sight of that since they've been in opposition for so long now, but we all get into it for the right reasons. And it's usually to make this a better place for our family, our friends, and those that we work for.

Next I want to just say hi to Dylan and Macey, Geoff. You guys have all helped me hugely getting where I am. I want to reach out to Mom and Dad. I don't know if you guys are watching tonight. You probably don't know that I'm up, but you might see this on social media later on, so I want to thank you guys for your guidance over the years.

And when we come and we're working at 9 o'clock at night and we start at 7 or 8 in the morning, it's like the good old days in the oil field, where you start at sunrise in summer and you work till sunset, 10 o'clock at night, just moving rigs.

So, you know, the federal government hasn't totally destroyed the oil field. They're still drilling a few holes down there, but they're making it a lot harder for my family and friends down in Estevan to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, I'm not going to forget my wife. You save the best till last there, Cannington. I want to just throw that out to Mom and Dad that, you know, 10, 12 hours here is a good day working for the people of the province, and it's not as hard on the body as, say, working in the oil field was, but it's a good day. We get to make a difference for the people here in Saskatchewan. Same as those people working in the oil fields and our mines down in Estevan, our potash mines around Moose Jaw, making this a better place, making this a good place to raise a family.

Okay, so I've got the kids. I've got Mom and Dad; got my brothers and sisters still down in Estevan, thank you. I want to reach out to all my constituents in Moose Jaw Wakamow. You placed your trust in me now for two elections. My board and the supporters that I have back home have nominated me to run a third time, so I will be running in the election next year, and I'm looking forward to that again.

It was a really good summer out there, knocking on doors and

talking to the folks in Moose Jaw. I was really surprised at the support I have out there. Even those that have said that they really don't support the party I represent, have said I've done a darn good job for Moose Jaw Wakamow. So I really appreciate that when it's coming from people of a different political stripe. And the supporters, well I'm looking forward to working for them for a third term.

And as I was reminded, but wasn't even close to forgetting, you . . . Well I'm going to actually add a couple more in there. I actually have two CAs [constituency assistant] now. I've got Trina and Sherry. They do a wonderful job holding down the fort back in Moose Jaw. Sherry moved back. Her spouse is in the Canadian air force and they moved back from Ontario — Bellevue, I think, Ontario — about a year ago and she's helping us out when Trina takes holidays, so filling in those spots where we need her help, and I just want to thank her for that. They do great work there.

I want to save the best for last and, like most of us, that's our spouse, our bride, our partner, whichever you want to call them — my wife, Marjorie. We've been through the thick and thin of it. She's the one that got me interested in politics a long time ago. We always voted. That was one great thing about the cadet program is they taught you your civic responsibility, a civic duty. You actually have to take control of your own future and part of that is doing your civic duty by voting. So my wife encouraged me to get involved in actually a political party when we lived back in Estevan and that was very interesting, learning how to do politics that way.

And then when we moved to Moose Jaw and I had left the oil field and I had more spare time, I became involved in union politics and the Métis politics in Moose Jaw. And some people say this is rough, but those were some pretty rough meetings as well back in the day doing that. And all those folks that do that, I give them kudos. So without my wife's support and without my wife's guidance and without my wife going, Greg you need to do this, I wouldn't be here. So you know it's tough to put it in words other than thank you very much Marj, hon, love you. Thank you for your support over the years and thank you for encouraging me to keep doing this.

So moving on, we'll get into the Throne Speech. Oh, I forgot to add, I need to thank my board for supporting me and all the good work they do back in Moose Jaw. You guys put in a lot of time, a lot of volunteer time for me, and I really appreciate that. So Myrna and Sherry and Ryan, and I know I'm missing a few. Now next meeting I'll apologize to everybody. It'll be my turn to buy coffee and doughnuts. For those of you that I forgot to mention, I'm sorry.

So on to the Throne Speech. So again our other members have stated it — I'm not sure what the opposition was listening to when they read the Throne Speech. But you know over the last 12 years, we've enjoyed a remarkable . . . and I'm going to quote directly. We've “. . . enjoyed a remarkable period of strong and sustained growth — growth our province has not seen since the 1920s.” Now I know some of our members are getting up there in years, and some members over there are up there in years as well, but nobody around here, even our illustrious member from Cannington — he's been here for a long, long time — he doesn't remember the 1920s.

But when you have a sustained period of growth like that, there's usually a reason for it. And the reason isn't government. The reason is the economy. So when you have a prolonged period of sustained growth, it means your government is there to support business growth. If you don't have that growth on the business side of things, you don't have jobs for these people. They wouldn't be coming here to work.

So when you have the second-highest job growth creation in the country, and you have one of the highest growths of population rate in the country, there's a reason for it. Government has got out of the way. And that's something that's important and integral to what we do as government. We need to be there to support our businesses. We don't have to tell them how to do it. That's what they do. Our job is to make sure they can do the job they need to do.

And one of those things that that leads into is getting our product to market. We are an exporting province. You know, wheat seed . . . You know, they used to call the area around Moose Jaw down to Milestone and a little bit farther the breadbasket of the world. They called us that since World War II. And they fed the world out of that area with grain. That was when 40 bushels an acre was an average crop. Forty bushels an acre now, people would be shaking their head at.

With the sustained growth we've seen in farming, and then . . . Okay, so I'm going to veer back here because we're going to talk about farming a little bit, and then the member from — where was that? — Regina Northeast today said, we're claiming farming here in the province is a net sequester of carbon, or a net zero.

I'm not a farmer. I don't come from farming background. I grew up in the oil field. My grandparents worked in the coal mines. I come from that background. Grandpa had a little farm. But I remember the '80s quite well because I was in the oil field, and before that I would help grandpa hay in the summer. And back then the farming practices, when you're moving the rigs in the summer, every farmer was out there. They were tilling the field. They were summerfallowing to knock down the weeds. I don't know if there was zero-till back then, but now they're doing zero-till.

I'm not a farmer. I understand the concept behind it. I understand that the sequestration of carbon is part of that process. I don't know how it all works. I'm not a scientist or, as they like to quote, a lawyer or I'm a doctor. I'm just a guy who worked. I've worked, you know, pretty much every day of my life. I'm not one of those guys that went to university for years and years and years . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh yes, I worked. I was in the oil field for a long time. I wasn't quite a pusher like you, but I worked for a long time in the oil field and a lineman for Power.

[21:15]

But back to the '80s. When it was a drought in the '80s like we've had over the last few years at different times, the dust would blow. I used to wear snow goggles running a picker, a crane truck loading pipe, because the dust would blow so bad you couldn't see. So I remember seeing the dust fill the ditches with topsoil. You don't see that now because farmers have changed their practice. We have some of the best farmers, if not the best

farmers in the world, right here in our province. We have some of the best companies that produce that farming equipment right here in our province.

Now when one of the opposition members goes, well the farmers are contributing to carbon; they're making it worse, I'm going, no, they don't. They're actually doing a much better job. They are better stewards of the land than pretty much anybody else out there. And I'm not going to tell a farmer how to do his job. There are other people out there, maybe from the other side, that in all their extensive knowledge in whatever job they had before, they know how to be a better farmer than a farmer, but I don't. It's one of those things you've got to sit back and you've got to shake your head at. And you wonder where they get their information from.

So back to getting our exports to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . That would be our member from Regina Northeast, your member from Regina Northeast. So we've got to get back to the strong export growth. And what we need to do is we need to get our oil and our other products to market. So to get that to market, we actually need to work with the federal government to get our product to market. We need to get those pipelines built, both to the West and, hopefully at some point, to the East.

The fact that our oil goes south to United States and they actually refine it and then ship it back up to Quebec and Ontario, it really doesn't make a lot of sense to me that we sell it to them at the West Texas Intermediate price and then they sell it back to our country at the world price. That doesn't seem to equate that we take our tax dollars from here, and through equalization we send them east so they can ship it south. That doesn't make a lot of sense to me. I would like to see our product get there, and then we can actually support their social programs, our social programs, our education programs a lot better if we can get our products to market, to the world market where it really needs to get.

I'm going to touch on the federal election just a little bit because it does matter. There's members over there that call us the conservatives all the time. And I'm only going to talk about the vote in this province because when you take a look at the amount of votes that the Conservatives got, which was 366,611, and then you take a look at the New Democratic Party vote, 111,379, now I'm not a rocket scientist but that's about a 3 to 1 vote. I'm pretty good at math though. That's 3 to 1. So if you take a look at the representation on that side of the House, there's 13 over there and there's 49 here. So that's a lot. Forty-eight. That's a lot better than 3 to 1.

So you have the party that wants to implement carbon tax and saying yes, it's good for our province, yet two-thirds of the voters said no to a carbon tax. And they're still saying it's a good thing. They haven't walked that back at all. Not once. That sure quiets them down when you point out to them that two-thirds of the province don't like what they're saying. Not everybody likes what we're saying because one-third of the province actually voted for a carbon tax.

So you know what? I've heard members say it before. I heard the former Liberal here, Minister Ralph Goodale. Thank him for all his years of work. But even he said voters are never wrong, and he lost. So when two-thirds of the province is going, hey guys,

sit up and pay attention, maybe you should sit up and pay attention.

So part of that is . . . And it's huge. And it's simple. We need to get our product to market. The more of our product we get to market, the more schools we can have, the more teachers we can have, the more doctors, the more nurses. The more people we have working, the better it is for the province of Saskatchewan.

So one of our other members talked about it today, and they talked about the 176 schools closed under the NDP. And then I heard the number today and I hadn't associated the 400 teachers that disappeared when they closed that 176 schools. So I'm not sure if they fired them, laid them off, or just moved them out of the thing, but they got rid of 400-plus teachers. So what did we do? We got a bunch of teachers.

But I'm going to touch on the schools around Moose Jaw that they closed. We've got Wilcox Public School in Wilcox. We had the École Ross School in Moose Jaw. We had the Briercrest School in Briercrest. We had Crane Valley School in Crane Valley. There's a few more. Oh, and a few schools I actually went to in Estevan. Scotsburn closed. I went to that. My dad went to that. Estevan Junior High. I went to that. I had some uncles go to that. Hillside Elementary. My kids went to that one. All in Estevan. We have the Alexandra School in Moose Jaw close, the King Edward School in Moose Jaw close. I could read them all. That would take the 20 minutes to get these all into the record.

And so, you know, we're building schools. We're not closing them. So that means we've got more work to do. We've announced a school this year in the budget in Moose Jaw, and from what I understand they're in the talks with the city right now to get the right place to build it on South Hill. Hopefully my grandkids are still on South Hill and will be going to the new school in a couple of years. So we're going to get that built and we're going to consolidate four schools.

And I went to those meetings this summer, and the people were just . . . They're like, yes, let's get it done. What can we do? What more can we do? What can we tell the government we've got to do to get this built and get it in and work with the city and get the new school? They actually said — and I heard it — we deserve a new school in Moose Jaw. So we're going to do our best to get that built and get shovels in the ground, soon as we can get all the land worked out and where we're going to go, and we're going to get that built. And my grandkids are going to have a new school to go to.

An Hon. Member: — Keep going.

Mr. Lawrence: — Yes, just had to get a drink of water. I was a little dry there, on a thing. So as opposed to closing 176 schools, laying off or firing 400 teachers, we're building schools. We're putting more money. Since we've been in power, school operating funding — so that's what funds the teachers and TAs [teaching assistant] and our school principals and just some folks that work at our schools — it's up by 34 per cent.

I actually had somebody challenge me on that today and I'm like, okay, so what's the right number? They had no idea. It was just like they were reading the NDP notebook. They're like, we need to spend more. And I'm, how much more? More, just more. Is

that 1 per cent, 2 per cent, 5 per cent? Just more. Well that just spending more with no direction isn't going to help anything . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, yes. And I know they hate hearing, but yes, there's more work to be done. Our capital spending compared to the NDP on education is up 396 per cent — 396 per cent.

An Hon. Member: — How much?

Mr. Lawrence: — 396 per cent, yes. So that's what happens when you build schools and when people are moving here instead of moving them away. Our motto is “from many peoples, strength,” and if you get more people coming to the province, then that strength grows, as opposed to the old NDP model which was leave it in the ground and last one out of the province shut off the lights. We're looking at the longest sustained growth period in our province since the 1920s, in spite of all the years the NDP were in power. And yes, it might have turned the corner before we took over, but we sustained it. We got out of the way and let the people do what they do best.

Then there's the 52 hospitals. And you know, yes, they made a good point. It's how many of those have you reopened up. Well first of all, we had to fix all the ones they let deteriorate or closed long-term care beds. We had to get those fixed up. So we fixed those up and we built new hospitals, but we've got more to go. But they know how hard it is to recruit nurses and doctors, and we've got 3,000-plus more nurses. Rather than laying off or firing or . . . I'm not sure what they did with the nurses, 450 nurses and 173 doctors.

So we talk about wait times now; we talk about crowded ER [emergency room] rooms. Had they maybe not fired 173 doctors and 450 nurses and closed 52 hospitals, including the Plains where I actually had to ride an ambulance from Estevan to Regina and back when I was a kid . . . I had an accident and ended up being rushed up here in an ambulance. And they closed that down because it was for rural Saskatchewan. It shows you what their thoughts are because the majority of those were rural hospitals.

And if you take a look at this side of the House, we have a really strong rural representation on this side of the House. And yes, there are some folks on that side with rural roots, but they don't represent rural communities. So to say they're the voice of the farmer — and I'm sure there's a farmer or two out there that supports them — or they're the voice of rural Saskatchewan, I guess the numbers don't play out. Again I'm not a lawyer. I'm not a doctor. But I'm pretty good at math and they don't have any rural representation on that side of the House.

So you know, you can tell when you're getting under their skin because they start talking from their seat. So maybe I'm getting under their skin a little bit, pointing out. And the reason we have to point out what they did is so we don't make those same mistakes of the past. And we have to keep reminding Saskatchewan people what they actually did to our province when they were in power: closing schools, laying off teachers; closing hospitals, firing doctors and nurses. Everybody needs to realize that that was a huge problem. And yes, it takes time to get that changed and turn the channel on that and move ahead.

So we need to take a look at what's going on down in Estevan

and the federal government's decision to accelerate the phase-out of conventional coal-fired electricity by 2030. Now I've got family and friends still down in Estevan. Some of them are still involved in the mining industry down there and lots of friends that still work at the two power plants that are running down there. And instead of finding a way that we can sustain the life cycle of those power plants, they're like, no, back to the old days. Leave it in the ground, and last ones out shut off the lights.

Well we're trying to build for the growth of the province. So there's some things we've done to do that. Yes we've got some work to do working with the feds and seeing what we can do to sustain the life of those power plants, whether it's carbon sequestration or exactly what we're going to be able to do with the two power plants there and down in Coronach. But we're taking a look outside the box.

[21:30]

We talked about the Deep Earth Energy Production Corp. So they're actually drilling down in the Southeast, using drilling rigs to drill down into the hot water that runs underneath this province in a huge lake and they're going to bring it up. And I believe the member from Moose Jaw North touched on it a little bit and talked about the energy that they're going to be able to produce out of that, the same as they did in Moose Jaw at the old Temple Gardens mineral spa.

They actually tapped into another bed a bit and used, from what I understand, part of what the Tunnels of Moose Jaw did was run radiated heating, and heated all the buildings of downtown Moose Jaw. But sometime in the past they moved away from that. But we do have the Temple Gardens mineral spa right there with hot water and a nice heated pool that you can go to year-round and be out there in the winter when it's cold and be in a nice warm pool looking up at the stars.

So we've got DEEP [Deep Earth Energy Production Corp.] down there and a successful drilling of a preliminary well for their geothermal power facility. We talked about the wind power that they're building down at Assiniboia. That's another big project. And we removed 500 tonnes of carbon emissions this year. So that's just working with some of these folks.

SaskPower is one of our really good Crown corporations. I worked there for several years in the late '80s to the mid-'90s down in Boundary dam. And yes, it's an aging facility, but the folks down there have done a great job keeping it up and bringing in new technology that we can take to the world.

When you have Canada producing 2 per cent of the greenhouse gases, yes, we . . . 1.6, 1.6. Yes, we need to do our part, but part of what our part is developing the technology that other countries and companies aren't. When you take a look at Korea or South Korea and China building numerous numbers of coal-fired power plants, and we have the technology. We can work with them because we're not going to be able to tell them, no, you can't build your power plants. Because you know what they'll do? They'll tell us, take your canola and stay home, kind of like they've done with some of the trade issues we're having with them. So let's work with them to clean up the atmosphere.

Okay. The benefits of growth. So we've touched on that a little

bit. We've got more hospitals, doctors, and nurses; shorter surgical wait times; more schools, teachers, and funding for education; lower personal income taxes and Saskatchewan people keeping more of the money they earn. We have safer highways, and I know the member from Regina touched on that today. And being an old truck driver back in the day, and even though it was oil fields so I wasn't up around Regina a lot, you know, we'd go out to Mosaic and move the drilling rigs out there when they'd get an extra one. But making our highways safer. When we heard those stories this morning, we heard the story about that one lady's son, you know, it's pretty hard not to tear up. And you know, they make light of the fact it went from four overpasses to a huge infrastructure project. And I just got to ask them, what's one life worth? What's one teenager worth? What's one grandkid? What's one family?

Those interchanges, when you listen to the fire chief from White City speak today and you could . . . He had his handkerchief ready because he knows he tears up. He's an emotional guy. And you hear the stories. And he hasn't had to knock on a door. Yes, there have been accidents, but they haven't used the jaws of life. And I think it was two years they haven't used the jaws of life in an accident out there, and that's huge, you know.

And now they're still complaining about it and I'm like, you know what? My kids, my grandkids, they're not going to have to worry about that. Those families out there, they're not going to have to worry about that. Is there stuff they're going to have to worry about and be concerned with? You betcha there is, especially if those guys ever, ever even come close to governing this province again. Because we saw the abysmal rate that they put money into highways, which was sad. So yes, it takes a while to get all that stuff fixed up.

Am I getting close? Yes, okay. I don't want to go over my time, but there's so much stuff. And our member from Regina Pasqua, today he said it well. He doesn't understand why the NDP did not like anything in the Throne Speech. Yes. And I know they hate us saying this — there's more work to be done — because you know the reason they're over there? Because they thought all the work was done. They thought we'd been all we can be. And now, and now we actually admit, yes, there's more work to be done.

We've talked about increasing our supports for surgical wait times because they're getting longer again. Happens with a growing province. You really never had the worry about a growing province, did you? You know, there's a reason. And you know what? I want to thank you for your many years of service. You worked for quite a while.

So you know, we have made a point of making the people of this province, all the people of this province, a priority. Making it a better place. Making it a safer place. Making it so our grandkids, your grandkids, my grandkids, our children want to stay here, want to work.

Yes, I was part of that generation that, you know, the majority of the people they either went to school in another province and stayed out there, or they graduated and had to go work. And it didn't matter if they were in the trades and they were working pipelines in union trades, union jobs, they had to pack up and leave. You know why? They were in power. Their motto was leave it in the ground. Their motto was shut off the light, last one

leaving. They managed for decline. They closed 176 schools. Why? Because people were leaving in droves. They closed rural hospitals so there was no support in rural Saskatchewan. And yes, that's not something you can fix overnight. You can shake your finger at us and go, well you haven't re-opened another one. Oh, that's because you fired all the doctors and nurses. So it's pretty tough when, you know, we're busy recruiting for an expanding province for them to point the finger at us and say, you haven't opened up anything we closed. Really? That's your answer?

You know, we have an aging population. What do they do? They close long-term care beds. So you have an aging population, but you've closed long-term care beds and then they complain about all the overcrowding and everything else. You can't snap your fingers or wave a magic wand and fix this. It takes time and we're working on it, and we're getting there, and we're moving ahead. And you know what? For those . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . yes, for 12 long years.

So we're building hospitals. We're building schools. Better than closing hospitals, better than closing schools. Better hiring nurses than firing nurses; better hiring doctors and recruiting doctors than firing doctors; better hiring more teachers and teacher's aids than firing teachers and teacher's aids.

That's their record. That's their record and they were in government, and there's members over there that sit there and they chirp from their seat because they know we're right when we point out what they did to the schools, what they did to the hospitals. And now they laugh. They don't have a problem firing teachers, doctors, and nurses. Listen to them. That's them, they're laughing at it. We hire them. Is there more work to do? You betcha. And you know the difference is? We're willing to do the work. We didn't lose sight. We want to work. We want to do the work of the people. Those guys want to sit back, rest on, oh look at what we did. Well you didn't do much but close the schools, close the hospitals, and run people out of the province.

So I'm getting a signal here. So I just want to thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to prattle on. And I usually forget to do this, but I'm not going to do this, and I'm going to thank my wife one more time. Thank you, Marjorie, if you're watching, for putting up with it. And I want to say for sure I'm not going to support that amendment and I am going to support the Throne Speech.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand in my place this evening to do my address to the Throne Speech. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important before I do that, I want to take care of business. I want to explain to the people that are listening that in this particular Assembly, there's different roles that different people play. Of course the leader and the opposition challenges the Premier. And then you have the House Leader that conducts the day-to-day occurrences within the Assembly as to what bills are passed and who speaks and so on and so forth — is really the traffic cop, so to speak.

And then you have your Whip. The Whip makes sure that people are in the Assembly at the appropriate time. It's a pretty important job. And the Whip must always know where you're at.

It's a really critical part of the Whip's responsibility. And I really thought I was the Whip's best friend, but somewhere along the line I must have got him upset. Because I tried to avoid this evening, Mr. Speaker, and somewhere along the line I got the Whip upset. And he said to me, I'm sorry but I can't give you any leave tonight. So I argued with our Whip. And to the people that are listening, you never, ever argue with the Whip because the Whip controls when you have to be in the Assembly and who you have to listen to.

So he gives you three strikes. And the three strikes that he gave me, at first I had to listen to the revisionist history of the member from Cannington. You know, that was brutal enough, Mr. Speaker, when he was talking about, you guys never paved no highways, he said, back in 1991 when you guys took over the government. That's because the Tories sold all the Highways equipment, for the record, Mr. Speaker.

And then you had to listen to the member from Turtleford. Now that was a brutal speech to listen to, Mr. Speaker. I sat there and I was cringing and I was really . . . I had to leave the room, Mr. Speaker. And that was the second bit of penalty that I received from the Whip.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Whip said, you will listen to the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow. Now, Mr. Speaker, that was the cherry on top of the . . . apple pie? It's confusing because the speech was confusing. But nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, nonetheless, I want to say to my Whip, I paid the price for upsetting you. You made me listen to three speeches that had no bearing on what the whole job is in this Assembly of trying to lead this province to better times, Mr. Speaker. I sat and listened to those three speeches and, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that I had no choice but to be here. And that's why, if you ever get into this business, to those that are listening, do not get your Whip upset.

Now I want to point out, before I get into my speech, my response to the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, I want to say hello to a couple of very special people that might be watching this evening. My CA is watching back home in Ile-a-la-Crosse. And of course my sister and her family. I want to say hello to Jackie, my sister Jackie, and her son, Carter Engele. And her friend, they're pretty friendly; they've been friends for the last number of years, Curt Engele.

Anyway, I want to read into the record that we had a basketball game against my nephew, Carter, and I had two of my older sisters playing with me, and we played against these three young guys. Carter of course was on the young guys' team and we beat them pretty bad in basketball. And both of my sisters are over 50 years old, Mr. Speaker. Don't tell them I told you their age. But the fact of the matter is that three old people beat these three young guys in a game of basketball, pickup basketball, and we soundly defeated them.

So for the record, I want to point out that I won't ever talk about that again. But as Carter gets older, I want him to know that we gave them, we spotted them a number of points so they could at least have half a chance of beating us in this pickup basketball game. But, Mr. Speaker, between Jackie and my sister Lisa and I, we soundly defeated those three young guys that were age 15 to 16.

[21:45]

So I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that everything that the Saskatchewan Party mentioned, right from the member from Cannington, who's stuck so far in the past, Mr. Speaker, and the member from Turtleford who announced that he's not running again . . . And I would point out that most of them aren't, Mr. Speaker. They're heading out of Dodge. And of course you listen to that last speech and you wonder what the future of the Saskatchewan Party is for this province, Mr. Speaker. I fear for the future of this province because of activity and statements and speeches like that, Mr. Speaker.

At the outset, Mr. Speaker, they made many assertions against the NDP. The NDP said this; the NDP said that. And I challenge every one of them that responded to the Throne Speech, provide the evidence. Mr. Speaker, they will not provide the evidence that that's what members on this side of the Assembly said. And nobody said what they accused us of saying, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to point out to Alberta and Saskatchewan, to the people of Alberta and Saskatchewan, one of the things that's really important for us is to make sure we have a robust economy for the people of Saskatchewan. Nobody on this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the Assembly has ever said any of the things that the Sask Party is accusing our party of, Mr. Speaker. Their accusations are absolutely false, Mr. Speaker. And shame on them, grown men and women doing that kind of activity over there to try and discredit the NDP.

When the time came, Mr. Speaker, after Grant Devine nearly bankrupt this province, the day after we took over office in 1991 — that's how far back the member from Cannington goes, back in 1991 — we were so broke under Grant Devine and the Conservatives that we were worried about making payroll for the people that work for the province of Saskatchewan. And yet they have the gall to get up here and talk about highways not being paved.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan know very well. When you study your history, the people of Saskatchewan knew very well, at a critical time, at a critical time, the NDP came into power and they rebuilt this province, Mr. Speaker. So we're not going to take any lessons from the Saskatchewan Party no matter how they try and change that history, Mr. Speaker. The more they try and change it through rhetoric and speeches such as that, Mr. Speaker, again I say, they should be ashamed of themselves because they're misleading the people of Saskatchewan because they can't stand on their own history because their history, Mr. Speaker, ended with the birth of the Saskatchewan Party. They changed their name.

The question I have with the people of Saskatchewan: why did the Saskatchewan Conservative Party change their name, Mr. Speaker, to the Saskatchewan Party? Well as I've always maintained, that was part of the witness protection plan for the mismanagement and how they drove this province into bankruptcy, Mr. Speaker. And that's a shame. And when the critical time came, the NDP rose to the occasion under Roy Romanow and they rebuilt the credibility of this province, Mr. Speaker. It's a history that we'll always be proud of, Mr. Speaker. And it's a history that we will always be proud of. At a critical time, we led the province.

Now after all the hard work, Mr. Speaker, after all the hard work, after all the hard work of rebuilding this province, Mr. Speaker, along comes 2007 — \$2.3 billion in the bank; our overall debt was 9.1 billion between the Crowns and the General Revenue Fund, Mr. Speaker. We knocked it down from almost 16 billion down to 9 billion, and we left \$2.3 billion in the bank. And who brought the oil and gas company to the province of Saskatchewan? It was not the Saskatchewan Party. It was the NDP that brought them here, Mr. Speaker. It was the NDP that built the oil and gas sector in this province.

So I'll ask today, for a party that governed very well, took this province from the depth of bankruptcy, Mr. Speaker, to the height of record revenues . . . And the moment we got the record revenue, Mr. Speaker, the moment we got the record revenue, the Sask Party come along under their new, assumed name and took over government. And you tell me this today, Mr. Speaker, tell me this today: when we left government we had \$9 billion in overall debt, down from 16 billion when Grant Devine was the premier. And then we turn around, we left them \$2.3 billion in the bank. We had a booming economy. We had a growing population.

And what did they do, Mr. Speaker? They spent it all. They squandered it on deals like the GTH [Global Transportation Hub], Mr. Speaker, where they had their friends pocket millions of dollars overnight. And that's why on this side we keep asking, we keep asking for a full explanation, a full explanation and a full financial accounting of what happened to the GTH. And they will not give it to us, Mr. Speaker. Because once again they're up to their old tricks and their old habits.

That government across the way, we see it every day, Mr. Speaker. They're old, they're tired, and they have to go, Mr. Speaker. They have got to go because they're starting once again to drive Saskatchewan into debt. So finally one day I asked the question which nobody wants to ask on their side, how much has the debt gone from when the NDP left these guys with money in the bank, from 9.2 billion? How much do we owe now, Mr. Speaker? By the end of 2021 it is going to be \$23 billion, Mr. Speaker, that we're in debt.

Does that debt help the future of Saskatchewan? Absolutely not. And that was our point, Mr. Speaker. When we left, when we were no longer governing this province, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party took over. And they drove this province once again, deep into debt, Mr. Speaker.

Now how did they get there? How did they get there? Let me explain how they got there, Mr. Speaker. Let me explain how they got there. It is very, very clear, Mr. Speaker, that they just wanted the headlines. We left them record revenue, record revenue. We had a booming economy. We had money in the bank, Mr. Speaker. We had a growing population. They inherited all that, Mr. Speaker. They inherited all that. They didn't do anything. They just rode that gravy train that the NDP left them.

Now what did they do, Mr. Speaker? Well the Tories weren't done yet. What they did was they went to the P3s. They went to a P3 process. One of the guys in the back row said, why don't we do this? Let's go to a P3 where we lock up the government for 30 years or so on, let's say a Regina bypass project, and we'll get the credit. We'll get the credit, and we'll go around bragging

