



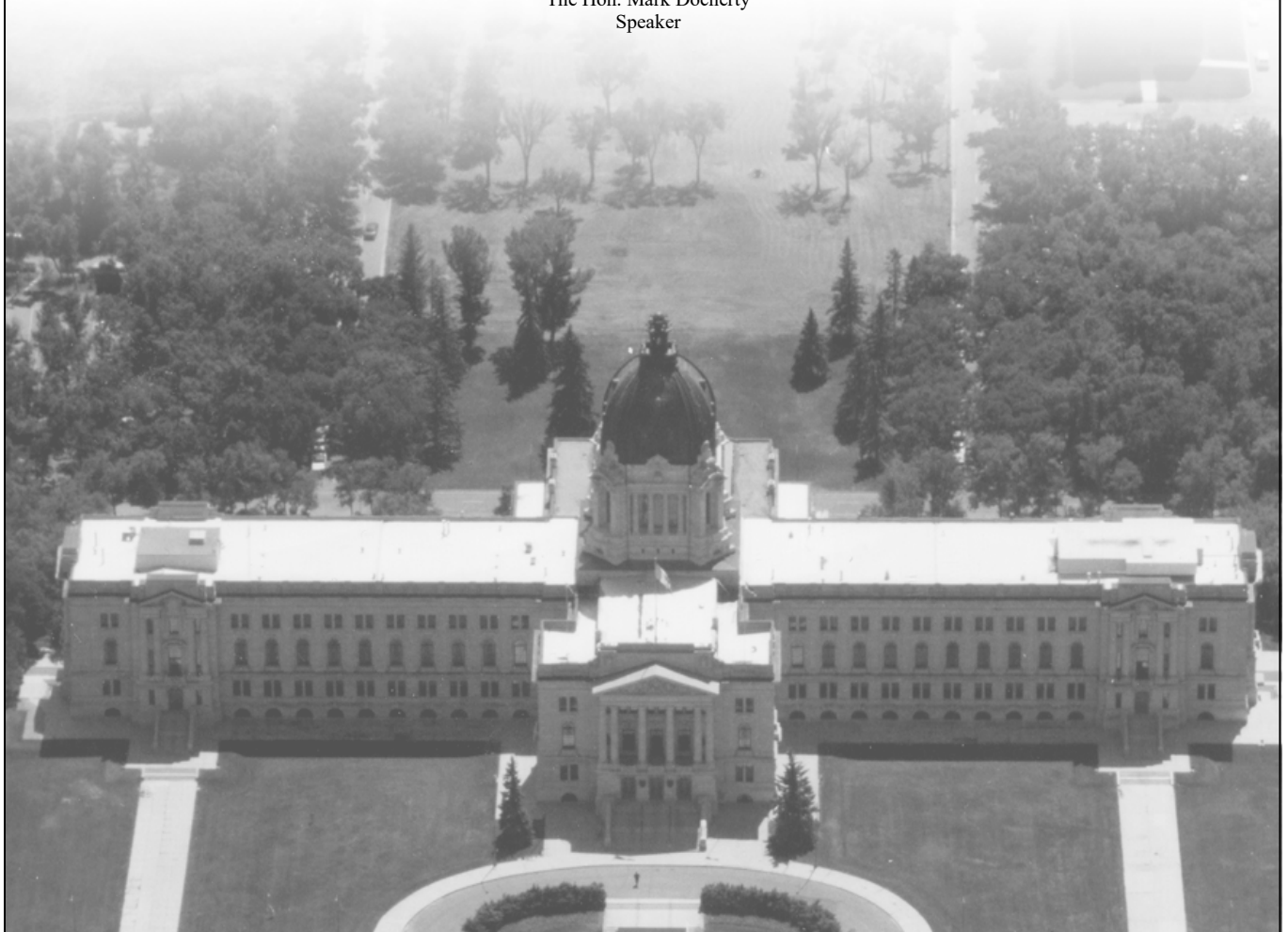
FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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



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4th Session — 28th Legislature

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Speaker: — Okay, hello folks. It now being past 7, this Assembly will resume responses to the Throne Speech motion and amendment.

I recognize the Minister of Highways.

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.]

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just really briefly recap where we were before the evening break. I recognized my family: of course, my wife, Leone; my daughter Katelin, married to Mark Cuthill, their kids Raya and Malaya; and of course, my daughter Rayanne. And Austin, our son-in-law, married her a number of years ago, with their children Wynnslet and Otto, and of course, the new one, Crew, is only a few weeks. And Austin has been a real blessing to our family. He's been around since he's 15 years old or so. He's really been a member of the family for a long time.

I recognized my staff in both the Ministry of Health, Rural and Remote Health before I had left there and all their great work that they helped me accomplish there, Mr. Speaker. And also my new staff in the Highways office, campaign team constituents that have brought me here, but also I was touching on some of the colleagues.

I mentioned the great benefit is being able to work with the member from Lumsden-Morse, who has served as our Ag minister, and many other benefits of working with him as well. Mr. Speaker, a man of a lot of knowledge and relationships throughout the province and, of course, a great asset to be able to work with him.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank the Premier, Mr. Speaker. I've been lucky enough to be moved into a new portfolio that actually fits a lot with my background, being formerly from a transportation and waste disposal company. It fits as well as my history in aviation and understanding of airports and those things, Mr. Speaker. So it's been a neat fit. It's been a bit of a learning curve, but really is a lot of fun to be working in a new ministry with some new people and learning some new things and building some new relationships around the province, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, I will be speaking in favour of this motion, the Throne Speech. I won't be supporting the amendment, but I'll make some comments ahead of that, Mr. Speaker, as we move through.

First off, however, I would like to join in with my colleagues and

offer condolences to the family of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Molloy, a great loss to this province and all those that knew him, but also offer congratulations to Lieutenant Governor Russ Mirasty. I actually got to meet Russ a number of years back as he was still leading the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] in the province. He did a couple of events in Yorkton. And you know, just his approachability and his leadership with that post and in those since is evident. And he's going to really be a great Lieutenant Governor for our province, and we're really blessed to have him in that position as well.

Also before I move on, retiring members and the member from Cannington, our last founding member. He's going to be missed here: his intelligence, his intellect, his history, but also his personality, Mr. Speaker. There's no one like the member from Cannington. And he's going to be missed as well, and of course all of the other members that we're going to see moving on to the next parts of their lives. So congratulations to them. And they will be missed but we do have them for another year.

When we think about the upcoming year, the Throne Speech, the plans for the upcoming year, the talk about the 2030 plan that's going to be out in a number of weeks, you know, that was done in very intense, I would say, and in-depth consultation with the members of our constituencies and the citizens of the province. So I think that that will be reflective in the new growth plan where we will see some of the targets set out and provide a road map for how we're going to go to our vision for year 2030, building on our 2020 plan and moving on from there, Mr. Speaker. So I'm looking forward to having that final edition out and people being able to peruse that.

We look at the export growth of our province. We know we're an export-based province. You know, I'll talk a little bit more in a few minutes probably about the Regina bypass project, but how that's integral to the export growth of our province, alongside what is the priority for us in the Ministry of Highways is safety, safety in our highway systems. So, Mr. Speaker, you know, I'll touch on some of those issues as well.

But you know, we're going to have to meet these challenges head-on and seize every opportunity, as it says in the Throne Speech, to communicate those benefits of Saskatchewan around the world and around the globe. And we know the Premier just recently came back from a very long trip to the East, spent a little bit of time I believe in Hong Kong but also in South Korea and Japan, expanding those markets and looking at opportunities to expand those markets.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I know our minister of the Economy has been around the world as well expanding those markets, doing the great work on behalf of companies in this province, in this country, but also on behalf of the people of the province. So looking at those different export opportunities that we have to build on to diversify our economy outside of just having one or two or three major export partners. So looking forward to how that's going to be built on over the next while.

And of course when it comes to agriculture, we know there's more we can do in value-added opportunities and expand on some of those, so pursuing some of those opportunities in adding value-added product development in our province. And of course

continue to stand up for those, the Saskatchewan economy and sectors that do represent those different areas.

Mr. Speaker, we know the resources are a big part of our economy. We've been hit with some record-low resource prices. But you know, that is a big part of our success. Mining is a big part of our success. Oil and gas is a big part of our success. So some of the initiatives that we brought forward, whether they're the targeted mineral exploration incentive spelled out in the growth plan, we'll be taking action to work on strengthening that industry as well. Mr. Speaker, we know some of the work through that incentive has actually resulted in 110 new exploration drilling operations, both base and precious metals and minerals. So you know, that's good news for the future, and we have to continue to build on those opportunities.

I mentioned oil and gas. We have the oil and gas processing investment incentive. That's for infrastructure upgrades for companies so, Mr. Speaker, continuing to support oil and gas businesses in their time of downturn. Also helping that industry, the Saskatchewan petroleum innovation incentive, which is more based around research and development.

We know that uranium is a big positive that we have in the province, some of the best uranium deposits in all of the world. So looking at expanding on that where, you know, some, I guess, caution with some of the uranium industries around the world, specifically what's happened in Japan.

But we're realizing now if we're really going to have the green economy and clean energy production, definitely uranium and nuclear is going to be have to be part of that. So looking at some of those new opportunities through discoveries in uranium projects, ALX Uranium, NexGen, of course those are great opportunities for the North. And I know our friend from Cumberland talked about some of those opportunities for the North. And I mean, I know they're going to be supportive probably of the Throne Speech because of how many benefits some of these industries do deliver to the North and the opportunities they'll bring to our northern residents as well, Mr. Speaker.

And also talking about uranium, we're going to continue working through SaskPower to develop small nuclear reactors to see if that's a feasible opportunity for here in the province for the coming generations, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at some of the incentives we have or the direction we're going with reducing emissions, of course as many would know, we're not in favour of taxes, carbon taxes. But we've got our own plans, Mr. Speaker. Prairie Resilience I think is recognized by a lot of people around the world, even within our country, but still not getting the recognition that many want. I think it's based mainly on ideology and I'm not sure what else, Mr. Speaker, but not recognizing the actual impacts that Prairie Resilience could make with cleaning up the environment and, you know, maybe trying to push us down a carbon tax road or tax credits or carbon tax trading, Mr. Speaker. We're just not really sure that's going to be the way to go. We're really supportive of our Prairie Resilience climate change strategy led by the member from Weyburn, the Minister of Environment, so we'll continue down that road as well.

Of course we have to continue to focus on our agriculture industry. That's the backbone of our economy. So you know, we look at how agriculture has actually contributed to cleaning up our environment. The numbers that I have here is 12 million tonnes of carbon sequestered through the operations of zero till and our agricultural practices. So that's a big benefit we have to be recognized for that, up to this point, I don't think has been properly recognized. And of course what has been recognized by many jurisdictions is Boundary 3 and the carbon capture and sequestration through Boundary dam 3, or Boundary 3. So we have to continue to recognize those and build on some of those strengths, Mr. Speaker.

Support for our technology sector is important to us, Mr. Speaker. We know that the Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive is one of the most aggressive investment tax credits in Western Canada and it is creating new jobs in Saskatchewan as well. So we'll look forward to seeing the benefits of that as we move forward.

And you know, we'll often talk about the benefits of growth. And without growth, without that expanded tax base, without that income to the province, Mr. Speaker, we don't have the capacity to do the things that many expect us to, whether it's through health or education or social services or highways, infrastructure investment. So, Mr. Speaker, we know that what we've seen over the last 12 years under this government is a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people because we're focusing on economic growth, the benefits of growth, and building a strong economy.

It's clear, I know in my time in Health, we can point to many more hospitals, doctors, nurses, training opportunities for those specific experts, whether it's rurally or urban settings, Mr. Speaker. And also we'll hear from time to time — or quite often actually from members opposite — about these cuts in these different areas. But we can point time after time, Mr. Speaker, to whether it's health and doubling of that investment in health care in this province since 2007; or education, the education budget's virtually tripled since 2007. That does point to, I think it's 900 more teachers, you know, many more schools and renovations of schools, supports for education, Mr. Speaker.

And also through those benefits of growth, we can point to tax deductions that keep more money in peoples' pockets, Mr. Speaker. I mean highways, more police officers, long-term care beds, you know, things like being able to triple the senior's income plan benefit, Mr. Speaker, puts more money in seniors' pockets and helps them have a better quality of life. Child care spaces. More money for post-secondary education. Doubling the funding for municipalities. We know that, you know, most of those municipalities have seen their income from provincial coffers go up by 115 to 120 per cent, Mr. Speaker. So that's given them a lot more capacity as well.

And of course, a lot of these different incentives, we can point to the North. And the member of Cumberland pointed out, I think, basically insinuating that this government doesn't care about the North, Mr. Speaker. But if we look at the investment under the former NDP [New Democratic Party] government as opposed to this government, Mr. Speaker, I know in my Ministry of Highways, it's a 95 per cent increase, almost pretty much doubling plus over what was spent previously under the former members.

And I think the member for Athabasca was actually the Highways minister for some time. And you know, the North was struggling with investment back then, Mr. Speaker. So, you know, we do have a very solid record when it comes to the North, as not really pointed out by the member for Cumberland.

You know, investments in health, I talked about the nurses, 3,800 more nurses, 900 more doctors. The hospitals, the health care facilities that were, you know, not for us to pat ourselves on the back, Mr. Speaker, to be proud of. We're proud for the people of the province. We were able to build a new children's hospital in Saskatoon. We were able to build the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford. And of course they're facing a few struggles, as many new projects do, but we're fully confident those issues are going to be straightened out. And of course those facilities are going to provide services to the people of the province for many, many years, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to the children's hospital in Saskatoon, that was something that was very close to my heart, very proud to be involved in that project. It's interesting to get some of the ribbing from my colleagues on our side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, where some of them pointed out that I was able to be there for the sod-turning four years ago, five years ago. And just a couple weeks short of the actual opening I ended up being moved over to Highways. So instead of being welcomed to the front of the room with the Minister of Health like the new Minister of Rural Health was, I had to find my own seat.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, it's not about what I want to be recognized for. It's about that service is going to provide to the people of the province and the children of this province. And you know, the one thing that really impressed me, I was walking through the facility and there's a lot of northern lights artwork, I guess you would say, that's integrated into the facility. And for me it was really special to see that without knowing it ahead of time. Because I look back at our history, and going back 15 years or so would have been when our son was going through cancer treatment at RUH [Royal University Hospital]. Peds 3000 would overlook onto the parking lot where a chunk of that was taken out to build the new children's hospital.

And now to see that new facility there where Brayden would have talked about his car collection, to have the children's hospital that will service families like ours and children like Brayden to help them get to better health, and to see that northern lights motif on there was quite touching for me. Because it just so happens that the evening that Brayden passed away, there were some of the most beautiful northern lights that I've ever seen. So to me it was a bit of a sign, a bit of a signal that the significance that it is to our family and the significance it will have to so many people in the future.

[19:15]

And I could go on about the different long-term care facilities, investments in other facilities, Mr. Speaker. Investments in mental health and addictions services, we know that the budget this year is \$402 million, a \$30-million increase, closing in on the 7 per cent target. But, Mr. Speaker, we know we're not done. We're going to continue to fill those services where they're needed, Mr. Speaker, to aid the people of this province.

When we look at some of the increased support for CBOs [community-based organization], specifically I'm looking at the Family Service Saskatchewan, their offer to start mental health walk-in clinics, Mr. Speaker. We actually had one of those in Yorkton prior to this new investment. And that's what sold it for me when I was in my former position in Rural and Remote Health, was to see the impact that they had on the mental health services in Yorkton and to be able to expand that throughout the province. And a number, I think 18 more sites with that investment, was something that we're truly behind. So we're looking forward to seeing how that's going to improve services and access for people throughout the province.

I know we talked about organ donations in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and I've always been an organ donor and donated blood. Of course with my diagnosis of cancer three years ago, that takes me off the organ donor list. I've got to be cancer free for five years. Now I'm at a two-year point, so I'm looking at three years down the road being able to become an organ donor again which I'm really looking forward to.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I'll look at more of these of things. The continued investment in STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service] we've extended, something I was happy to be involved with. The ten-year extension to the STARS contract, so it'll take us to I think it's 2030. The investment in new helicopters, developing that new platform for STARS is something that we're very proud of. And of course delivering that service to the people of the province.

You know, Mr. Speaker, many talked about the investments in education, so I'll just touch on those really quickly. You know, schools, and of course I talked about the increase in teachers and all the rest of it. When it comes to post-secondary also, I just think of our Parkland College who's recently joined forces with Cumberland College in our area and had a new CEO [chief executive officer] put in place that covers both of those colleges. And the great work that Mark is doing there as they're recognized locally, and I'm looking forward to work with him in the future, Mr. Speaker.

When we start going through some of the public safety initiatives, I know with the increase to police officers, the enhanced visibility in rural areas is something that a lot of citizens in the province were asking for. And I'm pretty proud that our highway traffic officers in the province are taking an active role in delivering more and more public safety throughout the province as well.

Before I run out of too much time here, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to touch on the new project we just actually opened yesterday, and it officially opened for traffic today. It was the Regina bypass. And you know, as wouldn't surprise me anyway, Mr. Speaker, we've always talked about the project being on budget and on time. But actually, Mr. Speaker, we cut the ribbon about a month ahead of time. And as history would have it and as the way things would play out with this project, it's always been ahead of time or on time or on budget. We actually opened it to traffic ahead of time today. It was supposed to be 6 o'clock tonight, this evening. It actually opened shortly after lunchtime to traffic, so, you know, it's keeping on with that personality that it has in that regard, Mr. Speaker.

And I understand the members opposite. They have to play politics and do some of the things they do when it comes to projects like this, Mr. Speaker. But again, you know, it's just amazing the amount of safety that this is going to add to our province. And I made the comment yesterday that the critic mustn't have been at the same event I was at, because I listened to what she said in the House here, answered some questions. I listened to her media from yesterday. She must have been at a different event, so I want to refresh her memory about what was said there.

Wanda Campbell, who of course is the mother who lost her son in a traffic accident along No. 1 Highway out by Pilot Butte in 2013, said:

On August 9th, 2013 my life changed forever and I became an advocate for road safety. We can honour Lane's memory if no other family has to live through the pain we suffered.

At the event she asked, "What value do you put on human life?" And we couldn't agree more, Mr. Speaker.

The fire chief of White City, Randy Schulz, said:

Before the bypass, I was on a first-name basis with the coroner's office. Since the first phase of the bypass opened, we haven't used our jaws of life.

And actually, speaking to some of the people that work with Randy in White City, he said:

Actually we had a request in for additional funding for another jaws of life, and not only don't we use the first one at all anymore, and hopefully we never do again. But the second one we don't need to fund.

And I thought, you know, Randy said it well: what a glorious day. He kept throwing his arms out and talking about what a glorious day that the bypass was finally open.

Another friend of mine actually lives at White City, Mr. Speaker. He told me that, you know, every day that his kids would go out on the highway, coming home later in the evening, he would not sleep. He would wait and wait and wait for them to come home, not sleeping. Once the construction started, the areas became safer and especially the first interchanges opened. He said, I can sleep peaceful at night because I knew they were likely coming home safe, with before I couldn't really guarantee that.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, I think it was brought up. The line of, I think, comments that I heard last night was about well, that part's okay; what about the west? Well, Mr. Speaker, think about the amount of truck traffic going. I mean, the member opposite from Rosemont — I mean, he'll have to maybe stand and correct me — 82, 83 times, maybe it was more, that he brought petitions to this House to get truck traffic off of Dewdney. We couldn't agree more. Mr. Speaker, this project will do that.

When we think about truck traffic and the safety of trucks and being able to move trucks not only economically through the city and the area but also safely, you know, we look at . . . We'll admit, that area was built to handle up to 10,000 trucks a day. Will that area ever handle that? I believe it will eventually. But,

Mr. Speaker, think about the thousands of trucks that are currently going through there trying to access Highway 1. Those intersections, thousands of trucks still, Mr. Speaker. That interchange, this bypass is going to make that area safe as well all the way to the west.

And I don't know how many times I've driven that route and I've wanted to make sure I'm safe. And my family, other family members drive around. It's not just a Regina project, Mr. Speaker. This is a Saskatchewan project along the Trans-Canada Highway going through Regina, tying us to the economic quarters around Regina, but moving that traffic safely through the area, Mr. Speaker, including the west.

So it's not bits and pieces, Mr. Speaker. It's a whole project, one team, one project that's come through ahead of time and on budget and is going to serve the people of this province for many years, many years to come, Mr. Speaker.

So I think I've pretty much used up all of my time here. I'll take to my seat here pretty quickly. I'm getting heckled by the former minister of Highways right now so, you know, I'm just going to conclude. There's so much more I'd like to speak about but my colleagues are definitely going to touch on all the other points I probably was going to touch on.

So, you know, Mr. Speaker, we're looking forward to what lies ahead. We look forward to the future of this province. We have a positive outlook for this province. We know we have a lot of potential. There's a lot of good things that are happening. I think the plan that we'll see in a couple of weeks will kind of point the direction to go.

And, you know, we're really looking forward to continue to lead in this province. We kind of like our chances in the next election, although we don't take anything for granted. So over the next year we'll be continuing to work towards gaining or regaining the trust and the support of the people throughout the province and serving in this position on this side of the House again for another four years post October 26, 2020.

So, Mr. Speaker, God bless Saskatchewan and its citizens. Thank you for allowing me the time to speak tonight. I will support the Throne Speech. I will not be supporting the amendment.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Weekes: — I request leave to introduce a guest, please.

The Speaker: — The member has asked leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery I'd like to introduce my good friend Raymond Sadler. Ray came to Biggar in 1999 and opened a pizza restaurant, the Pizzeria Adria. And if you're ever in Biggar, I would recommend stopping in and having some very good food with Ray and his staff.

Ray was elected in 2004 as mayor of Biggar, and he's the longest serving mayor in Biggar's history. And Ray will be running for re-election again. And Ray and I do enjoy an odd glass of wine occasionally, and we discuss the many local and provincial and international issues. And so we've become very good friends. And I'd like you to join me in welcoming Ray to his Legislative Assembly.

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

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. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'd join briefly with the member opposite to welcome Mayor Ray, His Worship, to his Assembly. It's nice to have him here tonight.

And it's also my pleasure to enter into Throne Speech debate here today. We do so on Treaty 4 territory and the homeland of the Métis. And we do so with the responsibility of representing our constituents and the people of this province in the best interests, Mr. Speaker.

We also started this Throne Speech here this session with — well someone I'd like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for making happen — but the presence of Elder Harry Francis on the floor of this Assembly, a meaningful prayer from someone who's been a teacher in the community for many, many years. And also to have a prayer brought by Rabbi Jeremy Parnes, someone who is a friend and a teacher of mine and a teacher of many. And somebody who, I thought, was able to capture the challenging and complex times that we live in and, you know, called us to our work in an earnest way with all those challenges that our world faces.

I'd also like to take a moment to remember Lieutenant Governor Thomas Molloy, someone who certainly served in that capacity in an honourable way, but somebody who was a builder of certainly his province but his country, and very important relationships for many, many, many years.

And I would welcome our new Lieutenant Governor, Russ Mirasty, to his role, somebody who has served his country, our province, and in fact communities across our province, but also provinces across our country, with distinction. And it's been a real pleasure to watch his leadership hit the ground shortly after being sworn into here.

I was able to observe him being welcomed out to the Treaty Four Governance Centre, and that was a really special thing to observe. Certainly Lieutenant Governor Russ Mirasty brings so much to his role, but he's also the first Indigenous Lieutenant Governor in this province's history. And it was nice to witness that as it's nice to see him in so many different facets. I was surprised recently running the Prairie Summit race out at Buffalo

Pound to have the Lieutenant Governor chasing up and down the trails running that race as well.

I'd like to enter in the debate with recognizing those that are important to us. And in that case I'd like to think of my family, as others have. I suspect William's just going to bed here right now. Certainly, Stephanie is, you know, she's an amazing partner, an amazing teacher, and a really amazing mom. And I'm thinking, you know, certainly she's fully involved in my service and our service and in the community. I know she's acutely aware of the pressures in education as a teacher, Mr. Speaker, as a teacher-librarian the demands and the needs that exist there, but she also really gets a lot of reward out of her work. She's been quite involved in the last number of years with the GSA [gay-straight alliance] within her school, Mr. Speaker, and I know she really sees that as an important body of work, an important group that comes together and guides work within her school.

I'd also like, you know, to thank my good little buddy William, who's probably just getting tucked in to sleep here tonight, Mr. Speaker. But certainly our families are pretty important to how we go about this work, and my little buddy is pretty important to me in all other aspects of life as well. He's five and a half years old. He's loving kindergarten. He loves his friends and all the activities that he's involved in, Mr. Speaker. This week is a big week; it's Halloween and so he's excited about that. I know Stephanie had worked very closely with him on a costume, a tarantula, had spent hours on this costume. I know she's a little heartbroken right now because he says he's scared to wear it. So I think he's going to go as Heatwave with his costume from last year, Mr. Speaker. I think there's still some debate to let him know he'll be fine wearing the tarantula outfit.

You know, it's pretty amazing going at this work and our service. Certainly in my case I've done so just along with Stephanie, and then I've done so with William in our lives. And it's really been a lot of fun to have him join us and me in the community. He comes out for community events and gatherings. He joins me for cultural events and Indigenous events, Mr. Speaker. He joins me for rallies and different activities standing up for rights. And he has all sorts of questions — often, "Why, Daddy?" — which force us to really figure out, I guess reassess what we're doing and why we serve and, you know, what matters, and challenges us to be able to then articulate that to a five-year-old, which can really be a challenge, Mr. Speaker.

[19:30]

Also with respect to William, I mean he loves hockey. He loves school as I say; he's into art. And he's my real sidekick out for all sorts adventures on the prairies. He's ready to go, to go catch a fish at any moment or get into the field for a hunt. For years I've taken a crew up on the Churchill River, Mr. Speaker, a group of friends and family, and it's been pretty fun these last couple of years to share that experience with William. I'm pretty proud that he outfished my group of buddies this last year up there, Mr. Speaker, and I can give them a hard time about that as well.

Certainly our families are what are most important in our lives, and it also guides our work in this Assembly and reaffirms much of what we're working for. We have a very supportive family. I'd be wrong not to think of, as well, our extended families, our

parents — you know, my parents, Steph's parents, our extended families who provide us a lot of love and a lot of support — and we're just so lucky for that, Mr. Speaker. And it's not the case for many, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also like to recognize Jennifer Morin who serves as the constituency assistant in Regina Rosemont. Jennifer is hard working, earnest, dedicated to the people that we serve, that she serves. She takes that responsibility seriously, and she really works hard when someone engages with us in need, often in crisis to make sure that we're working together as a team to find some supports and to advocate. So I just want to say to Jennifer, thank you so very much for your dedicated service to our constituents, Mr. Speaker. It means so much to so many and certainly those that pick up the phone or send an email or come in through the doors of the office. And we have a busy office, Mr. Speaker, which I value and I appreciate. I'm glad people feel comfortable to reach out.

I also want to thank her family, her husband, Trevor. He's a good friend and a real lead within our community as well and someone certainly that always works for workers' rights. And their children, Jack and Ethan, both great students and amazing hockey players. They play all sorts of hockey, but they still come out and play at the Rosemont Outdoor Hockey League, as well as William does as well, Mr. Speaker. And we have a lot of fun around that outdoor rink. All levels of hockey and diverse ages and diverse backgrounds come out and play, some players that play have played for many years, others that are just picking it up for the first time or maybe putting skates on for the very first time.

And I'm thankful, Mr. Speaker, to serve the good people of Regina Rosemont. People that work hard. People that give back. People that work hard to protect and, you know, take care of their family, and people that certainly care deeply about the future of the community, but our province as a whole.

And the constituency of course is made up of various communities from, you know, Rosemont through Mount Royal through Dieppe and Normanview West and Prairie View. And the community associations that form around those respective communities are engaged in their own unique ways but always that really enrich the lives of people and provide a lot of service and support to our community, that provide a lot of strength to our community. So I'd like to recognize all those community associations as well that work so tirelessly to extend services and supports and to build community.

I also think of our school community councils, many which are really active and engaged in doing such good work. Parents and students and community members directly engaged in education, that's a really important component of high-quality education, Mr. Speaker. And I'm so thankful for that. And I'm thankful as well for the different churches, Mr. Speaker, that are active, that bring people together, that certainly support and enrich the lives of not just their parishioners, but the respective communities as a whole as well. And I guess that's what we, when we come at these throne speeches, that's what we've been asked to do, is to represent as best we can the good people that we represent. And I'll certainly aim to do that here tonight.

I was thinking a little bit as I was mentioning how lucky we really

are as a family: a healthy five-and-a-half-year-old son and employment and some security and families, extended families that we can count on and that are there.

And I think of many that aren't in that situation. And I think of a 23-year-old young man that recently lost his life, a constituent in a terrible fire, a tragedy just a couple weeks ago in my constituency, Kelly David Strobl. And you know, he was a carpenter and a hard-working guy around the house. He was a mechanic and he was working hard one evening in the garage. I've met him before, visited outside of the house, always busy with his hands on equipment. But he was in the garage and had an explosion, lost his life. And his young wife expecting their first baby is left in a very vulnerable situation, Mr. Speaker.

And I think of people like Kelly Strobl when I think of the people that we're there to serve as a government, as a society. And certainly in the case of this young family, community does what it does. People came together and raised dollars and were there to support that young, expecting mom. But such a terrible tragedy.

I also think of many of those folks that I serve, a couple of families recently that I've been working hard with, with terrible addictions, Mr. Speaker, but working hard to find a path. Working hard to find treatment when the options just aren't there, aren't extended in a timely way for far too many. You know, I've got a couple of active families that I'm working with right now who aren't finding the treatment they deserve. Far too often I've seen this play itself out and it's, in many cases, loss of life, Mr. Speaker, or just the tragic realities that none of us should accept. And so I think of that when I look at this Throne Speech here as well.

But there's a lot of good as well, Mr. Speaker. I do think as well of my constituent Angela McLean, who's been discussed on the floor of this Assembly, but that had the terrible experience in five days in the hallway just recently when she needed care in the hospital, Mr. Speaker. And I think of these good people that give back so much to their community and certainly Angela is an example of that, then not having the supports that she needs when she needed them.

But there are many good things to recognize and celebrate. We've got certainly so many working to provide the best circumstances they can in our classrooms. Over at Martin they've really revitalized the school, really renewed the school, including their football program. This year, the team — they had lost their football program for a little while — they've built it back. This year they were 3 and 3. They made it to the semi-final. They had a great O [offence]. They had a great D [defence]. They've got a really solid team and they've got a bright future. And that school is really growing in positive ways and it's been positive to witness that.

I also think of some of the fun things that make up . . . I certainly identified all the good work of the community associations, but I think of big events like we had this weekend, the Prairie Classic and the Heritage Classic. And of course Evraz Place is right on the border of my constituency, so many of my constituents work there. I just want to say to Tim Reid and the entire team over at Evraz that they did such a spectacular job of hosting this world-class event. It was a lot of fun. William and I were over

there for the Prairie Classic. I know many people came into the province and into the city for it. And certainly I want to thank them for their work, Mr. Speaker.

When I look at what are the local priorities, you know, I'm sure there is some commonality with a lot of constituencies, but certainly having a strong economy is important, having jobs that can pay a mortgage and support a family is critical. Certainly the weakened state of our economy, the stagnant state of our economy, the job loss that's occurred in this province is a real concern for my constituents. And I'll get into that some more where it connects directly to the choices of this government, who so often have really made this economy much weaker than it should be and have forced job loss. I think of the PST [provincial sales tax] hike on construction labour as one example, Mr. Speaker.

The schools, like every other riding, the schools are important. And class size and the complexity and the needs within classrooms, they simply aren't being met with the resources and support that they need from the provincial government. I would also want to highlight within my own constituency the pressures that are there within some of those schools. I know McLurg is sort of bursting at the seams, Mr. Speaker.

Of course a few years ago under this government, Mr. Speaker, Dieppe School was closed in my constituency, and this is a really important school to Dieppe and to the community, to the constituency. And it was really hard and disappointing for it to be closed. Certainly this government presided over that. And it was a time where funding of school boards wasn't sufficient, wasn't adequate, and that board was faced with a really difficult decision. But it's a hard one for the community, and children were then moved over to McLurg school. And that school is bursting at the seams while Dieppe still sits there empty, Mr. Speaker.

And I give the school board so much credit. They've retained that school, that asset. They've kept it maintained. It's there and ready, you know, if the financial resources and the conditions are there for it to be redeployed. And it's positive that Westerra is growing, Mr. Speaker, and that people are moving there and that children are going to need a place to go to school as well, because Dieppe sure should and could be that school. And it's something that I'll continue to push for, Mr. Speaker.

I also think of Rosemont School, beautiful school with great charm to it, but it needs replacement, Mr. Speaker. It's up on the priority list with Regina Public Schools and for good reason. It's past its lifespan and it's at that time that it needs to be rebuilt. And it really serves actually a very large community, Mr. Speaker, and a young community as well. So when we're talking about proper funding of schools and we're talking about the inadequate support from the Sask Party government, there's consequences. There's consequences in class size. There's consequences in the supports that students expect and need and deserve. And there's consequences as well when it comes down to schools like Dieppe not being open and serving the community or schools like Rosemont not getting rebuilt or McLurg itself that is over capacity.

When I think of other needs, I mentioned already health and the emergency rooms and the hallway medicine that stands out again

with the terrible experience of Angela McLean, my constituent. But so many other constituents have faced this as well. And, you know, our emergency rooms simply aren't able to respond to the emergencies, the crisis that patients and people are when they go and seek help. And we certainly don't see anything in this budget to respond to that.

[19:45]

When I look at a pressing need within our community as well, and I know it's not unique to just my riding. In fact, it's a real issue in Regina right now, Mr. Speaker, and other parts of the province as well, but that's the crime issue, Mr. Speaker, and community safety. Crime has spiked under this Sask Party government. It's causing a high level of distress and concern and safety concerns for people in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And the police certainly need the resources to go out there and provide the security and the enforcement and to respond to these really challenging situations, Mr. Speaker. And I'd argue they don't have the resources that they need from this provincial government.

But it weaves together with other aspects of our society, as you know well, Mr. Speaker. And we've had the police out to Rosemont to hold court and work with the community to talk through some of these matters because it's a real concern for folks. But the issues of addictions, Mr. Speaker, and a mental health system that fails too many weave into this, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the gang activity in our city, Mr. Speaker, is a full part of this. And I just think of so much of the good work that was happening to combat gangs in this province a decade and some ago, Mr. Speaker. And so much of that that's been stripped back and cut by the Sask Party and those efforts that have been pulled away, and I just think of how important it is for us to be addressing these gangs, Mr. Speaker.

We have a new reality, Mr. Speaker, a growing reality of guns that are also involved in this activity with gangs and the connection to drugs, Mr. Speaker. And we've just had a government that's just truly failed to step up to this task, and there's pressing needs here. I think of on the addictions side, of course, we've got real concerns on this front and a system that isn't offering up treatment in a timely way that meets the needs of those that are requiring it.

And it really is failing to step up to the crystal meth epidemic in this province — an epidemic and a drug that's ravaging the lives of my constituents and yours, Mr. Speaker, and many within this Assembly, but that's stealing people really from themselves. But that's hand in hand with the crime statistics and realities and risks that we have in our communities. So it's really disappointing to come across a Throne Speech that doesn't step up in a meaningful way on that front.

As well, the fact is we've had even our corrections and so-called rehabilitative systems have been stripped back. They've been gutted, Mr. Speaker. We're warehousing folks in many circumstances as opposed to making sure that there's interventions that have some likelihood of a better tomorrow. And there's a cost, Mr. Speaker, for not tending to these things, and that cost is certainly being felt by my constituents by way of crime, by way of impacts of the addictions within our province,

Mr. Speaker.

I'd also just want to touch that Pioneer Village is still there. It's not right directly in my riding — it's just 100 metres to the other side of Dewdney — but there needs to be a plan in place. We've got this facility that's way past its lifespan, as I've stated time and time again in this Assembly before, and pressed for action. But the needs of those that need care in the form that Pioneer provides really need some certainty. And we need a new building or buildings, and we just continue to see delays from this government on that front.

You know, I would certainly want to, you know, as I'm into the Throne Speech here, recognize the hardship and the terribly hard conditions that so many producers are facing this year, Mr. Speaker. Of course they've dealt with the market access concerns that have devastated pricing for, you know, crops like canola, Mr. Speaker. But then they dealt with the drought. They are now dealing with horrendous harvest conditions, and certainly that's hard work. It's stressful. We will be there to partner and work with government wherever possible for supports that might be needed. But we have the producers in our thoughts at this time as well.

You know when we look at that Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker — and I'm cognizant that I've gone over my time allocation — really what we see is a tired government in action, Mr. Speaker, a government that's far too often interested in their own self-interest or partisan interest and not the public interest or not what matters to people or the future of this province, an uninspiring document that fails to step up and tackle the real challenges that face our province, the real opportunities that exist as well, Mr. Speaker.

And, you know, I think that, you know, certainly we've talked about the breaking point in education and the lack of action in this Throne Speech on that front. That will be a steady focus of this opposition — to fight for those classrooms, to fight for those students.

I also think of the circumstances around child hunger and young families that are without the resources that they need. I'm so troubled by what we're hearing from so many organizations around changes to the income assistance program that could displace many Saskatchewan people from their homes, Mr. Speaker, at a time where, you know, we've got the first taste of a cold snap out there right now, with the harsh realities of winter emerging. Certainly we press this government to make sure that they're adjusting their program, changing their program and listening to those on the front lines of income assistance. The letter of guarantee for a landlord is a really critical piece of that, Mr. Speaker.

I want to just touch on a file that my colleague the member for Cumberland spoke to so well, but nothing there as far as a suicide prevention strategy across the province, Mr. Speaker. Like wow, such a missed opportunity to step up in a positive way and be a positive force in the lives of many, Mr. Speaker. And such a disappointment to see that.

Certainly when we look to our economy, as we've said already it's a stagnant economy. It's been weakened and made worse by choices and decisions and cuts of the Sask Party government. We

see that certainly with the PST on construction and, well, on pretty much everything else, Mr. Speaker. That's really hurt households and their financial position, Mr. Speaker.

We see that play out in things like retail sales, but that puts some sort of statistic to something that's a much harder-lived reality for many within our community. We also heard it of course from the construction industry again here today, Mr. Speaker.

We also see that solar industry, Mr. Speaker, that was burgeoning, that was growing, that is affordable, that's sustainable, that was reducing emissions, Mr. Speaker. We see that industry being scrapped in a real callous way, Mr. Speaker, without consultation with the industry. Livelihoods being flipped upside down. Businesses being shuttered by way of the choice of this Premier and this government, Mr. Speaker. And really, really defying common sense.

This is a program that's affordable, that makes financial and economic sense, and that allows us to do our part and many citizens and people and businesses and First Nations and farms to do their part to tackle climate change and to reduce emissions in a really practical way. So it just astounds me, Mr. Speaker, that we have a government that's so out of touch that they would attack an industry, basically eliminate an industry in the way that they've now cancelled net metering and then brought in a program that simply won't work within our province.

And I urge the Premier, I urge the Sask Party to sit down with those businesses before we lose those businesses, before we lose that capital, before we lose the skilled labour in that industry, because certainly the workers who have lost their jobs, Mr. Speaker, they can't wait long and they'll be out seeking employment. They are already. And when we lose them out of this industry, that's more skilled labour and, in this case, skilled labour that can be deployed in such a positive way lost within our province.

We'll continue to push to fix the broken procurement model, Mr. Speaker, within our province that shuts out, far too often, Saskatchewan companies and workers. That makes no sense at all. We have world-class companies, world-class workers in this province, too many of which are sitting more idle than they should be, both the businesses that have reduced, many of them a fraction of what they were, and certainly the workers, Mr. Speaker, who have lost employment.

And you know, I think Saskatchewan people find it awfully offensive when they hear that the Saskatchewan government is procuring schools, power plants, or roadway projects that actually shut out Saskatchewan businesses from even bidding. When we have things like a power plant in Swift Current, Mr. Speaker — an important project, a very important project — but we have a general contractor from Kansas City that's been contracted by this Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, when we have workers in Swift Current that are idle and are ready to put on their hard hat and go to work, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make any sense.

I think of that bypass that of course we pushed for by way of making sure we had overpasses and an effective bypass in place. But a project that really went off the rails over the years, Mr. Speaker, certainly by way of cost ballooning many times over.

But then also for that contract to again shut out Saskatchewan companies from actually bidding on the project, Mr. Speaker, and to have handed that massive overrun, that \$2 billion contract to a massive conglomerate from France just defies common sense, Mr. Speaker, and has hurt us economically within this province and failed to provide the value that Saskatchewan people deserve and need with their resources.

We're tracking other measures of that hardship that households are facing. We know that the PST of course over just a four-year period has taken more than \$800 a year more out of the average household, Mr. Speaker. That's a lot of money. Most households are skating by, working hard to pay for child care and a few activities and to pay the mortgage or pay the rent, to pay for groceries. Eight hundred dollars is a big hit, Mr. Speaker, and it certainly makes it understandable why we're now leading the nation in a very sad statistic, in mortgages that are in arrears.

And I looked at a chart today, Mr. Speaker, that we're actually twice the rate of Alberta on this front. Households are so strained that they can't make mortgage payments over a 90-day period. In arrears for 90 days, twice the rate of Alberta, and we're three times the national average, Mr. Speaker — this speaks to the real hardship that many households are facing. And certainly we don't see any measures in this Throne Speech to repair the damage of things like the PST or to address the real affordability pressures that people are facing.

We don't see anything in this Throne Speech to bring about a fair minimum wage. Instead the Sask Party government's happy to stick Saskatchewan people who are often working two and three jobs with poverty wages, Mr. Speaker, depriving them of their quality of life, often their health, Mr. Speaker, who are often doing everything they can to pay rent or to have food in the fridge and to tend to their family. And we'll keep fighting for a fair minimum wage. We're pushing that we work towards the implementation of a \$15 minimum wage, Mr. Speaker. It just makes no sense to have Saskatchewan people, the most vulnerable workers working and not able to make ends meet and having to use the food bank. And these are realities for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, far too often.

You know, we don't see any accountability in this Throne Speech with respect to the financial mismanagement of this government. No inquiry into the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal that ripped taxpayers off of their hard-earned dollars, Mr. Speaker, filling the pockets of insiders of the Sask Party government. No inquiry into the bypass, Mr. Speaker, and how on earth a project balloons in price the way that does, accounting for the biggest overrun in Saskatchewan's history. And we don't see a government able to get our finances in line because they keep signing us up for this sort of mismanagement.

[20:00]

In fact debt, as you would know, has tripled, Mr. Speaker, under the Sask Party government, an unsustainable trajectory, a result of a government that couldn't manage during the best days, that couldn't put a dollar away when oil was high and the dollars were rolling in, Mr. Speaker, and in fact didn't save a dime. They actually drained the rainy day fund and piled on debt. And it's that sort of mismanagement that puts this province at risk and the programs and the services that we count on. We've seen this

movie before in this province by the predecessor of this party, Mr. Speaker. And it's disappointing to see no change in course on that front as well.

Certainly we don't see any action towards climate change, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we see the steps in the opposite direction with the cuts to the very practical and affordable renewable power program, the net metering program for solar power. We want to turn the dial on this front, Mr. Speaker. We want to crank up a program we call Renew Saskatchewan. We'd be happy to call it anything, Mr. Speaker. What we'd like to do is to see this government act on the proposal we've brought forward at this time to create thousands of jobs across Saskatchewan, work to provide affordable power for Saskatchewan people, and to reduce emissions. We could do the same sort of program with energy efficiency retrofits of homes and buildings, Mr. Speaker. But we see a government that's sitting on their hands and really eroding their credibility from the very important conversation and action that's required when it comes to climate change.

I see a government that certainly isn't acting as a good-faith partner towards reconciliation and that journey, Mr. Speaker. Far too often instead we see a government that's willing to fan flames of division in this province that need not be stoked, Mr. Speaker. And I guess that's really concerning. And you know, in a broader sense even away from that Indigenous relationship, when we think of the diverse province that we value in this province, we have a real challenge, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to rising hate within this province, racism that's all too real for far too many in this province, Mr. Speaker. It's a concern that we have reported out that hate groups are actually on the rise, and in an alarming way, in Saskatchewan and in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And I just think that this is a time to not be silent. It's a time for good people to rise up and to speak out and to call out hate and bigotry and racism and to work to build understanding and build bridges wherever possible, Mr. Speaker. And we just don't see that enough.

And segueing back to my touch on Stephanie's work on her GSA within her school, Mr. Speaker, we owe it to those children, we owe it to our schools to not leave it up to them whether or not they can form a GSA and all the pressures that are then placed within an actual school in a community. We owe it to them as adults to be able to take a stand in this Assembly and enshrine in legislation the right to form a GSA, Mr. Speaker. And I see the Minister of Education shaking his head here to the negative on this, Mr. Speaker. I would urge him, Mr. Speaker, to chat with some educators, to chat with communities, to chat with students who are facing the pressures of communities. Right now, Mr. Speaker, we have a duty and a responsibility to take a stand and the ability to do so. So we call for that as well, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I want to touch just on a couple items, and then I'm cognizant of the clock here. Our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, have been attacked by the Sask Party at every turn. They weren't honest with Saskatchewan people in the last election. They've been outsourcing project after project, job after job. They of course shut down, sold off STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] when they promised that they wouldn't. They brought forward legislation to sell off up to 50 per cent of our Crown corporations. And they recently forced our Crown workers into job action, Mr. Speaker, by the poor treatment that they offered up. Just another attack on our Crown

corporations.

Saskatchewan people know that when our Crowns are gone, they're gone. They also know they can't trust the Sask Party government on this front. And this is going to be a pretty critical push. We'll fight in this Assembly in every way we can as an opposition. But rolling around to the next election, Crowns are pretty important in this conversation. And we'll be fighting to protect, save our Crowns, working to make sure that they're strong and vibrant, delivering for the people of this province for generations to come.

Before shutting it down I just want to touch one other piece and that's, you know, there's a lot of frustration in the West and within Saskatchewan. And much of that is rightful. And that's being expressed by citizens, and we have a duty to listen to the people on that front. So the characterization of that as western alienation is real and we'd be very unwise to not recognize the concerns that exist, and for good reason. Many people have lost employment. Many are facing a lot of uncertainty.

Certainly there's a high level of frustration with the choices of the federal government and the approach of the federal government, Mr. Speaker, things through Bill C-69 in its original form and the pressure that was required on that front, Mr. Speaker. The concerns around, you know, certainly pipeline capacity and the importance for this province, Mr. Speaker. But also things like . . . So I'm getting heckled by the Energy minister. I'm saying western alienation is real. Frustrations are real. And we have a federal government that has failed to understand Saskatchewan, that has failed to understand the very important energy sector in this province. What we don't need is divisive games. What we need to do is to be earnest and focused on these fronts. Bill C-69 was certainly out of line with an understanding of the West. Pipeline capacity matters, Mr. Speaker.

And equalization, Mr. Speaker, certainly Saskatchewan New Democrats have never wavered from fighting for a fair deal. And I guess on that front, Mr. Speaker, as I get shouted at by members opposite, I guess maybe there's a reason why the members opposite fail to kind of get the job done for Saskatchewan people on this front or for the West, Mr. Speaker. We have an Energy minister that would like to heckle through a portion of a speech that I would hope would unite us, Mr. Speaker. Because if we're ever going to be able to apply pressure from the West, we should work to do it as a united effort. But all we see over there are too often divisive political games.

But when I think of equalization, Mr. Speaker, equalization that was a file that once then opposition leader Brad Wall signed on his full support to the lawsuit that was brought by the then Lorne Calvert NDP government on behalf of Saskatchewan people, to exclude natural resource revenues and ensure a fair deal for Saskatchewan people, something that that premier, that government, were fighting for in Ottawa.

Of course we know the hypocrisy of these that have now arrived back and have found equalization coming out of their lips twelve years on, Mr. Speaker. But we saw then Brad Wall being elected as the Sask Party premier, Stephen Harper elected the prime minister, and we saw Brad Wall go silent, Mr. Speaker. And we didn't hear about equalization for years, Mr. Speaker, as he let

Harper break his promise for the people of Saskatchewan.

And I guess if we really want to get into it, who else was in that team from Saskatchewan and in Ottawa who broke that promise to Saskatchewan people? Well I think that one of the members is now the Leader of the Opposition, the Conservative leader, Mr. Speaker. So he was there as one of those members that broke that promise. In fact, the Premier, the now Premier of Alberta was one of the members of that cabinet, Mr. Speaker, that broke that promise to the people of Saskatchewan.

I'll just say this. We'll never get rolled over on equalization. We'll never get bought off. We'll fight for a fair deal and for Saskatchewan people as Saskatchewan New Democrats. And we won't allow, I guess, a revisionist history on these things or a convenient entry after we've had the Sask Party government mismanage our finances, and now all of a sudden looking for it. We need to be principled when it comes to equalization. We deserve a better deal. We'll be there as partners. What we need is a dance partner that's ready to stand strong and to fight for that deal and not just be there out of necessity when they've mismanaged our finances and our economy in such a significant way, Mr. Speaker.

Now I was thinking that I'd speak to western alienation and real frustrations with the federal government. I thought I'd have members opposite agreeing. I thought I'd have folks saying, hey this is good; we can work with this — as we should, Mr. Speaker. But I'll say this. What I've seen instead of . . . What I was wanting to offer up is our support to work on these issues, and as well the advice that it's unwise to not listen to the concerns that are real. But I'll say this. When I see a government and a premier unwilling to shut down the discussion of separatism for Saskatchewan, for Alberta and the West, that's a sad day.

Fanning flames of separatism won't get us anywhere. It won't help my constituents who deserve a strong economy, deserve jobs; it's not going to help us get the pipeline built that we need, Mr. Speaker. What we need to do is stay focused on these matters where there's real grievances with the federal government, and fight like heck for a strong Saskatchewan within a strong Canada, Mr. Speaker. Anything less is weak. It's reckless. It's a betrayal of our province, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan New Democrats will stand up to the federal government, will stand up to whatever federal leader we need to in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, for the interests of this province, Mr. Speaker. But we won't do some sort of reckless, damaging, weak dance towards separatism, Mr. Speaker.

Right now, with these issues, we need strong leadership right now, Mr. Speaker. We need steady leadership, and we need someone to have a backbone with these pressures that exist and work towards that path forward.

Mr. Speaker, we see in this Throne Speech, you know, it's light. As I said, it doesn't respond to the needs of Saskatchewan people, the pressures of our times, and certainly I won't be supporting the Throne Speech. There's a couple things, you know, the work towards Estevan and Coronach that's very important work, overdue, but that needs to be engaged in earnest . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Energy minister is heckling some more, so I'll just . . . if she would stop heckling, I'll explain.

The measures in the budget are long overdue to work with Estevan, to work with Coronach, to work with these communities and workers that her government has a responsibility to. So I'm glad to finally see a dollar put there, and now we need to see it followed through with actions. The Energy minister can heckle from her seat if she wants; instead I'd urge her to work with the communities of Estevan, the communities of Coronach, to make sure that there's hope and opportunities for those workers and those communities who so desperately deserve it, Mr. Speaker.

I see measures as well around vaping that are positive, Mr. Speaker. But I know I've taken more time than I was allotted, and I have a very gracious House Leader. But at this point . . . I won't be supporting the Throne Speech. I'll be supporting the amendment. And we'll always be working to put Saskatchewan people first.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to make my reply to the Speech from the Throne. First I'd like to thank a few people. I'd like to thank my wife, Cindy, who is an educational assistant at Biggar Central 2000 school. We've recently had an addition to our family with the birth of our third granddaughter. And I always like to mention our little Zane, who we're . . . Actually he's a grandson by choice. He's been living with us for some time, and he's right now transitioning back to live with his mother, Desiree, who also lives in Biggar.

Biggar-Sask Valley of course is an agriculture constituency, and farms have had their challenges this year. For the most part harvest is complete, but there's still some out there of course. And there's always lots of work to be done with livestock and other operations in the fall on the land.

[20:15]

I'd like to thank my constituency assistant, Janet Hanson, who has been with me for the past seven years. She has done a great job looking after the office and dealing with files that come through the office. And she has three daughters. The eldest one is actually in second year university, and the youngest I think is in grade 8 or 9. So I'd like to thank Janet for the good work that she has been doing for many years.

The constituency is a very diverse constituency as far as the people. We've had a wave of immigration into the constituency over the last few years, people from all over the world but the vast majority of them are from the Philippines. And this community has, you know, really filled our Catholic church and our Catholic school. And they've been a great addition to the constituency and to the workforce, of course, and to the fabric of Biggar-Sask Valley. And Mayor Ray can attest to this, how many Filipino families are living and working in the town of Biggar.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just get into some of the details of the Throne Speech. Over the last 12 years Saskatchewan has enjoyed a remarkable period of strong and sustained growth, growth our province has not seen since the 1920s, and our government's goal is to ensure that Saskatchewan's strong growth continues. Today more than 1,170,000 residents call our province home. And as I said, we have welcomed new residents

from every other province and territory as well as 170 different countries around the world.

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.

In our new growth plan which we'll be presenting, we'll set specific targets and provide a road map of how Saskatchewan will achieve them. The targets include 1.4 million people living in Saskatchewan by 2030, and 100,000 more people working in Saskatchewan by 2030.

Now economic growth is so important to the province but also to the constituency of Biggar-Sask Valley and right in the town of Biggar. Saskatchewan exports two-thirds of what it produces to over 150 countries around the world and is Canada's largest per capita exporter. Over 100,000 Saskatchewan jobs rely directly or indirectly on exports, and Saskatchewan must meet the challenge of international protectionism head on and seize every opportunity to communicate the benefits of Saskatchewan products to our trading partners around the world.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to mention a couple of businesses that export products really around the world. The one is Prairie Malt. It's been there since the '80s and they've been an important employer and purchaser of malt grain for many, many years.

But one company in Biggar called E-Kay manufacturing is a small manufacturing company. They employ about 25 people. It's a family operation, and they make crop dividers and augers. And this little company is quite amazing, not only exporting in Western Canada but into the United States. And in the last few years — I don't know, about eight years — they've been exporting into Australia. And they recently went on a private trade mission to Australia and they have got more orders that will keep them busy year round. So it's amazing what this little company right in the town of Biggar is doing on the export file.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak a bit about health care which is so important to everyone, of course. There are about 3,800 more nurses and nearly 900 more doctors practicing across the province since 2007, thanks to this government's significance emphasis on recruiting and retaining medical professions. Since 2007, over 1.6 billion have been invested into health care infrastructure. These funds have allowed for five new replacement hospitals to open as well as 13 long-term care centres and 20 additional major capital projects. And one of these long-term care centres was built in Biggar and replaced the aging long-term care home, and not only we built a new long-term care home but we also expanded and refurbished the hospital. So it's been a real blessing to the people of Biggar and the area.

Two very important projects, the Weyburn Hospital replacement project as well as the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital redevelopment project entering its final stages, were announced. And in March this government delivered its commitment to mental health with the opening of the 284-bed Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. And as of last month for the first time, Saskatchewan now has its own children's hospital, the new Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon. Along with the new facility there are 72 physicians in more than 20 specialties who will work there. This government continues its commitment

to mental health and addiction services including a record investment of 402 million this year, an 80 per cent increase since 2007.

And some other initiatives that our government is taking of course is the organ donation registry in Saskatchewan. It will help ensure that families and loved ones are aware of the individual's donation intentions. One very important innovation — it's really part of rural health care for the most part — is STARS, which is the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service, and it's so important right across rural Saskatchewan, but in the constituency of Biggar-Sask Valley. STARS began operating in 2012. It has transported over 4,500 individuals in the need of medical attention. And since unveiling its newest helicopter, the STARS fleet will ensure the dedication health care providers who work for STARS that they will have the capacity to continue to save lives across the province.

Mr. Speaker, there's a number of other initiatives that I can speak to, but I will go on to infrastructure right now. Over the past 12 years, this government's made massive investments of \$30 billion in Saskatchewan infrastructure, 13 billion through executive government projects like hospitals, schools, highways, long-term care facilities, and \$17 billion through Crown corporations capital projects. SaskTel is investing up to \$50 million to further increase coverage in rural Saskatchewan and work has begun on 15 new cellular sites. As part of the phase 2 of the Wireless Saskatchewan initiative to provide rural communities with enhanced access to reliable cellular high-speed internet services, 103 rural communities will receive a new small cell site by the end of 2020 and over half of these new sites are already in service.

And just more specifically to the constituency of Biggar-Sask Valley, the notable capital projects have been in 2018-19: Waldheim School, two new relocatables worth \$60,000; Langham Elementary School, two new relocatables of \$150,000; Borden School roof project, \$200,000; and the Biggar & District Day Care capital fund, \$368,000. And as I mentioned, we have a new long-term care home in Biggar, which is a very welcome addition to our community in the town of Biggar.

Other infrastructure projects in the constituency are improvements to Baljennie SaskTel core network to increase capacity and modernization of key components so they can meet the needs of Saskatchewan residents, \$52,000. And also improvements to SaskTel wireless network to invest in 4G LTE [long-term evolution] and LTE TDD [long-term evolution time division duplex] wireless networks as customers abandon older wireless technologies in Borden. That value was \$95,000. Improvements to SaskTel access networks to add infrastructure to new neighbourhoods and increase capacity in existing neighbourhoods in Langham, \$15,000. And improvements to SaskTel wireless network investments as customers abandon the old wireless technologies in Langham, worth thirty-two point nine thousand dollars. Improvements to SaskTel wireless network and wireless network as customers abandon their older wireless technologies in Biggar, \$24,000. And the list goes on and on. So there's many improvements in the infrastructure in Biggar-Sask Valley.

On the highways front is a \$3.8 million for the 2019-2020 year projects which include enhanced intersection safety between the

intersection of Highway 14 and range road 3701. Enhanced intersection safety on various areas along Highway 16, and work done on bridges on Highway 16 westbound over North Saskatchewan near Borden. So that's just a few of the infrastructure projects that have taken place in Biggar-Sask Valley.

I'd also like just to speak a bit about, you know, we talk about infrastructure deficit which our province does a great job of narrowing. There's always more work to be done. But we talk a lot about, you know, bricks and mortars and those types of things which are very important. But there's also always a deficit, I guess, in human well-being and care. It's an ongoing struggle. Our government has done a lot of things to help people that are disadvantaged. Mental health issues, drug addictions, and right in the town of Biggar and all the communities around the constituency has a real crystal meth problem.

And part of my personal story, our grandchild, his mother has been suffering from meth addiction and it's part of the problems that she has been dealing with. But hopefully that's behind her now and she's moving in the right direction. But it's a terrible scourge and you can't believe how difficult it is until you witness someone going through it.

But some of the things we've done as a hand up to those in need, this past spring this government signed three new agreements and created a stronger relationship with the Saskatoon Tribal Council. The Children and Families Reconciliation Partnership Agreement will focus on the safety and well-being of First Nations children and youth. A new delegation agreement will re-establish the Saskatoon Tribal Council First Nations Child and Family Services agency and join the 17 First Nation agencies that deliver services on reserve to First Nations communities around the province.

And earlier this year 150 people from the Valley View Centre were successfully transitioned into suitable communities of their choice. This involved work with residents and their families to develop a person-centred planning approach that included family, residents, and their Valley View family. This fall the government will continue to implement the disability strategy by consulting on a new accessibility Act. And this government has significantly increased funding for the transit assistance for people with disabilities program, including a 45 per cent increase this year that will partially fund up to 15 paratransit vehicles in the province.

And, you know, part of the whole crime wave and drugs, I mean it's really a public safety issue. You know the drugs are driving, for the most part, the crime wave in Biggar and area and the constituencies, like many areas where there's a lot of thefts, not only in rural areas and farms but right out of the town of Biggar.

And again anyone that's on crystal meth has lost all sense of right and wrong. Speaking to authorities they say it's the use of crystal meth. The people that are on it are totally different than people in the past that they run into that were, you know, alcohol abuse or other drugs, cocaine or marijuana. People on crystal meth have no sense of fear whatsoever, and they will go into communities and steal vehicles and things out of people's homes and sheds without a second thought.

Now our government has done a lot of work in this area but of course there's always more work to be done. Now the crime rate has fallen since 2007. This government recognizes that there are areas of the province where crime remains a serious concern and there's still much more to be done of course. With the increase to the number of RCMP officers and the launch of the protection and response team, there are now 300 more front-line officers providing service in rural areas of the province, an increase of 40 per cent since 2011. Initiatives such as the Saskatchewan crime watch will continue to be supported.

Now, Mr. Speaker, none of this can be done in the province without strong fiscal management and balanced budgets. And our government has . . . As we all know, this spring the government completed its three-year plan to return the provincial budget to balance after a sharp downturn in the resource prices left a billion dollar hole in the province's finances. This summer three major credit rating agencies, Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and DBRS [Dominion Bond Rating Service Ltd.], affirmed the province's high credit rating, which are amongst the strongest in Canada.

[20:30]

There are also some who say around the management of taxpayer dollars means cutting services. It actually improved services by redeploying resources to where they are most needed. For example, the government decided to end the exec air service in 2017 and sell two of the airplanes, saving Saskatchewan taxpayers \$1 million per year. The third plane was provided to the Saskatchewan air ambulance. The repurposing executive airplane ensures that there are always two aircrafts available for medical flights, many of which are to northern Saskatchewan. The repurposing aircraft is also available for life-saving trips to support the organ transplant program, making 74 total flights transporting patients' organs since 2007.

So I can go on and on. There are many other things that our government has done, but I will take my seat now and I will be supporting the Throne Speech. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lumsden-Morse.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a great honour for me to rise from my chair in this beautiful, historic room to reply to the 2019 Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, it's been a great honour to come to work in this beautiful place for the last 20 years. So few people can say that they have had that experience at all, let alone for the 20 years that I have, Mr. Speaker. And as you know, some days in this place are better than others, but I wouldn't trade one of them, or any of the great memories that I will take with me, from living out the honour of being elected to work for the wonderful people of Lumsden-Morse, formerly Thunder Creek, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my constituency are basically rural people, with the largest centre in the constituency being Lumsden. They are people that work hard, raise great families, and contribute greatly to our province and their communities. They are people that only ask to be given a fair chance to make a living and raise a family and enjoy retirement without having to fight the policies of left-wing governments. I'm proud of my constituents. I'm

proud of having been elected by them now five times. And, Mr. Speaker, I never forget who sent me here, and I've said it before: having their trust is a great honour indeed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would be difficult to do this job without the support of a loving family, and in this regard I am truly blessed. My wife, Linda, has always supported me and my work here and in everything I have done in life except the stupid stuff. Together we have raised three wonderful children, Stephanie, Alison, and Lee, who are good people, successful people with wonderful families of their own. How lucky can we be?

Stephanie lives in Ontario and is CEO of a consulting business that she started and has since taken in a partner and a number of employees. Her business continues to grow. Her business began in the aerospace and shipbuilding sectors and has since branched out into several other areas of business including agriculture, much to the great pride of her father. Stephanie and her husband Gabe, who is CEO of his own software company that thrives mostly in the aerospace sector, have two boys — Stewart, aged 13, who is a terrific student, a wonderful teenager who excels at everything he does. Jack, who is seven years old, is a character famous for his insightful and often colourful observations of life.

Alison, our middle child, is vice-president of operations for Innovative Medicines Canada and an accomplished hockey player who capped her hockey career by playing for Team Canada. Her daughter Liberty, age seven, is a chip off the old block with a quick wit, independent spirit, and one who excels in gymnastics and hockey, particularly last weekend scoring two hat tricks in a tournament, I think out of two games, that made her old grandpa smile for sure.

Lee, the youngest and my son, runs the family farm which has been growing steadily under his leadership, and along with his beautiful wife, Jessica, are parents to Josie and Samson. Josie is a beautiful, somewhat shy nine-year-old who is always kind to the people in her life as well as the animals in her life and has a keen interest in horses which she has been riding, feeding, and grooming for the last two or three years now. A truly gentle soul who is a great help in looking after her little brother, three-year-old Sam, who is like a perpetual motion machine who I understand the local teachers aren't necessarily looking forward to having in school. Sam sure keeps his mom and Sissy, as he calls Josie, busy and sometimes a little exasperated maybe, but he makes me smile. He dresses just like his dad and I see them, I see him follow his dad around the yard helping him work, and it's really great to have three generations of Stewarts on that farm.

I also want to mention my constituency assistant, Terry Lynn Carefoot, who runs the office, my office in Moose Jaw, my constituency office, and makes me look better than I am. Terry Lynn is always asking if there are other things that she can do to serve our constituents better and to make my job easier and maybe even to try and help me get organized for a change. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate her as do the many constituents that have better access to government because of her efforts.

One of the things I've learned over my 20 years in this place is that politicians are unfairly and unjustly maligned. I can say that I have the greatest respect for my colleagues. Yes, even those on the other side of the floor. Although we may not agree, and sometimes I must admit that I find the more abrasive approaches

to issues a bit irritating, there are a lot of good people in the political life, and I am proud to know many of them from the past and present, yourself included, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech sets out a road map for the kind of government that we want to provide in the future and, Mr. Speaker, I think we can judge our future actions reasonably well by our past actions. And over the last 12 years, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has enjoyed a remarkable period of strong, sustained growth. Our province has not seen growth like that since the 1920s, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Government's goal is to ensure that Saskatchewan's strong growth continues.

Today more than 1,170,000 people call Saskatchewan home. We have welcomed newcomers from every province and territory, as well as from 170 different countries around the world. In June of this year the number of people working in Saskatchewan hit an all-time high of nearly 593,000 people. That is an increase of 83,000 new jobs since we became the government in 2007.

Mr. Speaker, members of this Assembly and members of the general public will see a new growth plan rolled out in the not-too-distant future. A couple things we can say about it is, that will be a road map of how Saskatchewan will achieve some of the targets that we will set, and among those targets will be a couple of things in particular. We'll project to have 1.4 million people living in Saskatchewan by the year 2030 and 100,000 more people working in Saskatchewan by then.

Saskatchewan punches well above our weight class in world trade, Mr. Speaker. We export two-thirds of what we produce to over 150 countries around the world, and at that we are Canada's largest per capita exporter and by quite a margin, Mr. Speaker. Over 100,000 Saskatchewan jobs depend on exports.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan must meet the challenge of global protectionism head-on and seize every possible opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of purchasing our products to our trading partners around the world. And that's what our Premier and ministers do. That's what they accomplish on the trade missions that we undertake, Mr. Speaker.

To ensure the province gets full benefit of our agriculture resources, government will continue measures to increase agricultural value-added exports to \$10 billion by 2030.

Mining is a very important part of our economy in this province, Mr. Speaker. And Saskatchewan under our government is considered one of the top places in the world for mining investment, and accordingly, Mr. Speaker, the industry creates a large number of jobs. Incentives like the TMEI, the targeted mineral exploration incentive, is leading to increased activity in the province and, as a result of this incentive, 110 new exploratory drilling operations for base and precious metals are currently being undertaken in the province, Mr. Speaker. And the oil and gas processing investment incentive supports infrastructure upgrades as well as value-added processing. And the petroleum innovative incentive provides transferable royalty/freehold tax credits for qualified projects.

Despite challenges around the globe resulting from low uranium prices, we see new opportunities in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Recently ALX Uranium announced that they are

beginning a drilling program at Close Lake in the Athabasca Basin. And NexGen also has announced the beginning of its first drilling program in the region.

We're proud of our mining, our oil and gas, our manufacturing, our agriculture, but we couldn't be as proud of it if we didn't have a good record of reducing emissions. And this government will continue to take action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the Prairie Resilience climate strategy.

And our government will assist the communities of Coronach and Estevan and areas surrounding there to transition to new economic development opportunities with the creation of a fund of up to \$10 million that will be administered by the impacted communities.

Our agriculture industry has sequestered nearly 12 000 000 tonnes of carbon in recent years. And during this session the carbon capture and storage unit at Boundary dam 3 will remove its 3 millionth tonne of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what other jurisdiction can boast a record like that?

The ground has been broken on a 200-megawatt wind farm near Assiniboia, nearly quadrupling our wind power capacity since 2007. And SaskPower is accepting applications to fulfill 35 megawatts of renewable, carbon-neutral, non-renewable self-generation . . . [inaudible] . . . power generation partner program.

[20:45]

Deep Earth Energy Production Corp., or DEEP, announced the successful drilling of a preliminary well for its geothermal facility. SaskPower and DEEP have signed a power purchase agreement allowing for further research into the potential for Canada's first, very first, geothermal project.

Our government signed the first agreement in Canadian history between a provincial government and a First Nation to provide provincial support in environmental regulation to an entire reserve at Whitecap Dakota First Nation. The Prairie Resilience plan supports a pilot project using technology to monitor and measure electrical consumption at Cooper Place building in Regina. And since January 2018 the effort has resulted in a 30 per cent savings and a reduction of more than 500 tonnes of carbon emissions a year. And this type of green monitoring has been expanded to 11 additional government buildings, including this building, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and four others commonly referred to as the legislative loop: the Walter Scott Building, the T.C. Douglas Building, the Power House, and Lloyd Place.

Prairie Resilience will accomplish the goal of adapting and thriving in a changing climate resulting in real emission reductions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and ensuring that our industries can stay competitive without harm to our environment. Doesn't this make more sense than to simply force a tax on emissions, Mr. Deputy Speaker? This is a solution. That's just a tax grab.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive is a most aggressive angel investment tax credit. And it's creating jobs in Saskatchewan, attracting private investments, and increasing the number of start-up technology companies.

And with the support of Innovation Saskatchewan, Co.Labs technology incubator has helped 72 companies receive programming support and mentorship. This results in more than \$6.85 million in private investment for those companies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm running out of time. And I want to point out that the reason that we try to grow the economy and do so successfully is not so that we can brag about the numbers. It's so that we can do things like this: more hospitals, doctors, and nurses; shorter surgical wait times; more schools, teachers, and funding for education; lower personal income taxes and Saskatchewan people being allowed to keep more of the money that they earn; safer highways; more police officers; more long-term care beds, and tripling seniors' income plan benefit; more child care spaces; more funding for post-secondary education; doubling of funding in municipalities; and 70,000 Saskatchewan students benefitting from the graduate retention program after graduating and staying in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Rosemont had some things to say about our economy.

An Hon. Member: — All negative.

Mr. Stewart: — Yes, all negative. He implied that our economy is in shambles. Of course I know — I was in opposition once — and I know what they try to do, Mr. Speaker. They try to create impressions with people. They don't back these impressions up with any numbers or any facts. But I have the facts. I've got the numbers here, Mr. Speaker, and they're not our numbers. They're independent numbers and they're up-to-date numbers. Here are some numbers on our jobs and economy.

Saskatchewan has seen strong job gains for 14 consecutive months. September 29 saw Saskatchewan having 13,300 more jobs than it had one year earlier. In September of 2019 Saskatchewan's unemployment rate was 5.3 per cent, fourth lowest in Canada, tied with Ontario, and below the national average of 5.5 per cent. In July 2019 Saskatchewan had the fourth-highest average weekly earnings in the country at \$1,035.63 a week. The third-best job creation record in the country since forming government with over 78,000 new jobs. By comparison, the NDP in their 16 years of government had the worst job creation record in the country.

In unemployment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in September 2019 Saskatchewan's unemployment rate was 5.3 per cent. This is the fourth lowest in the country. And from 2007 to 2019 we've had the best job creation record with 78,000 new jobs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And these are the real numbers. This is not what the opposition do, of trying to create a negative impression. This is trying to set the record straight, and it should, Mr. Speaker. Those are real numbers, and they're genuine numbers, and they're not our numbers.

Mr. Speaker, Moody's Investors Services has affirmed Saskatchewan's AAA credit rating and has also maintained a stable outlook for the province. Saskatchewan's credit rating and outlook have now been upheld by all three major credit rating agencies in recent weeks. Dominion Bond Rating Service affirmed its AA rating for Saskatchewan in June, and last week Standard & Poor's Global Ratings maintained its AA rating for the province.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Speech from the Throne is a road map of where the government intends to go and it's designed to show people the government's intentions. Mr. Speaker, I think the government intends to continue to do what it has done and that's to provide good, secure jobs for Saskatchewan people, to tax us as little as possible and still manage to maintain a high level of services, and accordingly, Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne sets out that map. And I will be supporting the motion of our government, and I will be not supporting the ill-conceived amendment from the opposition. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As was said by everyone before me, it's always a pleasure to stand in your place and represent the people from your constituency, and for me it's Indian Head-Milestone, and talk about this Speech from the Throne.

I can't help but reflect on the two previous speakers, my good friend from Biggar-Sask Valley and my good friend from Lumsden-Morse. Like me, they're 1999 models. So I was thinking about it when I was talking about what I was going to say and thinking, man, this is the 20th Speech from the Throne. I don't know if I replied to all of them, but we've had the opportunity to. But if you put that triumphant together, that's 60 years of replying to the Speech from the Throne, and I'm going to have to try and make it sound a little different than the two previous. It's a little bit difficult to do. But I do know that we're all sitting, all three of us, have been sitting on the right side of you for the last number of years because everything that I was going to say was said by the member from Biggar-Sask Valley or Lumsden-Morse. In fact, some of the very things I was going to say have just been taken, so now I've got to go away from fact and just go on emotion, I think, is what my speech will be made up of.

But like everybody else, I do have a number of thank yous to get through before I want to get into kind of the meat of what I want to say regarding the Speech from the Throne, and that starts with a number of thank yous. I, too, you know, I want to thank Cindy for all the support she's been for 20 years of service. I can't believe it. That's been a very long time. And you know, she's getting close to retirement, hasn't quite pulled the pin yet but getting very close. And I've said many, many times in years past that, you know, our relationship is probably a little bit better now. She's a nurse and I'm no longer the minister of Health, so that works a lot better at home that way. Sometimes there was a little conflict it seemed like on what we thought we should be doing with the health system and actually what was happening with the health system. There seemed to be a divergence there, but regardless.

People have also talked about their kids and their grandkids, and I'm happy to report there are no grandkids. They are never usually in one spot long enough I don't believe, our sons, to give us grandchildren, I guess, is the proper way of saying that. Right now Mark is in Austria, and he's on his way to Italy tomorrow to compete in an event in Milan, I think it is. And Craig is in Bristol, Connecticut doing some work with ESPN to get ready for the X Games coming up in January. So they have a very, very interesting life.

And actually because their life is so interesting, it's made my political life a lot easier because when I go to events people don't ask me about current issues or what are you going to do about PST or what are you going to do about this or that. They ask me about what the boys are doing. And by the time we're done that conversation they're pretty sick of me, and so then we don't have to get into the political conversation. So they really have made my political career perhaps over the last number of years a little bit easier.

I want to also thank — as all members I'm sure have, but I think I represent one of the best, if not the best area in the province — the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone, which of course is largely made up of agriculture, except for the valley on the north side which is the border up against Last Mountain-Touchwood and Melville where that is tourism for the most part. Whether it's the lakes or the ski hill, Mission Ridge, it really is a tourism piece.

But the rest of the constituency is pure agriculture and some of the best farm land. You know, I can't report that it's 100 per cent done but I'm glad to report that the vast majority of crop is done. There's a little bit of canola left, a little bit of flax. But the vast majority of the crop is in the bin, albeit tough and albeit downgraded. But the bushels were there this year, Mr. Speaker. There were some very good yields. People for the most part are satisfied coming out of a spring that was less than ideal with little moisture and have ended up with a crop that, you know, they probably wouldn't have predicted back in May, June.

But that is a testament to the practices that farming and agriculture have today, i.e. whether it's the equipment they use for zero-till, whether it's the crop science and canola or any of the crops that they're growing right now. That is a testament to the research and development that's been done here in Saskatchewan through crop science but also through zero-till which, you know, when you combine those two and you start talking about climate change and what this province has done to prevent the amount of carbon escaping into the atmosphere, is quite phenomenal. And I don't think we ever get near the credit . . . or I shouldn't say we. The farmers of our province, the researchers of our province never get the credit that they deserve for the advancement that they've made.

I will also say that I've been very fortunate with the constituents being very positive. You know, I was probably six, eight months, a year ago, kind of questioning as to whether I would seek re-election. As the two members before me said, they'd both been elected, went through five elections; I have myself. Do you want to chance a sixth? I don't know. That's maybe pushing a person's luck. But you know, the constituents have been very, very positive and have kept asking me, and so I finally had to make up my mind.

Before I decided as to whether I would run, I'm going to do like everybody else did, talk about their constituency assistant. Because before I was going to run, I needed to make sure that my constituency assistant would stick around for another four years. Because if she wasn't going to be there for another four years, I'm not sure I was going to be there for another four years. So it's getting the, you know, the horse before the cart. You know, Nicole had to commit before I was going to commit and, once that fell into place, it made the decision a lot easier.

Because I am very fortunate. Nicole lives just outside of Balgonie. Her husband has a chemical and fertilizer dealership with Blair's. They're so active in the community. You know, certainly I'm not as involved in a lot of the communities, or especially the Balgonie, McLean, Qu'Appelle community as much as they are, and so they certainly can kind of keep me apprised of what people are talking about and where people are, what people are thinking, which certainly helps and makes my job a little bit easier.

As I said, this is the 20th Speech from the Throne that I've had the opportunity of experiencing and I think I've responded to most of them, not very well sometimes but responded to most of them. But every time I sit in the Chamber for the six or seven days of debate for the Speech from the Throne, I'm always amazed at the divergence of opinions. I'm always amazed that we can sit through a 35-minute reading of the Speech from the Throne that was delivered very well with an excellent choice for Lieutenant Governor. The Honourable Mirasty did a great, great job of delivering the Speech from the Throne.

[21:00]

But I'm always interested at the time spent after, at the divergence of, you know, roughly 30 some, 38 members on this side, 39 members on this side, what they heard on the Speech from the Throne and the . . . What is there, 13 now? 12?

An Hon. Member: — Too many.

Mr. McMorris: — Too many, yes, whatever the number is on those benches. Let me add it up because it won't take too long. Okay, two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve. Yes, 13 members on that side. And how it could be so negative from one side of the House compared to the other side of the House, where really, you know, you'd swear you'd heard two different speeches from the throne completely. Because quite frankly I've heard . . . Well the member from Athabasca, which is always the same speech. It could have been a completely different Speech from the Throne. It could have even been their Speech from the Throne, and he'd have had the same response. It doesn't seem to matter. It's been the same for the last 20 years.

But you know, the member from Rosemont and the member from Cumberland, not a word of, hardly a word . . . in fact I don't think anything positive. In fact the member from Regina Northeast, I was amazed at such a new member could be so negative. It was 15 or 20, 25 minutes of pure negativity from the Speech from the Throne.

And I remember sometimes I really had to struggle when I would reply from that side of the House, and you would always find something positive in the Speech from the Throne. It may be the end, but there'd always be something positive from the speech. And you'd try and kind of talk a little bit about the positive before you'd kind of beat it up a little bit, talk about the negative, and there was always lots to beat up. But not from that side. It's just been pretty much negative, negative, negative.

And when I look at it, I can kind of see why in a way. I mean the title would throw them off right away. Certainly the title would kind of set them in a tailspin because it says "A New Decade of Growth." There is nothing that would scare an NDP more than

another decade of growth in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Because I can remember on that side . . . Listen to the contrast of this when we were in opposition. This just kind of, it just spells it out very starkly to me, is that when we were in opposition going into the 2003 election, I believe it was — which didn't turn out quite as well as we'd hoped it would — but in just leading up to that election we decided we'd better make some bold claims. What would we like this province to be? You know, what was the province that we wanted to govern, had we been given the chance? And remember sitting around the caucus table and coming up with a bold goal of growing the province by 10 per cent over the next term of our government, if we became government.

Now get a load of this. We're on the opposition side offering up a positive of what this province could be. The NDP are on the government side saying oh, no, no. Still negative back then. We cannot grow that fast. That was the difference. That is a contrast of a Sask Party opposition and an NDP government.

Now we flip it. It's a Sask Party government talking about more growth, another decade of growth, another 200 and, I believe it is, 30,000 people we want to bring to this province in the next 11 years, and the opposition is negative. You know, it's just such a contrast in the mindset of two political parties.

Now sometimes we'll start talking about, whoa, what the NDP did when they were government. And the NDP will say, well you shouldn't be talking about that. That was so long ago. You know what? The names have changed on that side, but the mindset hasn't. It is a province that cannot succeed under the NDP. They don't believe it can succeed, and that's why I can tell you that I believe the title in itself set them into such a tailspin and all we've heard is negativity since, because a new decade of growth simply is not in the vocabulary of an NDP in this province, at least the members that are elected.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you can go out into all of our constituencies and find the odd NDP in our constituencies. And they would probably say that growth is okay. But for the sake of being in this room, those members cannot look at anything positive when it comes to growth. And that's why we've heard their responses the way they have been over the last day or two. And the nice part is we've only got two or three more days of that listening to — I guess two more days, two and a half — and we can vote it off.

And I got a pretty good idea which way that vote's going. Because as a former member used to always say — and I won't say which member it was because he's no longer here — whenever we'd have a vote, and that member would always kind of holler across, and because the numbers weren't favourable, and he would say, boy, I used to get sick of that, sitting on that side. Every time I stand up and vote, I lose. And I've got a good hankering that that's what's going to happen come . . . Is it Thursday when we get to vote this Speech from the Throne off? First we'll vote off the amendment which, you know, I guess the opposition has to do. And then we get to get to the real business of this House and vote for something instead of against something, for the Speech from the Throne.

Now this is all, you know, this whole Speech from the Throne is

predicated around growth. And growth doesn't happen without opportunity, and we've been very fortunate in this province to have a lot of opportunity. And you know, I've heard other members talk on this side of the House about, you know, the suitcases, which was a graduation gift of the '90s, and people were moving out of the province. And why were they moving out of the province? It was never because they didn't like Saskatchewan. You know, I mean, what could be nicer than a night like tonight here in Saskatchewan? I mean, it's beautiful. And so it wasn't that they didn't like the province. They had no opportunity, Mr. Speaker. That's what was chasing people out of the province.

You know, early on in the very first page of the Speech from the Throne, it talks about opportunity. And why have we increased the population so much is because there has been opportunity. So number one, it brings people into your province, but even more importantly, it keeps people in your province. And there are so many more.

You know, it's interesting to hear members talk on this side of the House about their kids and what their kids are doing, and their grandkids. You know, the member again, the two members that spoke before me, their kids have settled here. Their grandkids are here. That wasn't what was talked about 15 years ago. It was talked about where your kids are, you know. And it was in Alberta. It was wherever, because there wasn't opportunity. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, over the last 12 years, what this government has brought to this province is opportunity — hope and opportunity.

But more importantly, what this government is setting forward and what is most important to the people of this province is that we're going to continue to work on that hope and continue to work on opportunity so that we bring more people to this province and so that the kids, the future generations stay in this province. That's what's most important moving forward, and that's what the Speech from the Throne talks about.

So when we hear member after member stand up on this side and don't have a positive word to say, I wonder, did you read the same document? Because, Mr. Speaker, there's all sorts of opportunity and hope because it talks about growth. It sets out a target again. Now you know, they may not like our target. That's fine. The opposition may not like our target. What's your target? Or do you have a target on population growth? I haven't heard one person there yet, and maybe it's coming up with this next member walking into the House here. Maybe that's coming up. Maybe he'll be the ray of light on that side of the House. But I think he's been here for 18 or 19 years and if he has shone a ray, it's been a very dim one, Mr. Speaker. Because, you know, he just hasn't been overly positive.

Now we talk about setting a goal of 1.4 million people living in Saskatchewan by 2030. Now how positive could that be? Why wouldn't the opposition members look at this Speech from the Throne and say okay, I don't care about anything else that they say in it. I mean it's negative — everything's negative — but boy, growth would be still good. That 1.4 million people in the province by 2030 is a great thing. I mean, I haven't heard everyone speak on that side, but between us collectively, have anybody from that side had a positive word to say about the possibility of growth and a target like this? None of them have.

Not a word. And you know, 100,000 more people working in Saskatchewan by 2030, isn't that a positive goal?

Now again, you don't have to accept our numbers. I don't mind if you don't think we can reach that. What number can we reach? If you got to be government, if those members — I shouldn't say you — if those members . . . Through the Chair. I've been here for 20 years. Didn't I just talk about that? Through the Chair. If those members ever got an opportunity to govern again, what would the number be?

An Hon. Member: — They don't know.

Mr. McMorris: — Oh yes. Absolutely. And I can understand well, because growth and NDP do not fit in the same sentence. So how do you achieve goals like this? And again, the members before me have talked about it very well. They've got into detail on it, and I'm going to go over it fairly quickly, but there are a number of things you need to continue to have opportunity in your province.

We are blessed in this province. Of all the provinces, we are blessed. We are the second-highest exporting of all provinces, but per capita, the highest province of exporters in the nation of Canada. We are blessed because of the resources that we have, some of them renewable like our agriculture. Year over year over year, the production continues to increase. We need to export more and more and more. And that's why it's so important to keep those markets open, whether it's down to Mexico on a recent trade mission, whether it's to South Korea, Hong Kong, and Japan, and how important it is to keep those markets open.

Because I've had the opportunity — I haven't for the last number of years — but I had the opportunity to run a combine through most of harvest. I think I put about 90 or 95 hours on a combine, which was a real treat. But I still remember when I used to farm all the time, that first 10 hours is wonderful but that last 70 or 80 was very tedious. I just love that first 10 hours, and then the novelty wears off pretty quickly, even with GPS [Global Positioning System], even with everything else.

But it was interesting. The point that I wanted to make — it wasn't that I actually was doing some work, agriculture work — is that, I mean, the combines now are amazing with the GPS and the monitors and everything else. And you're going along there, and you're seeing exactly what the yields are as you're moving along. And it's incredible. It's telling your moisture. And what you can learn off of those monitors, I don't know when you'd have time to steer the combine because there was so much to learn off the monitor.

But the yields that were coming in — and we were doing some durum, and we were doing some canola, and we did quite a bit of canary seed — and the yields that we were taking off on this land that was certainly not nearly as good as the land that I used to farm. I wish my buddy was listening because we've always had that running battle whose land was better. But I was amazed at the yields.

When you think of the spring that we had, when you think of the last couple years where we really haven't replenished the moisture like we did a number of years ago, it's been dry getting started but the moisture conservation through the seeding

techniques, the advancements which I've already talked about with the grain . . . I mean, canary was running 35 to 40. And I remember years ago when you'd get a crop of 30-bushel-to-the-acre canary. It would take you a month and half to get it done because it would be like wire, and you'd be itchy for a month and a half and a little grumpy. And you'd be happy to get 30. And this was breezing through at 35 to 40 bushels an acre on an average year, Mr. Speaker.

So when we talk about growth and when we talk about export, we have to look at what has been done in just our agriculture sector over the last number of years that makes growth and opportunity in this province a reality, which if opportunity is a reality, then population growth is a reality, Mr. Speaker. And that's extremely important going forward.

You know, and I just wanted to just touch on the resources because, you know, we look at again what are oil and gas fields are doing now with their advancements in technology. It's unbelievable. I mean if you're to go into some of those oil fields now and you would have gone into those oil fields 20 or 25 years ago, they look like different places because of all the advancements and the technology that has come from it. And this is all great. And we can produce more and more and more, but it doesn't help if we can't get it to market.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, the more oil that we put on the tracks, the less track space we have for 40- and 50-bushel canary seed and 60- to 80-bushel canola. That's why it is so important. It isn't just for the oil and gas industry, why pipelines are important. It's for the whole economy so that we can get, in an exporting province which is . . . You know, I could say that Saskatchewan is an exporting nation because what we export probably doubles half the nations in this world for exporting because that's how much we export.

And that's why it's so important and why it's so disappointing when we have an opposition, not a positive word to say about any of this, but even worse than that. I can understand if they're pessimistic, but when they stand in the way of progress for this province, i.e. pipelines, when they hitch their horse to a NDP federal leader that will vow to kill the energy sector in our province, Mr. Speaker, how can you . . . So it's one thing to be negative on what our government is doing. It's another thing to be so negative that you're trying to kill an industry within our province that employs thousands and thousands of jobs, creates wealth for our province, creates opportunity for our province, which then grows the province, Mr. Speaker. And it is very, very frustrating.

[21:15]

I'd be very interested to know, you know, as negative as they are, coming off of . . . and I know it's not reflective of a provincial election, but when you go into a federal election, after the last federal election, holding three seats in this province, and you come out shut out, Mr. Speaker, I think I would re-evaluate who I'm supporting and what those values and policies are.

But frankly, Mr. Speaker, from what I've heard over the last two days from replies from the Speech from the Throne, they've learned absolutely nothing. In fact, Mr. Speaker, which I think is a benefit to us except it's not a benefit for the province, I think

they're doubling down on those policies which is just absolutely, I think, crazy, Mr. Speaker. I think they should re-evaluate. They obviously enjoy where they're at because that's what they continue to do, is support policies like that that will keep them, I think, sitting on those benches for a very long time.

So this Speech from the Throne has an awful lot of positives. It has an awful lot of looking forward at what this province can do into the future and sets some very aggressive goals. I think they're aggressive but, you know, I like them.

And I really believe in 11 or 12 years we'll be meeting those goals, and what a province this will look like if we meet those goals. Can you imagine? 1.4 million people living in this province. That's another Saskatoon in the next 11 years. In the last 10 or 12 years, we built a Regina in this province. A whole Regina has moved to this province, and in another 12 or 13 years, if the province grows to 1.4, that's equivalent of a Saskatoon moving to this province. And the fabric that that creates in this province, the opportunity, the excitement is unbelievable. We've noticed it over the last 12 years, and I'm looking forward to the next 11 because it's very positive. It's not just negative from the opposition.

So part of my speech was going to be, you know, looking at the prospects of moving into the future, but I also want to look a little retrospectively on what has happened over the last six months because members have touched on it a little bit. The members opposite have touched on it, but again what they've touched on when they talk about these projects is negativity.

Over the last six months it really has been quite phenomenal because I do not believe that in any six months — and I'll stand to be corrected because I've been corrected many times before, but I'll stand to be corrected — that there is no time period, six-month period in this province that there have been such generational projects open like the North Battleford hospital, like the children's hospital in Saskatoon, and like the east Regina bypass, three generational projects, Mr. Speaker.

I mean the last hospital built in North Battleford was over 100 years old. That's a generational project. We just opened the North Battleford hospital, the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, about less than six months ago. That is a generational project. That is going to last this province for generations and generations, another hundred years to come.

And now, you know, I can understand the opposition, they're trying to find fault because they've never been positive about this project all the way through and they're trying to find fault. And the roof is leaking. Not good; I understand that too. It's going to be fixed. Short-term problem for a long-term facility. There is some issue with the water. It's going to be fixed. Short-term problem for a generational project, Mr. Speaker, and that's what they want to hitch their horse to.

But you know, there is a reason why that project was done as a P3 [public-private partnership], because it takes the risk away from government. That roof should not be leaking, absolutely not. But do you know who's on the hook for that roof? It's the proponent, not the Government of Saskatchewan. Had we built that and that same thing happened, we would be on the hook for that. If there is issues with the water, that's the proponent. That's

the whole benefit of a P3, which those members were dead set against all the way through, Mr. Speaker. That's why that hospital is going to serve the people of this province for decades and decades to come. And unfortunately we have never heard a positive word from that side. Unbelievable — a generational project and not a positive word.

The Jim Pattison Hospital, they may not have been quite so critical yet. I'm sure they're going to work really, really hard and try and find fault because if it's good news, it doesn't ride well on the NDP benches. So they're going to try and find some fault. But that is a generational project, Mr. Speaker, that is going to serve the people, the children of this province, the only one of only two provinces that didn't have a children's hospital.

And I always find it absolutely amazing. I think it was the former Health minister from the NDP, John Nilson, said, oh yes, yes, we were going to do that. Yes, that's exactly what we were going to do. And yet, you know, I was the Health minister right after we became government and I got briefed on everything that the NDP were going to do. I didn't see the children's hospital. I don't know why. Maybe John Nilson had it in a file in his basement somewhere that he forgot to turn over and it's still there, Mr. Speaker. But it wasn't in the Ministry of Health.

You know, and I always remember the former Health minister from North Battleford, Len Taylor, always talked about how much money they'd put aside for the North Battleford hospital. When we got there, there was no money. Now I hope he didn't . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, Len Taylor wouldn't have put that in his basement. But, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't there. So it's really quite amazing. All the things that we're doing that are so negative, they're trying to take credit for, previous ministers are trying to take credit for.

And the last one, Mr. Speaker, because I think my time is probably up. How long have I been going for? So I've only been going for 10 minutes, they said, Mr. Speaker, and I haven't even touched on the biggest infrastructure this province has ever seen, the east Regina bypass. And you know, it is really quite unbelievable. You want to talk about negativity on a project, listen to what has come from those benches opposite. Mr. Speaker, it is really quite amazing that you could put 12 bypasses up and you haven't heard a positive word from those members. Now you know, 16 years, I think they built one bypass and they were pretty happy about that bypass. You'd think 12 bypasses might get their attention and they'd have something positive to say. Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker.

You would think the 55 kilometres of new four-lane highway, the service roads, the repaving, the efficient flow of traffic around this city, the capital city, would garner some positivity from the opposition benches. But it absolutely hasn't. In fact it's been the exact opposite.

The safety advancement that it's going to build in, you know, I was coming into Regina last week quite early in the morning and it was foggy coming in from Fort Qu'Appelle. And you know, I'm going by Balgonie and then Pilot Butte and then White City-Emerald Park, and I remember doing that years ago and you could see the traffic lined up waiting to get onto that No. 1 Highway. And you know, so many of them in that community said, this is going to date me a little bit, but I don't know if any

of you guys ever played the game Frogger, where you kind of had to watch both ways and try and get across. And that's the way it was.

Well this morning I'm coming into Regina and it is foggy. It is really foggy. And I can kind of, you know, you can see a quarter mile, a half mile. And I could just imagine what would have been happening with all those vehicles trying to get onto that highway. They can't see very well. You can't see very well, and that's when collisions were happening.

And we heard, you know, a great story yesterday, as sad as it is, you know, for that young 17-year-old to be killed, and there are many others on that corridor to be killed or injured through traffic accidents. But driving in that morning, I'd come off of No. 10 onto the No. 1 Highway, and the first intersection is the one at Balgonie. And you know, no one's going across the highway because they're all entering through controlled access, and how positive that is.

And you carry on to White City-Emerald Park, and the same thing is there and the same thing in Pilot Butte. And you'll be able to take that all the way around now going across 33 Highway. All that truck traffic going — if it's going; this is just hypothetical — from Winnipeg to Calgary, you know, going across Western Canada, they're going to go across Highway 33. No level crossings. They're going to go across No. 6 Highway coming in from Milestone, coming in from the south. No level crossing there anymore. All the way around onto the No. 1 Highway, never reducing their speed below 110.

It's the first full freeway that we've ever had in this province, Mr. Speaker. It's going to increase the efficiency of traffic by far. It's going to increase the safety margin. And guess what we heard from the opposition? Not one ounce of positivity. The only thing we would ever hear from them is negativity and, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a shame. And to have some of them still . . . and it, you know, it just blows me away that they would still say, oh well we could have built that for 400 million. You know, that just is just an absolute disservice. It's misleading the public, as misleading as you possibly can be, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, it's not a whole lot different from, and I meant to mention this earlier even though I've run out of time. I meant to mention this earlier in my speech about the Leader of the Opposition coming in here today and telling us that the new North Battleford hospital is flooding and that there's mould in the hospital. That's what he's saying on the floor of the House. Is any of it true? Was any of it true? Not an ounce. That is appalling to me. Like if you want somebody to do the dirty work, get the critic up. The Leader of the Opposition is supposed to have some integrity, and especially in health care. And to come in to this House and mislead like that, Mr. Speaker, is appalling. And I hope tomorrow he stands in his place and apologizes. I really do. Because quite frankly, you know, to mislead the public on something like that is absolutely appalling.

So, Mr. Speaker, I've been up long enough and I will not be . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. McCall: — A point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — What is your point of order?

Mr. McCall: — Well as the member from Indian Head-Milestone would well know, having been here so many years, Mr. Speaker, what he's been saying is completely out of order. And I'd ask for you to call for him to withdraw his comments and to apologize to this Chamber.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw the word "misleading." I used the word "misleading" a number of times. I will withdraw that and apologize.

I will say though, Mr. Speaker, because I still have the floor, correct? I will say that to come in and talk about a facility, that it is flooding and that there is black mould when there is no factual evidence to say that is true, Mr. Speaker, is appalling. Mr. Speaker, if the member intentionally did that without knowing, that is one thing, Mr. Speaker. But if he is trying to cause problems — which he has done before, Mr. Speaker — to bring in facts that are not true, Mr. Speaker, they simply were not true according to the minister, is appalling. And he'd better be able to stand in his place and apologize for those facts, Mr. Speaker, that simply weren't facts.

I will not be supporting the motion, Mr. Speaker. I am very proud to stand with this government for the 12th year and support this Speech from the Throne.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to respond to the Throne Speech here today. I think, well I've been in this House 10 years, so I believe this is likely my 10th Throne Speech. You'll have to indulge me possibly a few tears. I wasn't even sure I could get on my feet but it's important when we have an opportunity that we take that opportunity to speak and share experiences from our constituents.

So I want to start, as is tradition, to thank important people in my life and in Saskatoon Riversdale. I need to give a big thank you to my staff: Dan, Judy, Tammie, and occasionally Jason. I want to thank the good people of Saskatoon Riversdale who are always more than willing to share their hopes and their dreams, their challenges, the things that are going well for them, what's going on in their world, and how I can help amplify their concerns and hopefully advocate for change for them.

I want to thank the staff in our caucus office who do such great work for us, work long hours, and deserve a big thank you for that, Mr. Speaker.

This is a difficult response to the Throne Speech. I want to thank my kids for being the most amazing 21-year-old and 11-year-old a mom could possibly have. My 21-year-old makes me super proud. There's been a theme of the last few days of all of us talking very proudly about our children and grandchildren and I never miss a moment to be able to do that Mr. Speaker.

[21:30]

Hennessey's in fourth year of university at McGill, and I'd like to say that from a financial perspective that her education is close to an end but it sounds like it's just beginning. She's looking at applying to grad schools in all kinds of places around the world and has really grown into quite an amazing and smart and bright, lovely, young woman.

And my 11-year-old, Ophelia, who many people in this House . . . She was one when I was elected so it's been quite a journey and she doesn't really know anything else. And she's a real trooper. She's a singer and dancer and is just a lot of fun to be around, Mr. Speaker.

My kids — this is both heartwarming and heartbreaking for me. My father passed away just about three weeks ago. And I actually haven't had a really good cry. I've tamped down those feelings and I'm not advocating for that to be a good response to grief, Mr. Speaker. That is not the right way to do things. But I think out of survival, like I've tamped those feelings down and I've been waiting for the most inopportune time for those tears to come up, and they might actually be pretty quick here, Mr. Speaker.

My kids, it's heartwarming for me to see how much my dad meant to my kids. As a single parent and a neighbour of my parents in the same community, my kids saw my parents on almost a daily basis. My dad was a pretty special guy and meant a lot to both my kids. So I know that I'm struggling and my siblings are struggling, but my kids are having a really hard time too because Grandpa Rusty meant an awful lot to them.

I need to thank my sister. I've said this many times in this House. As a single parent, I couldn't do this job without my sister, Michelle, and her supportive husband, John, who gives up his wife during the legislative session. Michelle also was a caregiver for my dad this last three and a half years since he broke his hip in the last election. And she has had quite the ride here, being my caregiver for my daughter and for my dad.

I want to thank my mom of course, who has been there too, right next to my dad. And they've been incredibly important people in my life. The former member was talking about hearing something positive. I'm going to talk about something positive — my dad. He is a large reason why I'm in this position here today. He's a big part of the reason why I felt I could and should put my name forward to represent the people of Saskatoon Riversdale.

My dad was a police officer in Saskatoon for 28 years. He spent most of those years as a detective sergeant. He did a little bit of time in loss prevention. He investigated some of the worst cases we've seen in Saskatoon's history when David Threinen killed several children and abducted and killed children in Saskatoon who were about my age.

But he was the most optimistic person you ever could have met. And he was a big believer in government. He was a social democrat through and through. He knew you could get more done working together than on your own, Mr. Speaker. He knew too that we . . . He was a big believer that government had a positive role to play, or could and should have a positive role to play in all our lives, that the job of government was to help foster an environment and help raise the bar for other people to make

sure that we're all doing our best, Mr. Speaker.

And despite being this police officer who saw some very negative things, who was shot at and was lucky to still be on this earth on a few occasions, Mr. Speaker, he was still always ever the optimist, striving for better, striving to push others for better.

Many people in Saskatoon knew my dad initially for letters to the editor when he was a police officer, but when he retired in 1988 he became a huge community activist. He was way ahead of his time when it came to food security and urban agriculture and trying to make sure that everybody had access to good food.

He was way ahead of the times when it came to community-based policing. There's not too many police officers who are retired, or active police officers, who had Robert Peel's nine principles of policing laminated and on his kitchen bulletin board for easy reference, Mr. Speaker. He felt that that's what police officers should be and should aspire to be, and that was the tenet of community policing.

When it came to community infrastructure, he felt that things like rinks and farmers' markets should be in the core of cities to revitalize those downtowns and make sure that people come into the centre.

He had his grade 10, Mr. Speaker, but he was well ahead of his time. He was probably the most well-read person you could ever come across. He was also, as I said, he was ever the optimist and he believed very firmly in government. I grew up . . . I know lots of people revile politicians. It's not the most popular profession. But he really believed that the politicians could be tools for good.

And he took that very seriously and there was not . . . His dementia, I think, got the better of him by about year two of me being an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. But my experience and the previous two MLAs from Saskatoon Riversdale, and the MLA for Saskatoon Centre, and our current leader, long before he was ever in politics and was a new medical student — my dad would come into our offices with stacks of paper and want photocopies, wanting people to read all the literature that he had and pushing us to be better. He wanted better, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's a great legacy to leave behind. Many people saw him push us to be better and a strong desire to be better, not just as people, but to make sure that we were working for the good of all Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

He was also really committed to democracy. Like I said, he had Peel's nine principles of policing that he shared frequently with people. Maslow's hierarchy of needs was really important to my dad, and he was oft known for quoting Maslow's hierarchy and pointing out where different social programs or where different issues fell on that hierarchy. The very rare or the very obscure Power commission from 2004 in the United Kingdom on democracy and how to improve democracy, that was a document that he often cited, not because they shaped his opinions, but these things reflected his beliefs, Mr. Speaker, and what he saw.

So I'm standing up today because my dad was a fighter. He was always positive and always optimistic but always pushed for better, and he would want me to do the same. He would want my colleagues to do the same. He'd want all of us in this House to

do the same. It's not about negativity, Mr. Speaker. It's about pushing to be better. Our job in the opposition is to hold the government to account, not to blow sunshine up anybody's skirt, Mr. Speaker, but about making sure that where there are gaps, our job is to point them out so we can close those gaps and make sure that people all have the opportunity to be successful, Mr. Speaker.

It's hard for me not to focus all the rest of my comments on long-term care and how we treat our aging population, Mr. Speaker. We have some demographic challenges coming, Mr. Speaker, an aging demographic, increasing dementia rates. We as a province have to get our . . . I was going to say something unparliamentarian. We have to get our act together, Mr. Speaker.

I believe, and I've said this in the House before, that the personal is political. My experiences as an individual or my family's are likely reflected in other people's experiences. And having been the Seniors critic for six years now, Mr. Speaker, at a time where last year we had three folks come in on three different occasions. Two came in and one woman from Saskatoon who was a resident of long-term care was talking about her experiences. It's not very often we have residents tell us about their experiences because by the time you get to long-term care, you're usually quite well advanced in your care needs, Mr. Speaker.

But what people have told us, not just those folks who've come to the legislature, but in ombudsmen's reports, this government's own CEO reports, we have huge challenges in long-term care, mostly related to staffing issues, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to tell my dad's story because . . . and I hope nobody over there is going to ask for a consent form. I can tell you what my dad's journey looked like and I can tell you what it looked like for people on his unit in one of the best long-term care homes in the province, to be perfectly honest, Mr. Speaker. Wonderful people, great atmosphere, but there's just not enough staff.

My dad started out in August of 2018 in long-term care after we tried to keep him at home. We kept him at home, after he broke his hip, for two and a half years. We managed to keep him at home in large measure due to direct funding, which is a really, again, a good policy of this . . . it wasn't just of this government. But individualized funding can have a lot of benefits. But I can tell you that there were lots of gaps in supports.

My dad had seven kids, five of us in Saskatoon. My sister took a leave three years ago from her employment and then took early retirement in February to support my dad. And it still wasn't enough, Mr. Speaker. It still wasn't enough. And admittedly my dad was probably a bit of an outlier in that he really was committed to being at home and only being at home. But many people are, Mr. Speaker. But also I think with his dementia and his history as a law enforcement officer, it created some challenges for us.

But in the last year . . . And my sister who has been there in large measure for my dad will tell you that the year he spent in long-term care was far harder than the two and a half years he spent at home.

I've seen my dad in handcuffs twice, Mr. Speaker, in the last year. I've seen him strapped to a stretcher. He spent, after a . . .

I've seen him medicated, overmedicated, and then was able to titrate his medications down after he had a stint at the dementia assessment unit, which is great. The dementia assessment unit, there's one in Saskatoon and one in Regina. But I can tell you that when you've got six beds, that's not enough. That is not enough for the needs of . . . Because my dad might have been on the extreme end as being an outlier in his difficulty with dementia, but there are many people who struggle with dementia and don't adapt well to long-term care. So his time in the dementia assessment unit started out really rocky because he had also spent 10 days in the mental health assessment unit, which is . . . and the Dubé Centre in Saskatoon because people don't know what to do with challenging seniors, Mr. Speaker. I'm here to say we need to get our act together as a province when it comes to making sure we have the proper supports in place to support our loved ones, Mr. Speaker.

In the unit where my dad's life ended, there were two care aids for 10 high-needs dementia residents. But those care aids aren't just doing personal care, which is a lot, two care aids during the day for 10 high-needs dementia residents is a lot, but those care aids are also doing the cooking and cleaning in this particular facility, which is wonderful. It's about continuity of care, but two care aids isn't enough, Mr. Speaker. At night there was one care aid for the house, totally inadequate after dinner, particularly after dinner, where with dementia, people often sunset or sundown and things get harder for them, Mr. Speaker. They get medication that makes them even less aware a lot of the time and this is when a lot of the problems in the house occur. So you've got one staff and then one staff goes on break and then a little bit later you only have one staff. People wander at that point in time. My dad on many occasions would wander into the wrong room, and the nine other fellows weren't always pleased with having someone . . . Because they have dementia and could be very confused and frustrated.

But my dad, who was one of the best people you could ever meet, Mr. Speaker, kind, compassionate, loving, the best dad you could ever hope to have, and a great community member, deserved better. In the last couple of months of his life he was so medicated he was black and blue when he died. He was black and blue from his feet to his head and every part in between.

[21:45]

Gashes on his head. Two weeks before his death, or probably about a month actually thinking about the time frame, this was one of the worst incidents. My sister had arrived and the care aid had just found . . . Her partner was on break. She was in another person's room and came out because she heard a commotion in a resident's room. My dad had wandered in there. He got shoved. And he was being dragged by his feet on his back out of the room, Mr. Speaker.

And those incidents are not uncommon because there just isn't the staffing levels, the staffing ratios to ensure people have proper care, Mr. Speaker. There aren't. We know those stories. I know these folks on the other side of the House know this as well because in the last election, after raising the issue repeatedly and having case after case come to the House . . . And the story of Margaret Warholm which ended up . . . the previous Health minister referred to the Ombudsman. And many people came forward with their experiences.

The Sask Party committed 7.5 million in long-term care, money to come from executive salaries, cutting executive, or from health administration positions, and putting that into long-term care. And that money hasn't all made it, Mr. Speaker, into long-term care. So I know, everybody in this House knows that there are challenges in long-term care and there are challenges around staffing. But that's not it, Mr. Speaker.

I'm an MLA. There's five kids in my family. We're not wallflowers; we are people who usually speak out and advocate. And we couldn't get my dad what he needed. We needed different supports in the home to help keep him at home. We needed different supports transitioning him into long-term care. It literally was like you drop him off that day and you're told to go home. No, no, no, this isn't our first rodeo. Your dad will be okay, don't worry about it. And you're . . . [inaudible] . . . he's not going to be okay. Like this is a big deal. And nobody prepares you for what long-term care is going to be like.

There's a lot of places along that continuum of care that we need to do work, Mr. Speaker. And it can't help my dad, and it's really lousy that he had such an awful end. He died, likely with a broken hip and with a broken rib jutting out of his body, Mr. Speaker, and like I said, black and blue from top to bottom. And that isn't fair and it's not right, and we need to do better. And my dad would want me telling his story to improve the lives other people, Mr. Speaker.

The one thing I want to convey to this government. This is about a Throne Speech here, but we hear speeches and we hear in question period a government who . . . Around long-term care, I've heard this for the six years I've been the seniors' critic and longer. We need this government to stop saying that everything is okay. Like the opposite of the former member talking about us being negative. We need that government to start looking at what really is happening here in the province and grounding in reality, Mr. Speaker. We need for them to stop saying everything is okay and start getting to work on fixing those problems, Mr. Speaker. And we need them to stop saying . . . Not just we as an opposition but people in Saskatchewan, when we get to hear, oh but it's really difficult in every other province, or every other province is facing challenges in long-term care . . . You know, as someone who watched my dad suffer, I don't care how bad long-term care is in Ontario. I do because I don't want anybody to suffer. But really our job here is to be a leader in the province. Let's be leaders in this instead of saying nobody else can fix this. So it's a tough problem. Let's get down to work and try to solve these problems, Mr. Speaker, and be leaders.

The comment about more work to do, and that is a refrain that we hear often in this House. I'm glad they know there's more work to do because the day that we ever stop thinking in this place that we've got the job done, it is a huge problem. So the work in this House is never finished, but saying there's more work to do is not an excuse for not doing it, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to touch . . . I know that my time here is running out and I'm just . . . I felt it was important to speak about my dad, Mr. Speaker, but I'm also the critic for mental health and addictions. And my colleague from Cumberland spoke so passionately about the need for a suicide prevention strategy. Most recent suicide statistics, there were 2,121 suicides between 2005 and 2018. So 2,121 — that's about the size of the Health

minister's town. Those are real people who left behind loved ones, Mr. Speaker, moms, dads, siblings, nephews, nieces. I know that I'm just about out of time, Mr. Speaker. That's a 69 per cent increase since 2005, which is not acceptable. There was an increase in suicides between '17 and '18, a 16 per cent increase year over year. I actually thought there was going to be something in this Throne Speech on a suicide prevention strategy.

The numbers are there and those numbers, again I have to emphasize, are about real people, Mr. Speaker, real people who have felt so hopeless in their life that they make the decision to end it, Mr. Speaker. We need to do better and we need a suicide prevention strategy here. The former Rural and Remote Health minister talked about the bypass and how important it is to save one life. We couldn't agree with that more, Mr. Speaker, but we have thousands of lives that have been lost to suicide. Young people who don't have a future because as legislators we have chosen not to act, Mr. Speaker. And you know what? A suicide prevention strategy, there's not one-size-fits-all. It needs to be tailored to your province, your country, whatever jurisdictional level at which you're doing it.

Sometimes it's not always recreating the wheel but it's about collecting the proper data so you make sure you know where the problems and the gaps are. It's about making sure that you've got good interventions for people who have perhaps tried to commit suicide so they have supports afterwards. It's about reducing the opportunity for suicide on particular bridges. Like, there's many parts and pieces to a suicide prevention strategy and it looks different everywhere it happens and should be tailored to the province.

The FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] has done some great work, and I would encourage the government. I hope that perhaps in the budget we see that. I would have hoped to have seen it in the Throne Speech and I actually was optimistic that it would be.

I'm just going to touch on CBO funding here, because that was mentioned in the budget, their support for community-based organizations. I need to point out in the last five years health-related community-based organizations have gotten a whopping 2.8 per cent increase in the last five years, Mr. Speaker. My experience with this government is if they're taking you back to a statistic that takes you back to 2007, you know that they haven't really done anything on it in the most recent years, Mr. Speaker.

Two hospitals, Sask Hospital North Battleford, which was sorely needed, and it's a physically beautiful facility. My colleague from Fairview and I had the opportunity to tour it over the course of the summer. But these mess-ups with the roof, with the clad, like, anything that delayed it . . . There are huge backlogs in our acute psychiatric facilities that mean that people aren't getting their longer term rehab in a proper environment because, for example, the roof needs to be redone, Mr. Speaker, so they can't take more people in.

I was, in June, worked with two families who desperately needed their . . . Both their children who suffered from mental health and substance use issues had referrals to the hospital. And the hospital wasn't taking, and isn't taking, new patients, Mr.

Speaker.

The children's hospital, it's a lovely facility again. The thing, my challenge, and I've raised this here in the House; I've raised it in committee five years ago; I've raised it several times in a letter to the editor this last spring: why the only children who aren't in the children's hospital are those who have mental health concerns is beyond me. As I've said before, talk about entrenching stigma from an early age, Mr. Speaker. All children in Saskatchewan should have the opportunity to benefit from the facility. And I was surprised actually when we got our delayed tour, that I had understood that outpatient mental health treatment was going to be there for children and they're not even doing outpatient mental health care for children in that hospital. I think that that is a shame.

Just in terms of kids and why it's so important to provide proper mental health care and why a suicide prevention strategy would be important, I want to take the government back to the May 2019 CIHI [Canadian Institute of Health Information] report that saw Saskatchewan's rate of mental health-related hospitalization for those 5 to 24 is the second highest of all provinces, and the ones connected to substance use are the highest of all the provinces. And the number of children and youth hospitalized for mental health has doubled in the last decade, Mr. Speaker. It's the highest rate of growth in the country. That's not a statistic of which we should be proud.

Coupled with that, some of their most recent numbers, kids waiting for that early intervention. So I believe, and I think we all believe here on this side of this House, when a child puts up his or her hand and says, I need help, I'm struggling, it should be there for them. And right now across the province, the most recent stats, there are 529 kids in the moderate range waiting for their first mental health appointment, Mr. Speaker. That is not acceptable.

We have an addictions crisis on our hands. And I'm mentioning this here because they talk about their investment in mental health. I just want to point out that in the time that we have a mental health crisis . . . And it's not political hyperbole. It's not me saying that. It's police services, it's front-line workers, all kinds of people talking about the ravages. Particularly alcohol is still a huge problem, but crystal meth has emerged in our communities.

I need to point out that in 2013 we had 364 detox and treatment beds and in 2018, before this budget, we had 356. We had fewer detox and treatment beds in this province in the five years that our growing mental health and addictions crisis has grown, Mr. Speaker. And admittedly they put some . . . In terms of treatment beds, there's 16 more that were added in this budget for adults. So that gives us a net gain of eight, at a time where crystal meth use, using the statistic of those who are talking about their meth use in residential treatment, has gone up tenfold, from 3 per cent to 30 per cent, Mr. Speaker, in five years.

All those stats: violent crime, gun violence, theft from vehicles, theft of vehicles, all those things that had trended down for a decade have started to trend up in those five years. And law enforcement will tell you that it's directly related to meth.

I represent a riding, Pleasant Hill, the member from Centre and I

share that riding. There were three murders this summer in just over a week. There's been 14 murders in Saskatoon. It is a huge challenge for people. You drive down 20th Street and you go through the back alley just behind, just off of Avenue P and 20th Street. It looks like East Hastings, Mr. Speaker, in the summer in Vancouver with people who are struggling with trauma, with mental health and addictions issues, congregating and are incredibly vulnerable. And gangs have taken advantage of that.

We need some serious investment in police resources. And I've actually once heard the Corrections and Policing minister talk about how we're not supportive of policing. I'm the proud daughter of a 28-year veteran of the police service, Mr. Speaker. I believe very firmly in the importance of policing. But I also, like my dad, know that there's far more to be gained by social justice than just criminal justice, Mr. Speaker.

So this government, in their public safety portion of the Throne Speech, didn't mention anything new. They've all been announced. Everything in the public safety portion isn't anything new, acknowledging that 14 murders in Saskatoon is a lot, Mr. Speaker, and that we have crime issues here fuelled by substance use and mental health struggles, Mr. Speaker.

[22:00]

There's a lot more I could say. I could talk about my daughter being so excited about only having 29 kids in her class, Mr. Speaker. I could talk about the teacher who last week said she'd be thrilled to have fewer than 40 kids in her high school classes. I could talk about the income support program where social workers have told me that the changes to the social assistance program will — not might, but will — lead to people's deaths this winter, Mr. Speaker. So forgive me for not being a ray of sunshine.

Organ donation. I just have to say this too because I had the privilege of sitting on that committee. I'm glad they're talking about the registry again, and something really positive. My colleague and I from Prince Albert Northcote had written a minority opinion encouraging the government to go hard and hire donor physicians. They are the linchpin of a good and high-functioning organ donation system. This government saw fit to . . . They've hired less than one position. I think it's a three-quarter-time position made up of multiple physicians, but you know what, Mr. Speaker? By all accounts . . . I don't have the statistics in front of me but I've spoken to people in the organ donation community, physicians, and they said that that three-quarter-time position is having wonderful effects, Mr. Speaker, and that they would like to see organ donation physicians across the province.

So just think if what a three-quarter-time position could do, and it's having positive results, what it could mean to reduce those wait times that people are experiencing and increase our organ donation rate if we actually followed the suggestion and hired more than that, Mr. Speaker, and kept pace with what other jurisdictions were doing.

But with that, I thank you for your patience, and my colleagues for their patience, in the entire House. And I will not be supporting the Throne Speech. I will be supporting the amendment and I thank you for your time.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my privilege to rise in the House to make some comments regarding the Speech from the Throne. I'd like to start off by congratulating His Honour Russ Mirasty on assuming his new role as Lieutenant Governor. It's exciting for Saskatchewan to have our first Indigenous Lieutenant Governor, and I know that he will do a wonderful job.

I worked with him some years ago when he was doing a consulting research piece for the Ministry of Education. He travelled the North and gave us a plan and direction that helped us craft a plan to help First Nations students improve their educational outcomes. There is more work to do, but he is responsible for many of the successes that our province has had. I want to wish him the best in his endeavours as he continues to be our Lieutenant Governor.

I also want to acknowledge with some sadness the passing of former Lieutenant Governor Tom Molloy. He was a great Canadian and someone that I was proud to call a friend. The member for Saskatoon Northwest and I visited him and his family in the hospital just before his passing. He was a class act. And even with serious health issues, he still had his sense of humour and he was keenly aware of and interested in our province and in politics. He was a lifelong Liberal, which I've come to accept if in fact not forgive. So we offer sympathy and support to his family.

At this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, most MLAs use the time to give a bit of a personal update. My long-suffering bride, Sandy, continues to be the best thing that ever happened to me. She continues to attend events, plan fundraisers, deliver turkeys — which is something that's very important to me — and make sure that I'm dressed appropriately and don't say too many foolish things that I might later live to regret.

Both of our moms are doing exceptionally well. Sandy's mom is 96 and lives in the Orange Memories seniors facility in Rosetown. I'm pleased to say that she's got a lovely romance going on with a gentleman named Gordon.

My mother is 98 and is in one of the LutherCare facilities in Saskatoon. Unfortunately she fell and broke her hip last year and is now confined to a wheelchair. She is mentally sharp and continues to give me political advice and continuously critiques my performance in this House, and she's very generous with her criticism. We thoroughly enjoy both of our mothers and all of the nephews, nieces, grandnephews, and grandnieces. Sandy spoils them rotten and they truly love her. Their little eyes light up when Sandy walks into the room. I've told her it's because of the gifts and candy but she says no, it's actually her that they love.

My constituency assistant, Angela Knoss, has been with me for well over a year and is doing a great job at filling in for the now-retired Gordon Rutten. I miss Gordon and his keen wit. There was something poetic about having a retired teacher working for me. He was very good at giving advice and also very generous in his criticism. To coin a phrase, you can take a teacher out of the classroom but you can never take the classroom out of the teacher.

I also have a new addition at the constituency office, Dax Koch, who joined the office this fall and is a student, and he's also been very helpful. I want to thank my constituency executive and volunteers for their continuing great work in putting on hot dog events and a variety of other things and, if I didn't mention it before, turkey sales.

I want to thank my staff here who are truly exceptional. My chief of staff, Clint Fox, heads up an awesome team. The senior admin, Cindy Chamberlin, maintains a sense of calm and reason during the craziest times. The new junior admin, Emni Eltassi, has been a great fit. I also have a new MA [ministerial assistant], Alan Dedman, who is wise and thoughtful and already has a great understanding of the intricacies and complexities of SaskTel and WCB [Workers' Compensation Board], especially considering that he's only been there for a few months.

My other MA is Molly Waldman, who's forced to laugh at my lousy jokes and drive me around pretending that she's Morgan Freeman driving Miss Daisy. She's got a wicked sense of humour, always one step ahead of me. Sandy says that we should adopt her but she's already got amazing parents. They live in the constituency. I don't want to offend them and I don't know whether I could make latkes the way that she does.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I'm blessed by my staff in Saskatoon and here. My family's wonderful, and I just hope that all of them are willing to tolerate me.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud that our government has taken the lead in our country and in our province to be the first in bringing Clare's Law into force. Clare's Law is in force in the United Kingdom and is named after a young woman, Clare Wood, who was murdered by her ex-boyfriend. Her father, Michael Brown, had an uneasy feeling about the young man and wondered whether her life could have been saved had his father known about his violent past. The law that Michael Brown pushed for allows the police in the United Kingdom to release information subject to a careful and well-defined protocol.

The protocol that this government has put forward is supported by the police, and we are well on our way to completing the protocol for cities with municipal police forces. It is important to note that contrary to what some members of the media have said, the opposition had no hand in finding, proposing, researching, or writing this law. My previous chief of staff, Drew Dwernychuk, found the law, researched it, and suggested that it might work in Saskatchewan. I do however thank everyone, including the opposition, for supporting it, but I want to especially thank Drew Dwernychuk for his initial work on this.

Addressing interpersonal violence is a challenge but it is incredibly important work for our province to do. The Government of Saskatchewan was part of an advisory committee formed by the Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan, SASS, and we were periodically consulted in their development of their sexual violence action plan.

We are now working with my ministry, the Status of Women office, as well as others in government to review the 22 recommendations that SASS had developed. It is my hope and expectation that this work will improve the lives and safety of women in our province. Everyone in the province has a role to

play to reduce the stigma and to openly discuss interpersonal violence and sexual assault without judgment. But of course it's imperative that governments show leadership, and that is what this government continuously strives to do.

We have recently received the report on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The report and the Calls to Action provide a crucial voice to the women and girls who have gone missing or who have been murdered. Our heart goes out to their grieving families, friends, and communities. This is why the Chief Commissioner, Marion Buller, chose to leave their comments in the form that they were presented. That decision has allowed us to see and to understand the hurt and the pain that they have suffered. It also makes it complex and challenging for governments to work with.

There's no easy starting point or reference point that would acknowledge what work has already been done by many police forces, the provinces, and the federal government. The Calls to Action are not directed at specific entities, whether they be police forces, federal or provincial governments or municipal governments. As we have seen, some can be addressed exclusively by one level of government such as the federal government, others exclusively by provincial governments. Those that fall within the purview of the provincial government span across several ministries, so coordination will be imperative. Other Calls to Action will need to be addressed exclusively by police forces in municipalities. Some will be shared. Some will take some considerable time to assemble and to have careful dialogue. It will take time and work on the part of many people, but it is work that must be done.

The government supported this meaningful and important work from the beginning, but we must thank Chief Commissioner Buller and her commissioners for their tireless effort in completing their work. Several extensions were granted to the commissioner over the three or four years to ensure that the appropriate amount of time was dedicated to all those that needed to speak and be heard.

The report is not a road map, nor should we view it as such. The report and Calls to Action are in many ways the personification of the pain and anguish of all those affected over the many years. They reflect the thoughts, hopes, and prayers of the many people who participated and their sincere desire to see meaningful change in this country. I'm sure that everyone will understand the time needed for all levels of government to carefully consider the report and its Calls to Action.

Before the Calls to Action were released, I have made it a priority to see that there are Indigenous voices on the provincial court bench. Since March 2018 we have appointed four Indigenous Provincial Court judges: Judge McAuley, Judge Crooks, Judge Brass, and Judge Pelletier. The federal government also has an eye for great judicial appointments because they elevated Judge Crooks to the Court of Queen's Bench shortly after our province appointed her to the provincial bench.

Mr. Speaker, about a week and a half ago I was pleased to go to Whitecap Dakota First Nation with my colleague, the Minister of Corrections and Policing, to sign a memorandum of understanding with Chief Bear from Whitecap Dakota First Nation and Chief Crain from Muskoday First Nation. This MOU

[memorandum of understanding] is a significant opportunity to strengthen a partnership between our government and these two First Nations.

As part of the MOU, a joint working group will be established to consider ways First Nations laws can be enforced on reserves. The working group will be considering ways the province, Whitecap, and Muskoday can collaborate with respect to investigations, laying of charges, prosecutions, and adjudication of First Nations laws and the enforcement of fines, penalties, and other orders. Enforcements of First Nations laws have been a long-standing issue, not just for Whitecap Dakota or Muskoday, but for First Nations across Canada. This opportunity is about respect, co-operation, and advancing reconciliation.

We are also making amendments to *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* this legislative session. One that I am looking forward to is extending employment leave to individuals who are running for election to a First Nations band council.

This November many of the changes we made to *The Workers' Compensation Act* will come into force. This will include the expansion of presumptive coverage by six additional forms of cancer for Saskatchewan firefighters, including volunteer firefighters.

The Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety is moving forward with amendments to the occupational health and safety regulations to harmonize personal protective equipment for divisions across Canada. These amendments will allow employers and workers to easily work across the country, but more importantly will ensure consistent standards so all workers are safe in their workplaces across Canada. Officials and stakeholders have been working on a provincial fatalities and serious injuries strategy that will be delivered through WorkSafe Saskatchewan. I'm hopeful that this strategy will result in concerted and concrete actions towards improved workplace health and safety, which is something I'm sure that both sides of the House can certainly agree on.

Mr. Speaker, there's one item in particular that both sides of this House can't seem to agree on. I'm always disappointed when the opposition stands up and criticizes the Regina bypass. Not only is it the biggest infrastructure project this province has ever seen, it is also one of the biggest safety projects that this province has ever seen. The bypass has 12 interchanges, 40 kilometres of new four-lane highways, 20 kilometres of resurfaced four-lane highway, and 55 kilometres of service roads.

The highway intersections have now been replaced with much safer overpasses. The public will be safer. The jaws of life will not be used, according to fire chiefs in the area. Mr. Speaker, I've heard the members in this House criticize this project. Mr. Speaker, I'd urge them to take a drive through it. It opened earlier today and I think the drive will convince them of the safety of this project. The government will continue to improve highway safety throughout the province with more passing lanes and a commitment of \$100 million over five years to improve safety at highway intersections.

I also thank the Minister of Highways for the overpass at Boychuk and Highway 16 in my constituency. It is now complete and open so it is much easier to get in and out of the

neighbourhood. Another new project in my neighbourhood is the new P3 joint-use school in Rosewood which is now open, up and running. It would be crass to say on time and on budget, because the members opposite will simply roll their eyes and grumble. But, Mr. Speaker, it is a great project and a great school and we're proud of it.

[22:15]

Mr. Speaker, crime and public safety remain top-of-mind issues for many in our province in both rural and urban issues. The creation of the protection and response team has helped improve officer visibility and enforcement in rural areas. However there remains more work to do. Our gang violence reduction strategy will help improve public safety by helping reduce the impact of gangs in communities throughout our province. We know that gangs are driving the crime rates in many of our communities and are responsible for much of the illegal drugs that are available in our communities today. By working to combat gangs, something our strategy does on a number of fronts, our government is committed to improve public safety for all Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, we had a federal election last week. It ended with a troubling and divisive finish and our country sadly is more divided than ever. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was born in Saskatoon and I've always regarded myself as a proud Canadian. In 1968 I wasn't old enough to vote but I was definitely caught up in Trudeaumania. He spoke for people of my generation. We wanted to make Canada and the world a better place for everyone. I worked for my Liberal candidate, Otto Lang. I know the members opposite are rolling the eyes, and I'm probably going to get run out of town by the members of my own party. But, Mr. Speaker, at that point in my life I was caught up with Trudeaumania. I worked hard for my candidate, Otto Lang. I was part of an advance team that drove around the constituency in an old school bus. We were setting up chairs and podiums and setting up a sound system for town hall meetings. I was proud to be part of it.

I got to know Otto Lang better when I was in university. A friend of mine used to house-sit for Otto's family during session, so we would go over to Otto's house and drink beers. Occasionally Otto would come in — and he was a former dean of Law — and he would join us when he was in the city.

I was proud to be part of the new Canada, but I became increasingly troubled, first by Pierre Trudeau's treatment of Western Canada and our farmers, but it was the national energy policy that did me in. It was entirely focused on Eastern Canada at the expense of the rest. I couldn't believe that my prime minister, someone that I had worked for and supported, could be so totally crass. I went to work for the Conservatives and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've never looked back.

When Justin Trudeau ran, I understood the appeal to the younger voters. He was certainly better looking than his father, but sadly he was even less in touch with the issues and realities in Western Canada. He should have certainly understood that the carbon tax was really a tax on the average citizen and a tax that everyone knows will not address its supposed goal of reducing emissions.

We have a climate change plan that will reduce our emissions

while maintaining competitiveness without having a carbon tax. New output-based performance standards will protect economic competitiveness and will reduce emissions. By 2030 we will reduce GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions by 12 000 000 tonnes without taxing families and farmers.

Rich Canadians who travel to private islands of their billionaire friends, or those who can afford to travel in two aircraft, probably won't be affected by the carbon tax. They're rich enough to well afford it. The single mother who wants to travel to visit family will be deeply affected, as will the farmer who has an extra \$5,000 carbon tax bill to the costs of drying his grain. Those people will be hurt immensely.

The Trudeau carbon tax did not take into account the realities and potential of Western Canada. There's been no credit given for the carbon sinks created by the agricultural commodities, no credits for our carbon capture and storage, no understanding that our oil and energy sector is among the cleanest in the world.

We need to ensure that the West's interests are heard and are accounted for in the words and actions that come out of Ottawa. I'm glad that the Prime Minister is taking until November 20th to announce his cabinet. He sounds contrite. I hope that he is, and I hope that he consults with the Western premiers. I hope that he reconsiders his tax policies and works with the province. I hope that he appoints someone competent and that he listens to them.

I hope that the Prime Minister and his cabinet are willing to reach out and talk to the West. If the Prime Minister is watching, come visit or feel free to give us a call or even text. I am a Canadian, a proud Canadian. Justin Trudeau is my Prime Minister as well. I want more from him. I want him to represent all Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne is unique. It's non-partisan. It reflects the needs and values of all Saskatchewanians. There is an opportunity for all of us to set aside our political differences. This is an opportunity for all of us, each and every one of us, to support this speech. Can you imagine the incredibly powerful message it would send if we were able to pass this with the full support of every member of this House? I'm not terribly optimistic or hopeful that that's going to happen but, Mr. Speaker, I hope that it is. I want to give the members opposite the invitation to support the Speech from the Throne, to send an incredibly powerful message to the rest of the people in our province and to people in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne.

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

Mr. Francis: — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Since we had a good shot of Red Bull provided by the member from Indian Head-Milestone, you're going to get a double dose of NyQuil from myself and the Minister of Finance. So first of all, I'd like to reiterate some sentiments, how pleased and honoured I am to rise in the House to comment on the Speech from the Throne, to open this session.

I'd like to join with my colleagues on offering condolences to the former Lieutenant Governor's family, and also to thank him for his service to his province. As well I'd like to join with the rest of the members in congratulating our newly appointed

Lieutenant Governor, His Honour Russ Mirasty.

I would also like to thank my family and friends, as well as my staff in my constituency office back home. Without that type of support, none of us would be able to fulfill our duties as elected officials. My CAs [constituency assistant] continue to carry the bulk of the load when it comes to handling constituency concerns, and I want to again acknowledge their hard work. I want to let them know how valuable they are, not only to me but to the people of our constituency. They have a very thankless job at times, as do we. And I don't think people fully realize some of the pressures that go along with the jobs that we perform every day.

We know we face the challenge of our job as elected representatives isn't easy all the time, but voicing our constituents' concerns is a very important issue. And when it comes to government services, I think we can all agree that we're working together towards a better province, not just a better place for ourselves, but also for our kids, grandkids, and future generations to come. That is why I continue to enjoy this challenge and the opportunity bestowed to me by the constituents of Kindersley.

Last week, to be honest, session started with the federal election and, to be honest, it was quite a downer for myself. I was hoping for a different result that would provide Western Canada with some positive feedback going forward. We didn't get that result, but we have our government and we need to deal with it and we need to live with it.

It's never been more important as a provincial government to protect and stand up for our key industries and the residents of our province. Our Premier has made it very clear that Western Canadians need to be treated more fairly, and we'll continue to relay that message to Ottawa on behalf of our citizens. Yes, equalization grossly favours provinces such as Quebec and perhaps looks like it punishes provinces like our own, or Alberta. And certainly a carbon tax affects us all negatively in our pocketbooks. But I know our Premier will stand tall. He will work toward a new solution, a new deal that provides more fairness, not just for Saskatchewan, but for the rest of the nation as well.

We've been targeted, vilified, and branded as climate deniers for not supporting a carbon tax. More divisive politics from the left. We need to overcome this, stand firm, and prove our importance to the rest of the nation. For some strange reason, we have a bad reputation when it comes to environmental stewardship in this province and, quite frankly, it baffles me. We're among the most environmentally conscious and humane jurisdictions in the world. We capture and conserve our natural gas. We sequester carbon from coal plants, forests, grasslands, croplands, and we plan still to do better. Yet there's those in our nation that aim to tear us down in Western Canada. Our industries, including our energy sector, have always been ahead of the curve on improving our already sustainable and ethical agriculture, energy, and mining sectors.

Our federal government has imposed a carbon tax rather than to allow us to reduce our emissions in our own way. Our Prairie Resilience climate change strategy is being ignored. It's an actual plan to reduce emissions and do our fair share without crushing

our provincial economy and killing jobs.

Our taxpayers can only carry so much load. Taxpayers are any government's biggest revenue source, or really its only revenue source. So if us, if we as taxpayers aren't doing well, there isn't money in our pockets to pay taxes, everything else is going to suffer subsequently. No money for roads. No money for more teachers. No money to operate, let alone build new schools and new hospitals.

Budgets do not balance themselves. Unless you have the luxury of relying on a trust fund your whole life, you may not comprehend that point. Socialist parties like to promise free this and free that. There's no free lunches. Somebody pays.

So bringing promises like that forward, like we'll take from the big corporations or we'll take from the wealthy, that just doesn't work. The fact remains that you cannot multiply wealth by dividing it. Wealth will leave. Investment will leave. Economies crash.

One of my favourite quotes from Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is, the trouble with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money. Politicians need to remember that fact.

That's why the members on this side are unanimously in favour of supporting the Throne Speech delivered last week. It promotes strong fiscal management and balanced budgets. It promotes free enterprise and innovation. It promotes working alongside our people, not in front or pushing them from behind. Our Throne Speech is a playbook that will guide us into another successful decade of growth, back-to-back decades of continued and sustainable growth the province hasn't seen since the 1920s.

Being fortunate enough to be able to be a part of this government gives me great pride and a sense of having the ability to make a difference to the people of my constituency and the people of the province, to make sound decisions on their behalf. The opportunity we have is to leave this province greater than we found it.

Our government continues to take a very balanced approach to running this province, a balance between maintaining fiscal responsibility, making investment, keeping tax as low as possible, and still delivering essential services.

And I would like to touch on a few highlights, even though my time is running out here. The new growth plan this session will unveil a strategy that will continue on the growth that we've experienced in the last 12 years, including targets, as mentioned before, to hit 1.4 million people, 100,000 more people working by 2030. Lofty goals, some might say, just as they said in 2007 — no, you can't do it. We know how that turned out. This government's predictions came true and the naysayers were proved wrong.

We know that with a strong economy, lofty goals are achievable. But to do this we need to have aggressive focus on our strengths. We're a leading exporter in our nation, the largest per capita exporter in the country. We plan not only to maintain but to expand our global presence. To do this, our agriculture and resource sectors need to be strong. Our growth plan will rely on

the success of these industries and the people working in them. Ag, energy, and mining will carry us forward into the next decade and our focus will be to promote them.

To realize this growth, we need investment. Firstly we need to invest in our people. We will see that in our continued focus on health. Our government will spend a record 3.6 billion in the 2019-2020 budget year, up 113 million; 402 million on mental health and addictions, an 80 per cent increase since 2007. More facility beds, more front-line workers, continued funding for CBOs to offer services closer to home, resources for walk-in mental health clinics or health services for better access for those in need.

Earlier on this year an organ donor registry was unveiled, and we all know organ donations save lives. This program will undoubtedly improve the transplant program across the province and country and save so many lives in future years to come.

Then there's our government's continued commitment to supporting and funding for the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service, better known as STARS. What a shining example of what collaborative efforts can accomplish. Since 2012, 4,500 patients have been transported through that system, a real game-changer for rural residents. So many lives saved as a result. A 10-year funding agreement renewal was just signed with STARS to continue that great service into the next decade.

We're also committed to addressing the growing challenge for health care for seniors. A new ministry for seniors was established and it allows the government to stay on top of needs of our growing seniors population.

An online registry, my Sask health, was also recently introduced, a very popular, efficient, and . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — It is now 10:30, the time of adjournment. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 Wednesday afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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Premier

President of the Executive Council

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor

Minister of Advanced Education
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for Innovation

Hon. Lori Carr

Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis
and Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre

Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Joe Hargrave

Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Finance

Hon. Jeremy Harrison

Minister of Trade and Export Development
Minister of Immigration and Career Training

Hon. Warren Kaeding

Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Gene Makowsky

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor
and Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

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