



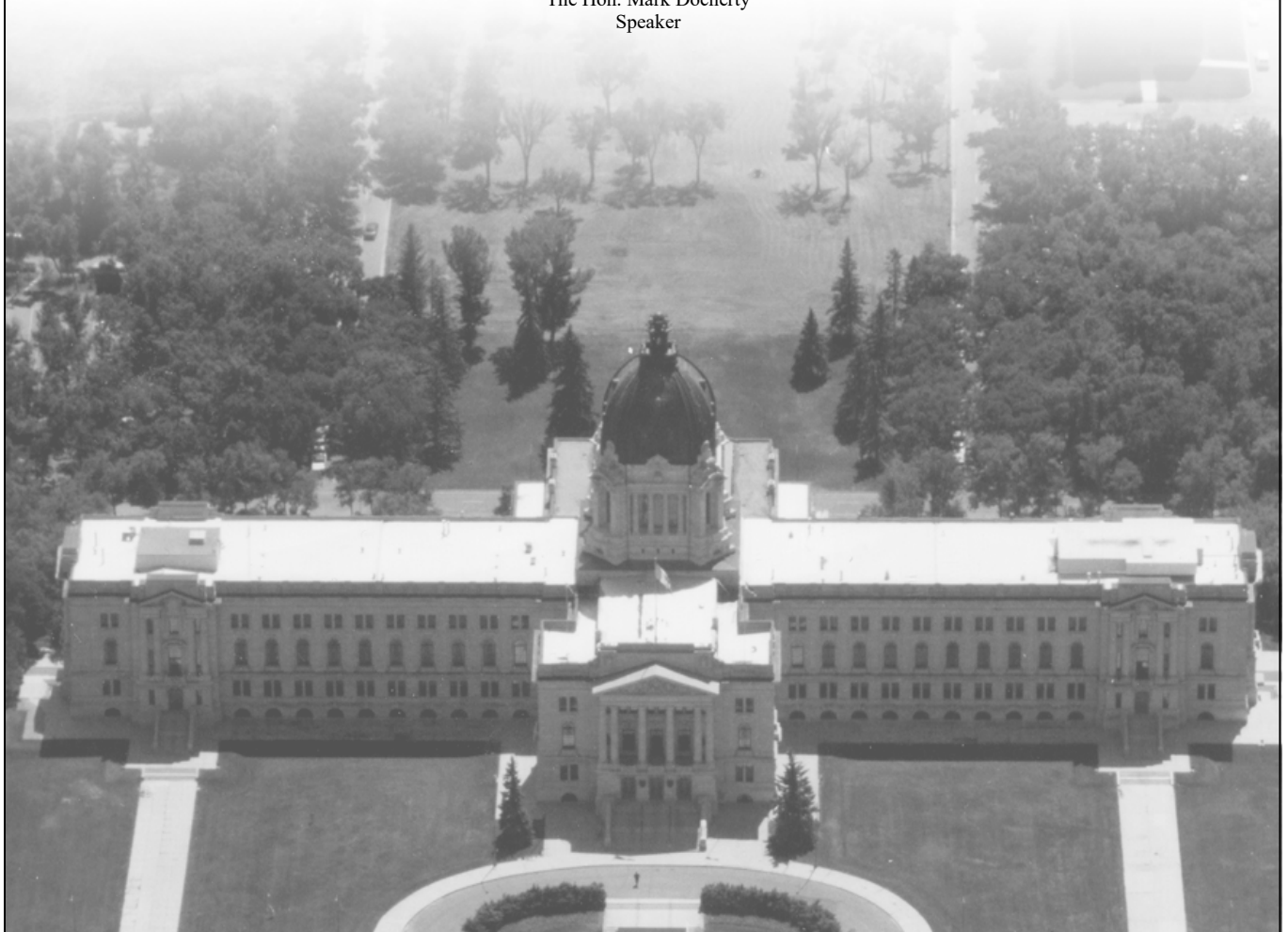
FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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



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

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Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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Lawrence , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	Vacant — Saskatoon Eastview

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I'd like to go first. Sitting in the Speaker's gallery, I've got seven grade 12 students from Thom Collegiate with their teacher, Stephen Poll. Really happy and honoured that you've chosen to be here with us today, and look forward to some questions a little later. But thanks again. Please join me in welcoming Thom Collegiate to our Assembly. I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this day I met, along with the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Justice, with the Saskatchewan Construction Association. I see a couple in the Assembly. I'm not sure all of them have made it in here, but I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce them.

Mr. Speaker, Mark Cooper, Saskatchewan Construction Association; Mike Lamontagne of General Contractors Association of Saskatchewan, Westridge Construction; Ryan Tynning, Mechanical Contractors Association from Swift Current; Dominic Iula, Sask Masonry Institute; Cory Richter, General Contractors Association; Shaun Cripps, from the SCA [Saskatchewan Construction Association Inc.]; Carolyn Bagnell from the Mechanical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan; Dave McLellan, Electrical Contractors Association; Randy Lovegrove of ECAS [Electrical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan]; and also Jason Duke, Saskatchewan Construction Association.

Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the partnerships that we do have with these individuals and the contributions that they do make to our economy. And we ask that all members welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll join with the minister to welcome the delegation from the Saskatchewan Construction Association. I think the only member of that delegation that's with us in this Assembly is seated in the west gallery, and that's Mark Cooper. Thank you so much, Mark, for being here today. Certainly it was also a pleasure to sit down with the delegation that was just announced here today along with the Leader of the Official Opposition and our caucus team as well.

Certainly the Saskatchewan Construction Association are leaders in building Saskatchewan, key drivers of the Saskatchewan economy, and it's always a pleasure to sit down and to dialogue and to work towards building a bright future. So I ask all members to join with me in welcoming Mark Cooper to his Assembly and thanking all the members of the Saskatchewan Construction Association that joined us here today.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, seated in your gallery I'd also like to introduce leadership of the Saskatchewan Realtors Association. It was a real pleasure to join the realtors last night

over at The Capitol here in Regina, a fine establishment with great food, local brew on tap, Mr. Speaker. And we have some of the leadership that's here today: Jason Yochim, who's the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatchewan Realtors Association. He's taken on that role as these associations have amalgamated, Mr. Speaker.

And also here today is Bill Madder, somebody that we've worked with for many years, that both sides of the Assembly have gotten to know well, someone who's served his industry and his realtors and his province well. It's a pleasure to have him seated here as well. I see Karin Wees up there as well, who's a local realtor and just a very fine person, Mr. Speaker.

To these realtors, I say thank you very much for their leadership within their profession, within the industry to ensure integrity to the transaction of real estate. And I know that it's been a big exercise to come together in one voice and one association. We wish them well on that front. Certainly we sat down with representatives here today as well who brought forward thoughtful recommendations as well, and we value that. So on behalf of the official opposition, we provide a very warm welcome and ask all to join in doing so to the Saskatchewan Realtors Association.

And while still on my feet, Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to welcome an economic leader in our province, and that's Darla Lindberg, the CEO of the chamber of commerce out of Saskatoon. Darla is seated with the realtors delegation. She was at the gathering last night. This is somebody who provides a strong voice, not just for Saskatoon but for our entire province as well. It's a tremendous honour to welcome Darla to her Assembly, and I ask all members to join in welcoming Darla.

One more.

The Speaker: — That's an extended introduction. You could have asked that from the front end, so thank you. I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I rise in the House today to introduce a member of our province's library and literacy sector and to recognize her accomplishments. LaVera Schiele, who's in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, is a family literacy volunteer who is committed to improving family literacy in the city of Prince Albert, and she's been doing that for the last 27 years, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Schiele has shown that literacy is a community responsibility and has worked very hard to include elders and educators in building community literacy programs. She's demonstrated a consistent initiative in innovation, a forward-thinking and community-minded approach to developing family literacy programs, and she's played a key role in establishing the Prince Albert Literacy Network.

She's a strong advocate for literacy programs, Mr. Speaker, in Prince Albert and in her community and continues to work to reduce barriers for those who want access to literacy resources. Mr. Speaker, we all know how important literacy is in our communities, and we're very thankful for the dedication and the passion which she brings to literacy in her community.

So, Mr. Speaker, today I had the honour of presenting LaVera the 2019 Council of the Federation Literacy Award. Again, she's seated in your gallery with her husband, Dale, and her family is also seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope all members of the Assembly will join me in congratulating LaVera as a recipient of the 2019 Council of the Federation Literacy Awards. And on behalf of a grateful province, Mr. Speaker, we thank her for her dedication and service to this sector, and welcome her and her family to their legislature, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to join with the Minister of Education in welcoming and congratulating LaVera Schiele on her well-deserved award and thanking her for her almost three decades' service to family and early literacy in this province.

As the minister noted, this is work that is so important to families, to the well-being of children in our school system and before the school system. And I understand not only with young people, but LaVera also has done work with adults in the correctional centre as well. Not only well known and admired for her work in Prince Albert but, I'm told, right around the province. I do want to sincerely thank her and welcome her here to her Legislative Assembly, and I invite all members to join me in doing so. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Request permission for an extended introduction, please.

The Speaker: — The member has asked leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you, I'd like to introduce some very important guests seated up in your gallery. And unfortunately I can't quite see them from where I'm sitting. But, Mr. Speaker, on January 21st of 2020 the Association of Saskatchewan Realtors, the Saskatoon Region Association of Realtors, and the Association of Regina Realtors will amalgamate to become one strong and united provincial association called the Saskatchewan Realtors Association, or the SRA.

Mr. Speaker, I've been a member of the Association of Saskatchewan Realtors, known by its previous name of SREA [Saskatchewan Real Estate Association] for some 38 years, so I can attest that this amalgamation has taken . . .

An Hon. Member: — How old are you?

Mr. Cox: — Yes, don't mention it's been that long please, okay. So I can say that this amalgamation has taken many years and has undergone a lot of thought process and a lot of planning, and I congratulate them on finally getting this amalgamation done. So,

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce some of our guests that are here today, and I'd just ask them to give a wave since I can't see them up there.

Firstly, their inaugural CEO, Jason Yochim. Karin Wees is with us here today. Sara McKinley, Darla Lindberg, Bill Madder, and Samantha Rumberger, thank you for coming out this afternoon.

We have enjoyed meeting with them today and to learn about their transition process, as well as the benefits of having one singular association. Their primary mission is to serve and advance the interest of all of its members while offering consistent and efficient services, as well as strong advocacy on behalf of the profession, the industry, and the real estate market. Their collaboration and team work will benefit many members across this province as they are so important to our province and to our economy.

So I now ask that all members join with me in welcoming this group to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce, sitting in the west gallery, a school group from my constituency. The Kincaid Central School grade 8 and 9 class are here, Mr. Speaker, accompanied by their teacher, Rhonda Pilgrim is here. And their parent chaperones, there's Jeannette Jalbert, and Doug McMillan is also there. And they also have Nader Beji, is also an international student who is also there with them. So I ask all members to welcome this school group to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Requesting leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — There can't possibly be anybody else left here, but we're all looking forward to this. I recognize the member.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you. It's an honour, Mr. Speaker, to welcome, seated in your gallery, students here with the robotics team from Thom Collegiate. Certainly I'm a proud graduate of Thom Collegiate. To have their teacher here, Stephen Poll, and this team in their Assembly, Mr. Speaker, is really special.

This is a remarkable team, Mr. Speaker, that actually went down to Houston last year for the world robotics championship, the FIRST [For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology] robotics championship, Mr. Speaker. These are leaders within our province, and I'm just so very proud to have them here in this Assembly. I ask all members to join with me in providing them a very warm welcome.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition from folks who are calling on the

government to call by-elections in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview. And they want to bring to our attention that the seats in the Legislative Assembly for Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview are currently vacant. And, Mr. Speaker, that's because of a loophole in *The Legislative Assembly Act*, that by-elections are not legally required to be called in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview because the former MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] did not resign before August 6th, 2019, and in fact they resigned in September, the following month.

Now we know, Mr. Speaker, that unless a by-election is called, constituents in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview will go without representation for nearly 14 months until a provincial election is held on October 26th, 2020. But we know as well the Premier has the power and authority to call by-elections in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview even though *The Legislative Assembly Act* does not require it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read the prayer:

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing the petition today come from Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview. I do so present. Thank you.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose an unfair and grossly ineffective carbon tax in the province of Saskatchewan.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good citizens of Alsask and Kindersley. I do so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens, businesses from all across Saskatchewan, communities from all across Saskatchewan, as it relates to the Sask Party government expanding the PST [provincial sales tax] on to construction labour. This was part of their billion-dollar tax hike, Mr. Speaker, and of course this has had a dramatic negative impact on our economy and also on household economics, the financial welfare of families across the province.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, we've seen permits down across

Saskatchewan. We see projects that have been shelved. We've seen many jobs that have been lost. So many skilled labourers, Mr. Speaker, tradespeople that have lost employment and have had to find employment in other industries, Mr. Speaker, many that have had to move from our province. This is a loss for all of us. Certainly it's a blow to our economy, Mr. Speaker.

The prayer reads as follows:

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Regina. I so submit.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to fix the crisis in our classrooms. Those who have signed the petition wish to draw our attention to a few points: that the Sask Party government's cuts mean falling per-student funding and fewer supports for students who need extra help; that the Sask Party cuts leave educators without the resources that they need to support student learning and, Mr. Speaker, we certainly heard this very clearly yesterday in Prince Albert; that the Sask Party government is ignoring overcrowding in our classrooms by refusing to track and report classroom sizes; and that the Sask Party government's lack of funding for school infrastructure has led to crumbling and overcrowded schools across Saskatchewan; and also that the Sask Party government's failure to invest in our classrooms is having serious consequences in our classrooms today, and will continue to do so into the future.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Sask Party government to immediately fix the crisis in our classrooms by properly funding the most important investment that we can make in our children.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition today reside in Prince Albert. I do so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to present a petition calling for the government to save our swales. The people who have signed this petition would like to bring to our attention the following: the Ministry of Highways is planning a four-lane, high-speed highway around part of Saskatoon and through the swales.

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

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government is neglecting its environmental protection duties to adequately protect those wild species, habitats, and ecosystems of local, regional, national, and global significance.

Mr. Speaker, there's more to say about this, but I'll just get to the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan calls on the provincial government to: (1) suspend planning for the Saskatoon freeway and development around the swales until a regional cumulative effects assessment has been completed; (2) update *The Wildlife Act* and expand the list of wild species protected by provincial regulation; (3) recognize the swales as an important ecological habitat and designate them as protected areas; and finally, ensure adequate long-term funding for research, management, and enforcement to protect the swales for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who've signed this petition today reside in the city of Saskatoon. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

2019 Pacific NorthWest Economic Region Summit

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past July, over 500 regional legislators, business leaders, academics, policy-makers gathered in Saskatoon for the 2019 Pacific NorthWest Economic Region Summit, better known as PNWER. Mr. Speaker, this annual summit is an opportunity to develop and strengthen relationships with legislators and the private sector at the provincial, state, and federal level. There are over 23 working sessions, six keynote sessions, and six policy tours over the five-day summit.

Monday's plenary luncheon featured the Premier as the keynote speaker. He spoke about Saskatchewan's focus on international trade to create jobs and opportunity, as well as the need to continue engagement between Canada and the United States at all levels. On Tuesday night, guests were treated to a celebration dinner hosted at the Western Development Museum in Saskatoon. The evening's entertainment was provided by Grammy-nominated Young Spirit Singers, a Cree drum-and-singing ensemble, and the Asham Stompers, a Métis dance group out of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, the PNWER Summit is an opportunity to advance Saskatchewan's interests and strengthen relationships with other PNWER jurisdictions. During the summit, Senator Mike Cuffe, a member of the Montana state senate, was sworn in as the new PNWER president. And I'm pleased to say that next year's summit will be in Big Sky, Montana, and I encourage MLAs to attend.

I would like to thank the host committee for all their hard work and to everyone who attended the sessions as participants and keynote speakers, as well as the 25 MLAs that attended. I look forward to the continuing partnership between all jurisdictions in

the Pacific Northwest region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Government Supports for Saskatchewan Farmers

Mr. Pedersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a long time since the Saskatchewan harvest has been so far behind. In some areas, farmers only have half of their crops harvested.

Now with technology our farmers continue to try to adapt as best they can, but ultimately mother nature has the final say. This year it's been one thing after another, from drought to rain to snow. So we can expect even more phone calls to the Farm Stress Line in the coming months, when the number of calls has already been alarmingly high. Net farm income dropped 45 per cent last year, and it's shaping up to take another hit this year.

Now many things are beyond the power of the provincial government, but there are some things that this government could be doing. They could have negotiated a deal for our farmers that exempted them from the carbon tax. Other sectors got special treatment, but the Sask Party left farmers exposed, and now they just want to point fingers to distract from their own failure. Under this government, rural communities continue to see their businesses and services die.

Farmers deserve better. They deserve a government that recognizes the strain on their mental health and invests in treatment and prevention. They deserve a government that will help them adapt to climate change and help them remain competitive while they reduce their emissions. They deserve a government that values and invests in their communities. Mr. Speaker, it's time for this government to quit letting farmers down.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Unveiling of Treaty 6 Adhesion Flag and Plaque

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On August 28th, along with my distinguished colleagues, I had the honour of attending the unveiling of the commemorative Treaty 6 Adhesion flag and plaque at Molanosa. Molanosa is an acronym for Montreal Lake, Northern Saskatchewan, and it is in this exact location where Treaty 6 was signed. To commemorate the anniversary in the very spot the Woodland Cree signed Treaty 6 130 years ago was extra special, Mr. Speaker.

The ceremonial event was spearheaded by a committee of appointed members from the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Montreal Lake Cree Nation, and Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. Chief Perry Bellegarde, Prince Albert Grand Council Chief Brian Hardlotte, the hon. member from Melfort, and His Honour Lieutenant Governor Russell Mirasty, who is a proud member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, were all in attendance.

Because of the rain the event had to be relocated to the Montreal Lake gym, but the relocation did not dampen the spirits of the day, Mr. Speaker. In addition to the flag and plaque unveiling, the 130th anniversary will also be marked with the Treaty 6 Adhesion Scholarship Fund open to post-secondary students

from the three communities. I ask all members join me in commemorating the 130th anniversary of the adhesion of the Woodland Cree to Treaty 6. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Throne Speech Comments

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I listened carefully to some of the Sask Party backbenchers to see if they had any good ideas because there weren't many new ideas in the Speech from the Throne. However as it turns out, their backbencher ideas were even worse.

The member from Moose Jaw North encouraged people to “. . . go on the internet and you can put in ‘climate change hoax’ and you can find thousands of pieces of information from scientists that also say that we don't have to be alarmists.”

The member from Kelvington-Wadena wondered aloud if the science has even settled on climate change saying:

Mr. Speaker, for anybody with any intelligence, to say that the science is settled, well let's say that they can go back to the Flat Earth Society and live in a world where they will fall off the earth if they reach beyond what they can see. If the science is settled, let's just send all those scientists home, because their work is clearly done.

But the biggest whopper came from the member from Canora-Pelly, who accused New Democrats of failing to attend the opening of the children's hospital, an opening that the Sask Party government later apologized for failing to invite New Democrats to in the first place.

We've known for a long time that this cabinet is out of ideas and they're running on fumes, but now we know that the backbench is even further out to lunch on the issues facing Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Canoe Kayak National Championships

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On August 27th I had the pleasure of bringing greetings on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan to the Sprint Canoe Kayak National Championships. Mr. Speaker, these games brought together officials, coaches, volunteers, sponsors, and, most importantly, athletes from across Canada to beautiful Wascana Lake. Not only is Wascana Lake a popular area for our residents, but it's also home to the Wascana Racing Canoe Club, which has served this community for many years.

Mr. Speaker, it was a chilly morning but that did not stop athletes from bringing their best to compete in these historic games. I especially would like to congratulate Jayden Hingley and Christian Patterson from Wascana Racing Canoe Club on their first-place finish in the under 18 men's 1000 metre race.

Mr. Speaker, this government is proud to support the Wascana Racing Canoe Club through Sask Sport and Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund. I had a great time at this event and was

inspired by the work ethics and determination of the 800 athletes in attendance.

So, Mr. Speaker, I invite all the members to join me in congratulating all athletes on their incredible performance, and to thank the volunteers and sponsors that made this championship a success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

Pep Rally for Education in Lloydminster

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every fall the Lloydminster Public School Division holds an annual pep rally to celebrate the beginning of the school year. But, Mr. Speaker, this pep rally isn't for the students. It's for the teachers, the bus drivers, the support staff, maintenance workers, and office administrators. This pep rally is an opportunity for professionals to collaborate, share ideas, and get excited about the upcoming school year, making it their best one yet. Mr. Speaker, I myself in the past have been a speaker at this annual pep rally.

And this year the participants of the pep rally were treated to a keynote speech by Shelley Moore who spoke about the importance of inclusive education, which directly aligns with the Lloydminster Public School Division core values that every kid can achieve excellence. Through collaborating, the school division says it will continue to focus on students' academic successes and continue to make progress on reconciliation to make their schools welcoming and inviting for Indigenous students.

Mr. Speaker, from the pep rally, the school division said there was feedback to create a more engaging learning experience for parents and teachers that encourages them to be a part of their students' academic experiences.

We all know that learning doesn't stop once a student leaves the classroom, and I commend the Lloydminster public school board for working towards providing an inclusive, positive learning environment for everyone at their schools. Thank you.

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

[14:00]

Argo Wildfire Benefit Concert

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past April the Argo wildfire ravaged over 22,000 acres of pasture and damaged 75 miles of fence. Ranchers in the area were left devastated, just a few weeks from summer. But, Mr. Speaker, ranchers are nothing if not resilient, and Saskatchewan people will always lend a hand to those in need.

So on July 6th, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association hosted their Argo Wildfire Benefit Concert. Mr. Speaker, I was proud to attend this concert, which brought in a staggering \$75,000 to help those affected. I would like to especially highlight the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. Mr. Speaker, the Wildlife Federation generously sponsored the performance of Saskatchewan's own Chris Henderson. While the funds raised

from this concert will not replace everything that was lost, these donations will go a long way towards helping ranchers recover.

Mr. Speaker, this concert is just another example of how Saskatchewan communities band together in the face of adversity. When we unite, there isn't a single thing that Saskatchewan citizens can't overcome.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating the Saskatchewan Stock Growers for an incredible fundraiser and thanking the many individuals who helped contribute to its success.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — All right, with that spirited introduction, question period. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Condition of Saskatchewan Hospital Building

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the government was quite dismissive when asked about the water at the new North Battleford hospital, Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford — water that cannot be drunk by patients or staff safely because of levels of lead and copper — dismissive about that very serious issue, which leaves me with a question, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier: is there anything else that we should know about what's wrong with the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that the Minister of Central Services has asked for an audit to be done with respect to the North Battleford hospital, the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, to ensure that if there are any other delinquencies, if there are any other challenges with the construction of that particular facility, Mr. Speaker, that we're able to identify what those are and ensure that they are corrected sooner rather than later, Mr. Speaker. This is unfortunate. We've had an issue that has been discussed with respect to the roof. We have an issue that we're getting to the bottom of with respect to some irregularities with the water in the facility, Mr. Speaker.

As we know, many of us in this Assembly were up for the opening of that facility, Mr. Speaker. It truly is a solid investment, replacing a century-old facility, a century-old needed facility, providing a service for all Saskatchewan families, Mr. Speaker. And as you walk through on a tour of that facility, it truly is a facility that is conducive to healing, Mr. Speaker. You see the natural light that is coming into all of the rooms and the flow of the building. It is a good building. It is a building that we will ensure that is constructed to the standards that were to be expected, Mr. Speaker. And we will ensure that that is a building that will be here to service the public, service the families, and service the members of our families here in this province for decades to come.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question was whether or not there was anything else we should know about. And it's disappointing the Premier chose not to share the

information that surely he has: that wards have been closed at that hospital due to flooding, that patients have been moved from unit to unit due to flooding, that the admissions unit has been closed due to mould, and that we've got many patients who are not able to get into that facility, are in other hospitals or in the community or on the streets because of these serious deficiencies in this hospital.

Mr. Speaker, we were supposed to get a brand new, wonderful hospital. Instead it seems we're getting a mess. Will the Premier come clean about what's really going on at the North Battleford Saskatchewan Hospital?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of the issue that the Leader of the Opposition is aware of. I would appreciate if he would inform the minister, Mr. Speaker. We'll be checking into it.

But the fact of the matter is is that the minister has asked for a facility audit to be done of that facility to ensure that it is constructed to the specifications that are required for that facility, Mr. Speaker. The results of that audit, to answer the Leader of the Opposition's question, the results of that audit will most certainly be made public.

But here is one thing that we can rest assured, Mr. Speaker, is the case. If the NDP [New Democratic Party] had the opportunity, we would not actually be replacing that particular facility. Mr. Speaker, there was a decision made on this side of the House to invest just under \$400 million into a facility, Mr. Speaker, a much-needed investment into a facility that is servicing the needs of Saskatchewan families, members of our families across this province, Mr. Speaker. Those members on this side of the House that chose to make not only that investment in the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, please. Finish off your answer, Mr. Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, but also investments in health care and education, Mr. Speaker, investments over the course of the last 12 years totalling over \$30 billion in the province.

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

Number of Educational Assistants

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Aside from the revisionist history there, it's exceedingly weak that the stories of flooding that we've been hearing for weeks and weeks out of North Battleford, this government hasn't even heard about, hasn't even had a look at. Why the failure to even supervise your own building, Mr. Speaker? It's embarrassing.

Also embarrassing is that this Premier ran to be leader of his party on a promise of 400 new educational assistants. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we were in Prince Albert for a town hall, and at that town hall we heard from parents, we heard from educational assistants, we heard from teachers, teachers who were in tears

because they were telling us how much harder it is for them to do their job, Mr. Speaker, harder because of Sask Party cuts that have created the crisis in our classrooms. Why did the Premier campaign on this promise of 400 new educational assistants, then promptly break that promise?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the \$30 million was provided to the school boards across this province to enhance the teacher, the educational assistants in our classrooms to enhance the supports for learning that we need, the people, the boots on the ground. Mr. Speaker, it was part of \$2.48 billion that was invested in education this year, Mr. Speaker, part of the largest investment in education in the history of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we're proud of that investment to ensure that our children, that next generation, have every opportunity for success in our classrooms across this province, Mr. Speaker, and it's a trend. It's a trend of increasing education budgets, Mr. Speaker. It's a trend of an increasing investment in education and in that next generation, Mr. Speaker, and it's a trend that's going to continue.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's the embarrassment that continues. There's no 400 EAs [educational assistant] that were promised by this Premier. We actually have \$400 less per student in Saskatchewan. With 171,000 students in our classrooms, that's over \$70 million less if you look at the per-student funding, Mr. Speaker.

It's no wonder with that kind of shortfall that this Premier found a political opportunity in promising new EAs. Hey, it may be even what won him the leadership, but it shouldn't end at the end of the leadership race because the work has not been done. The support was not there. Mr. Speaker, where is the support that this Premier promised educators, promised our students? Because it sure wasn't in the Throne Speech.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that those facts are just simply wrong. They're wrong, Mr. Speaker. \$10,900 — that is the per-student funding — represents a 23 per cent increase over the days when the NDP had the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, these are the facts: \$2.48 billion is the investment into education, the line item investment out of the provincial budget, Mr. Speaker; \$1.9 billion of that went to school boards, Mr. Speaker, so that they can appropriate those funds to provide the very best learning atmosphere, the very best opportunity for our children to have the opportunity for a successful education, Mr. Speaker. This is the record of this side of the government. This is the record of this side of the government over the last 12 years, Mr. Speaker.

And there's going to be opportunities for us to continue to participate in conversations that are happening today around classroom size, Mr. Speaker, which has stayed essentially stagnant. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education is engaging on

a classroom composition conversation. This is the commitment of this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, to always work with our stakeholders, the school boards, the teachers, the parents, the school community councils . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Lakeview, please come to order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, it's members on this side of the House, the Minister of Education, the Deputy Premier for the province of Saskatchewan, that will remain committed to investing in every opportunity for our children to be successful.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Premier stood up and delivered those lines in front of the teachers, the educational assistants, the parents, the school board trustees that I was talking to in Prince Albert yesterday, he'd realize how clueless and tone deaf it is to try to say that everything is fine when we have a real-life crisis in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker.

Just last week, Mr. Speaker, I spoke to a mom who was in tears. These were tears of pride, pride because she was showing me a video of her son who was able to read a book for the first time. He was eight years old, and he's a boy with autism. And she was so proud of what his accomplishment was. But at the same time as she felt that pride, she was worried, worried that her son isn't going to be able to reach his full potential because she doesn't see the support in the classrooms that he needs. Mr. Speaker, to her that promise of 400 new educational assistants, it wasn't about getting somebody the leadership, Mr. Speaker. It was about her quality of life, the quality of life of her son.

Mr. Speaker, when will this Premier stop pointing fingers, stop saying everything's fine, acknowledge that there is a crisis in our classrooms, and get to work fixing the problems that his government has caused?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, we've acknowledged, and I've stood on my feet in this House and in countless meetings across this province, Mr. Speaker, acknowledging that we've got some challenges in our classrooms. But I can tell you one thing. I can tell the people of Saskatchewan there's no crisis in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker. We've got some challenges that we need to face.

And as far as funding is concerned, Mr. Speaker, I was proud to see my Premier commit \$30 million in the budget the year before last to support classrooms. Promise made, promise delivered, Mr. Speaker. Twenty-seven more million dollars in the budget last year, Mr. Speaker — the largest education budget in the history of this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know we have more work to do. Just two weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, I announced that we were going to move forward with an urgent consultation to deal with the issue of class composition. Within the next couple of days, within the next couple of days, Mr. Speaker, I'll be releasing the terms of

reference for that work so that we can get to work to help deal with the issue of composition in the classroom.

It's a very complex issue. I've been spending a lot of time having conversations, Mr. Speaker, with people who are experts in this area to help us develop a path forward to help alleviate some of those challenges. We're committed to doing that, Mr. Speaker. And over the next little while, Mr. Speaker, the opposition and the people of Saskatchewan will see exactly how committed we are to that.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Education blamed the Regina Public School Board for overcrowding in Harbour Landing School. He said it was the board's fault for offering French immersion there in the first place, instead of taking responsibility himself.

It's this government that isn't giving school divisions adequate and predictable funding that they need to deliver on education. It's this government that has known for years that another school in Harbour Landing is badly needed. And it is this government that has its hand firmly on the purse strings, and ultimately decides if and when a new school will be built or not.

Mr. Speaker, even if a new school is announced today or in the budget, it won't open for another three years. What is the minister going to do now, instead of blaming the school boards, to address overcrowding at Harbour Landing School?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, you can't talk about overutilization in one school without also talking about the underutilization in other schools in that area, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased that the Regina Public School Board has recognized the fact that there is capacity in one of the neighbouring schools, Mr. Speaker, to be able to take some of that pressure off that particular school.

[14:15]

But it's fair to suggest — and I made this comment yesterday in the House and I'll say it again today — that the decision to move French immersion into that school was made after that school was designed, Mr. Speaker, which put significant pressure on enrolment. In addition, Mr. Speaker, almost 150 kids from outside that catchment area are going to that school.

So I'm happy that the Regina Public School Board . . . I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, that the Regina Public School Board has recognized the fact that they can utilize the excess capacity in the neighbouring school to take some enrolment pressure off Harbour Landing School while we move forward with the discussion about capital priorities in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker, just like we did over the last year when we recognized the capital priority in Lakeview constituency here in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker. And we'll continue to have those discussions.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the minister acts as if it's no big deal, but I'll tell you it is a big deal to those families who're being impacted. And yesterday we were in Prince Albert with my colleagues the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Prince Albert Northcote. And in Prince Albert, like every community that we've been to, the Sask Party's cuts are hitting classrooms hard.

We heard from teachers in tears who are worried about their students and from trustees, staff, and administrators who are being forced to do without successful programs just to balance the budgets. Maybe the minister would like to tell school boards which programs they should cut next to make up for his failure to fully fund public education in Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, the record investment that this government has made in public education in last year's budget goes to the school boards, Mr. Speaker. That's unconditional funding so school boards can make those decisions, Mr. Speaker. But with respect to the city of Moose Jaw, I can tell the members and the public that the enrolments in Moose Jaw have pretty much been flat over the last number of years, and on top of that, Mr. Speaker, a 20 per cent increase in funding to those school boards over that same period of time.

And as far as capital is concerned, a new École St. Anne School in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, a significant renovation at Carlton, and about three and a half million dollars in preventative maintenance, all of which wasn't available when those people were on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

We'll continue to look to ensure that we're funding education properly, Mr. Speaker. And as we go through our budget development, Mr. Speaker, and as we go through and analyze the conversations that we're having in terms of ensuring that we're providing the right resources to our school boards for the children in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan can count on this government to ensure that we do just that.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, if the minister thinks that the needs in Prince Albert have remained flat, he needs to have some more conversations in Prince Albert. At our town hall meeting last night in Prince Albert, we met with a teacher and he was nearly in tears. He has 30 students in his class, students with multiple mental health issues including high risk of suicide. He's seen important supports and programs for kids cut away over the past three years. He wants to be able to help each of those students reach their full potential, but he knows that he simply cannot do it.

What would the Minister of Education say to that teacher? What would he say to the teachers we heard from yesterday who cherish the rare moments when they actually get to teach their lesson plans instead of putting out fires? And what does he say to all of the other teachers across the province who are being asked to do more and more with less and less?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I'm not sure how many times I have to stand on my feet to remind the member opposite that this is the largest education budget in the history of the province, Mr. Speaker — more resources for school boards to be able to provide the resources that they need, Mr. Speaker. And we share that vision. We want every child in Saskatchewan to reach their full potential. We've said that, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we continue to make the investments that we make in public education, Mr. Speaker.

But we know, Mr. Speaker, by talking to teachers and by talking to trustees, that the real issue in our classrooms is one of composition. Class size isn't as important an issue to most teachers in Saskatchewan as the composition issue. And the member opposite understands that, Mr. Speaker. She's a former trustee.

And that's why we're proceeding, Mr. Speaker, to have an urgent consultation with respect to the issue of composition in our classroom, Mr. Speaker. It's a very complex issue. It doesn't affect every classroom. It doesn't affect every school and it certainly doesn't affect every division, Mr. Speaker. So the solutions aren't simple. They're just not simple, Mr. Speaker. But this side of the House is committed to moving forward, to having the dialogue we need, and to come up with the solutions that we need, Mr. Speaker, to affect children in the classroom. And we're committed to continuing to do that.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Changes to Income Assistance Program

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, back when the Sask Party introduced its new income support program, those on the front lines helping the most vulnerable were raising the alarm about the risks. Prior to the changes, clients could choose to sign the rent portion of their payments directly over to their landlords. Now they no longer have that option.

Within just weeks of the start of this new program, social and housing workers have seen some of their most vulnerable clients receiving eviction notices because of the problems with the new system. They're seeing more of their clients falling through the cracks. Will the minister listen to these groups, reinstate the letter of guarantee, and return the option to have rent go directly to landlords?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud to get up and talk about our new program that we have implemented in social services, the Saskatchewan income support program. Mr. Speaker, this program is designed to be able to assist people who come on to social services and how they can get off of social services. We implement a great strategy called motivational interviewing, Mr. Speaker, where each individual that is coming in is doing a special intake to be able to understand what it is that brought them to social services, Mr. Speaker, and what are the barriers that are going to get them back off social services to living a fully independent life.

In reference to the letter of guarantee, I've met with the Saskatchewan Landlords Association several times. They voiced some of their concerns and we're taking those concerns under advisement, and we commit to ongoing work with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, that minister needs to get his head out of the sand. Taking away the choice to have rents go directly to landlords is setting people up to fail, which will lead to more evictions and more homelessness. And winter is here already. Shelters are already struggling to manage, and now they will be left to pick up the slack, costing us all much more in the long run. Why won't the minister admit this is a bad idea, listen to front-line workers and landlords' associations, and reinstate the direct payment of rent option and the letter of guarantee?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to advise the House that for the past 25-plus years this has been happening on our transitional employment program, Mr. Speaker. We have been allowing our clients to go and make that. We have faith in our clients to be able to have the abilities to go and pay their rent, Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite, who don't have any faith in our clients.

Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that it's on the record that there are no cuts within social services. We've had an 89 per cent increase in our social assistance program since 2007, an additional \$10 million in our programs in this year's current budget, Mr. Speaker. But for them to say that this program is set up to failure, Mr. Speaker, I think it's set up to succeed for our clients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Review of Emergency Health Care

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the minister spoke of a sudden influx in demand in our emergency rooms. There's no sudden influx. This has been going on for years. He knows full well Angela McLean's experience wasn't an isolated incident and that every single measure for emergency waits has grown on his watch. We asked the minister to conduct a full public review of our overcrowded emergency rooms, and he didn't answer the question. Again, to the minister: will he commit to a full public review today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did answer the question yesterday. When the member opposite asked about a review, I indicated that I've asked the CEO of the Saskatchewan Health Authority to do a review of the situation, to report back to me, to report back with recommendations for what actions could be taken.

Mr. Speaker, I also pointed out yesterday I had the opportunity yesterday to meet with the Health minister from Manitoba. We

discussed this amongst a number of other issues. He tells me that they're having the same problems in Manitoba. In fact I know for a fact provinces across the country are dealing with this, Mr. Speaker. The opposition are trying to position this somehow that there was cuts to health care spending that led to this. This isn't the case, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite yesterday was quoting numbers talking about per capita decreases in spending from the CIHI [Canadian Institute for Health Information] report, Mr. Speaker. She accurately mentioned that between '15-16 and '17-18 that it decreased per capita, because of a growing population, by four and a half per cent, Mr. Speaker. She neglected to mention since 2007, it increased by 47 per cent.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very clearly talking about the past few years, which this minister doesn't seem to want to focus on in any way. And just because there are other ministers across the country that may not be doing their jobs doesn't excuse him not doing his. People deserve to know they're going to get the care they need when they enter the emergency room. And the minister needs to admit that he is failing to get the job done.

The minister tells us the Saskatchewan Health Authority is conducting a review of Angela's situation that's to be concluded in the coming weeks. Will the minister commit today that all the documents of the SHA's [Saskatchewan Health Authority] review will be made public? And if not, why not?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to get to her comment about Health ministers across the country at the end of my answer. But, Mr. Speaker, first of all, this is a very serious issue. We are extremely concerned by this. This is about the health and well-being of the citizens of the province, Mr. Speaker, and there should be discussion about this in this House. I've asked the SHA to review this. We'll make their findings public, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as far as the member's sort of smear of me doing my job as Health minister and all the other Health ministers across the country, I should remind her that in the past, one of the Health ministers that I've had those discussions with has been the Health minister, the NDP minister, from British Columbia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Increase in Number of Retail Cannabis Permits

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today our government made an announcement regarding the allocation of future cannabis retail permits in Saskatchewan. As you may recall, non-medical cannabis became legal in Canada just over a year ago. At that time Saskatchewan implemented a

distribution system which included private retailers, wholesalers, and producers, with SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] assuming regulatory oversight.

At the time of legalization, we chose to adopt a fairly cautious approach with a limited number of retail outlets in an effort to ensure public safety and community concerns were addressed. We also committed to reviewing the system 12 to 18 months after legalization to determine whether to allocate additional retail store permits going forward.

During the almost 13 months since legalization, we received calls and inquiries from many individuals and businesses interested in opening additional cannabis retail outlets in communities around Saskatchewan. We've also heard from community officials and law enforcement around the province that the overall transition to legalized cannabis has been relatively uneventful.

The plan we announced today will see additional retail cannabis permits available in two phases. The first phase, beginning in April 2020, SLGA will begin accepting applications for cannabis retail permits in communities with populations of less than 2,500. This state includes the communities who have not yet been issued a permit as a result of the permittees not proceeding with their application.

The second phase will start in September 2020. SLGA will begin accepting permit applications for retail stores in all communities in the province. We believe this change will allow us to meet the interests from potential businesses while also helping to improve access to legal supply and also discouraging the black market that is still operating.

While we're moving to an open market regarding the number of cannabis retail permits, the requirements to obtain a retail permit will remain the same. This means applicants will still be subject to requirements such as good character, inventory tracking and security, as well as meeting any municipal restrictions that may exist in each community. Municipalities also continue to have the ability to choose not to have cannabis retail stores in their community.

[14:30]

New retailers will continue to be required to operate a storefront location, with the option to also sell product online within Saskatchewan. It's also important to note that the supply of cannabis for permitted retailers will continue to come from the over 50 permitted wholesalers and registered licensed producers. This has not changed.

Saskatchewan has taken a unique approach to cannabis compared to other provinces and territories in Canada. There have been many positive comments from industry about our private system. We look forward to working with individuals and businesses in the months and years to come as they continue to establish new cannabis retail stores in communities around our great province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to

thank the minister for providing us an advance copy of his remarks today. We're happy to see the market open up more for cannabis retail permits. It was a concern that we had initially a couple of years ago when the original system was announced, that the retail permit numbers provided were too limited. So we're happy to see that it's opening up more and providing more licences to the province. Unfortunately the restrictive process that was used a year ago has pushed out some of the entrepreneurs who would have stayed in this province. But like I said, glad to see that it's opening up a bit more now.

Saskatchewan has some of the lowest sale rates of cannabis in the province, unlike our neighbours to the west under the former NDP government. They had an open market system that we were advocating for here as well, where they allowed for more retail permits. As a result, they have some of the highest sale rates in the country and they've seen their black market cannabis sales reduced as a result. And that's what we want to see here in Saskatchewan as well, is a reduction in the black market cannabis sales.

I do want to point out to the minister's attention another provision that Alberta has that we would like to see here as well — it was another concern that we had initially — of too many larger scale cannabis retail companies owning too much of the market. Alberta has a provision where no persons or entity can hold more than 15 per cent of the numbers of retail cannabis licences. This would be something that would be beneficial for Saskatchewan as well so we could see that Saskatchewan people, especially small-scale retailers, have the opportunity to participate in this market. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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.]

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

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to respond to the 2019 Speech from the Throne. Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I get too invested in supporting our government's vision, I would like to take the time to highlight the ultimate sacrifice that one of our brave young paramedics made last Friday afternoon in the Beauval, Saskatchewan area.

Tragically two young people, a young boy and a toddler travelling in a truck involved in the accident, were killed. They were from the Beauval-Jans Bay area. Our sympathies and prayers go out to the families as they mourn the loss of the two children and the hospitalization of family members.

And as well a young paramedic, Leigh Schroeder, originally from Regina, was killed in the accident. Based in the Meadow

Lake service area, he was responding to a call in difficult weather conditions. Tragically he did not survive the accident.

Leigh received his paramedic certificate in 2018 from Sask Polytech in Regina. He was just beginning his career in the paramedic service. Mr. Deputy Speaker, his paramedic partner, a young woman, was taken to the hospital in serious condition. Stories from the scene indicate that she acted bravely in providing care for all those she could, going above and beyond her duties, all while being severely injured.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are just over 2,000 EMS [emergency medical services] members in Saskatchewan, serving in over hundreds of communities. In 2018-19 they attended approximately 131,000 calls, travelling millions of miles. Friday afternoon was a reminder, as Trevor Lowey, interim executive director of the Association of Saskatchewan Paramedics, said, and I quote:

Any time a member of the EMS family dies, it's a reminder of how dangerous the job can be. It underlines our vulnerability when we are responding to someone else's emergency and that, at any time, we can also become an emergency ourselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, paramedics often deal with tragedies as part of their job. Fortunately it's very rare that they have to deal with one of their own. So I encourage each of us, as members, to think of all our emergency and health care providers, whether they are volunteer first responders, our paramedics, our ER [emergency room] nurses or doctors, STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service] professionals or dispatchers who may every once in a while just need a reminder from us that we appreciate the work that they do and the risks that they take to ensure that we, the residents of Saskatchewan, get the best care possible.

As tradition bears, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also ask for your indulgence now in allowing me to thank the various people who continue to support me in the work that I do for the residents, constituents of Melville-Saltcoats. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my wife, Carla, who I had the opportunity to introduce yesterday, continues to be my rock of support. I have learned by the misfortunes of the member from Saskatoon University not to ask if she has shovelled the driveway out yet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another key member of my family who is my motivation for what I do is my new granddaughter, Tessa Ryan Kaeding, who arrived in early July. She's a little sister to Brynn. She's an extremely happy baby who is also far less follicly challenged than the member from Carrot River or myself. Mr. Deputy Speaker, grandkids can certainly bring a new fresh perspective to the reason for our existence, the reason that we serve. We just want to leave the world in a better place than what we found it, and if nothing else, for them to improve on it.

I certainly appreciate the very supportive constituents of Melville-Saltcoats who provide almost daily encouragement to keep looking after their interests when given the opportunity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd also like to thank my constituency assistant, Rick McIntyre, who works tirelessly to provide the support that the great folks in Melville-Saltcoats deserve. I have to admire him, that when he goes home from work, he then jumps

on a combine for the rest of the evening to help family members complete harvest, which they fortunately did on Saturday night.

As well I need to thank my previous office staff at Government Relations who worked very hard to get this member up to speed on the issues of the day that related to Government Relations or First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs. I'd also like to congratulate our GR's [Government Relations] MA [ministerial assistant], Kelly Deck, who had a baby boy on September 2nd. I would also be remiss if I didn't congratulate the new Lieutenant Governor, His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty. His Honour was a very valuable member of our Government Relations team when I was minister, and he and his wife, Donna, will serve this province incredibly well in their new role.

In my new rural health and seniors shop, I'd like to have my appreciation recorded for all the hard work that my new chief of staff, David Keogan, has provided, and the work that Adam Nelson had put into getting me up to speed as best they could. The rest of our energetic crew such as Stacey Ferguson, Abby Rutko, Carter Zazula, Holly Buzila, Kirsten Holowaty, Cindy Moffatt, and Whitney Kelsch. Whitney is a former paramedic, and her insight into that world is highly valued.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to acknowledge the stress and strain that our grain and cattle producers have endured during this production year. From anxiously looking up to the skies for most of the summer to wondering when it was going to warm up, to wondering when it was going to stop raining, wondering when their federal government was going to maybe improve trade relations with our trade partners, it's been a stressful year from the beginning . . . [inaudible] . . . not sure if this is the end of harvest or not. Remarkably, with the new plant and animal genetics, there's been an amazing yield in the end. And remarkably, with the new crop and animal technology that ag producers are using, harvest, I believe, we've only ended up with maybe 10 per cent left to go.

Our farming members from Lumsden-Morse, from Wood River, Arm River, and Moosomin have a lot of work to do ahead of them in their spare time to keep, to dry, or keep the grain in condition before they get it to market.

As well I wish all the producers out there to ensure that they look after themselves and their neighbours as they cope with the stresses through the coming months. I hope everyone appreciates just a little bit more the effort that went into putting the food on your plate that you had for lunch or for dinner today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a new decade of growth is a tremendous, positive, forward-looking statement. It recognizes where we have come from and provides vision as to where we are headed to. We have gone through over a decade of record population growth. 160,000 new people from over 170 countries have landed in Saskatchewan because they saw an opportunity created by a strong and growing economy. A local example of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is in my constituency, the P.J. Gillen School in Esterhazy. The teaching staff there thought they could identify or detect approximately 50 different dialects that are spoken in their school today.

We've seen record infrastructure investment and development, and record investment in our Crowns. We've invested over

12.5 billion into infrastructure going into new health care facilities, highways, and building and repairing schools and investing over \$17 billion into Crown infrastructure. I will identify later how that has added up in my constituency.

We've seen record employment, nearly 593,000 people working in the province as of June 2019. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my community of Churchbridge we have experienced population growth of 23 per cent in the last 12 years due to the economic growth provided by the government's positive economic directions. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are real changes, real improvements that the people in Melville-Saltcoats have experienced, the people of Saskatchewan have experienced.

We have a new school in Langenburg, a new arena in Melville, a new group home in Esterhazy. We have major upgrades to most of our schools and improvements made at long-term care facilities in Esterhazy and Melville. We have had almost \$80 million allocated to our constituency in the last 12 years invested in highway and bridge repairs and improvements. Melville is looking forward to our government's commitment to highway safety with the installation of passing lanes between Melville and Yorkton and Yorkton and Canora, a major traffic corridor and a strip of highway that has unfortunately seen a number of serious accidents in the past number of years. I know myself, and the members from Canora-Pelly and Yorkton can attest to the significant increase in traffic on this major highway since this province has grown in the past few years.

Significant investments are continuing to be made in upgrades to our area with cellular, internet, and fibre optics network with SaskTel. Overhead power line replacements by SaskPower are ongoing in many rural areas of our constituency and across the province. As well, my constituents will benefit from the investments we've made provincially in the new Regina bypass as they get their products to the rest of the province and to Western ports. They will benefit from the new Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, as we already have constituents with family members that are working there or have family members that have been patients there. I have constituents who are members of the STARS team where we just recently announced continued funding as well as renewed investment and upgrading their fleet of helicopters.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the constituency of Melville-Saltcoats we have over 1,100 full-time jobs at Esterhazy Mosaic K1, K2, and K3. Another 1,000 jobs directly provided to the area from Nutrien in Rocanville. We have estimated well over another 500 jobs provided locally just to support the potash industry in both Esterhazy and Rocanville. Mining is an important part of Saskatchewan's economic success. This government has and will continue to encourage expansion in new mineral exploration to support the discovery of emerging and undeveloped commodities such as base and precious metals.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when companies like Mosaic are successful, everyone in the province and beyond benefits. These companies become tremendous corporate citizens, contributing to the well-being of all residents in Saskatchewan whether they're involved directly in mining or not. Mosaic is a proud sponsor of so many provincial and local groups, charities, and events such as \$40,000 that went to Wounded Warriors, a program to support Saskatchewan's first responders; \$3 million

to fund programming in the new Child Life Zone at the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital as well as providing \$4 million to kick off the capital campaign in 2011; \$2.5 million to help 12 non-profits in Regina, Moose Jaw, and Saskatoon this year who have a focus on food and food security. They have provided a million dollars to the Hospitals of Regina Foundation, the cardiac care unit, and \$2.5 million for STARS in 2017, as well as providing \$5.5 million in seed money in their launch year in 2011.

On a local scale, Mosaic is very generous financially, donating millions of dollars in supporting local swimming pool projects, school refurbishment projects, sports facility upgrades, arts facilities improvements in literally every community that they have employees living in the Melville-Saltcoats constituency. Bottom line to this story is Mosaic is able to be so generous because there is a strong equitable royalty structure that allows companies like Mosaic to remain profitable, which in turn allows them to generously give back to the communities that they exist in.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new growth plan will take into action to ensure competitiveness and strength of an industry that supports more than 30,000 families in Saskatchewan, a strong oil and gas sector. There will be targeted incentives that will support growth, diversification, and innovation in the energy and resource sector. There are new opportunities in exploration and discoveries in uranium projects despite lower prices. Finally we can have an open and civil conversation on the emissions-free energy production that nuclear energy provides. Small modular reactors can use Saskatchewan refined and produced uranium wherever they may be located in Saskatchewan, in Canada, or in the world.

[14:45]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, part of our growth plan is seeing this province reach the 50 per cent renewable energy supply by 2030. Clean power is currently being produced with the assistance of our carbon capture and storage unit at Boundary dam 3. It will remove its 3 millionth tonne of CO₂ from the atmosphere this year. Companies and leaders from around the world are coming to observe and recommend to their prospective governments to consider carbon capture with their coal-powered generation.

In addition a number of large commercial green-energy projects have been installed throughout the province: wind farms in Moosomin, Grenfell, Assiniboia, Gull Lake, Swift Current, Regina, Morse, Chaplin, and Riverhurst are currently operating or in the development stages, providing over 5.6 per cent of total power generation. By 2020 we could have well over 7 per cent of our power needs supplied by wind. First Nations are participating in this exciting new opportunity, such as Cowessess First Nation providing power generation through a joint wind-solar project near Regina.

Design and development of a biomass cogenerator was just approved for a site at Big River, Saskatchewan, working with Meadow Lake Tribal Council and a sawmill that they own, utilizing waste material from their sawmilling operations to produce power and supply back to the SaskPower grid.

Deep Earth Energy Production Corp., or DEEP, is currently developing a large geothermal well near Estevan. This is a

first-of-its-kind commercial geothermal project in Canada which has amazing potential. Currently SaskPower operates hydroelectric sites at Uranium City, Elbow, Nipawin, and Sandy Bay. They have natural gas energy production facilities at Landis, Meadow Lake, and North Battleford.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we expect to reach 50 per cent renewables by 2030. This will put us on the path to significantly reduce emissions, checking many of the boxes on our Prairie Resilience plan.

This government believes in innovation and is encouraging innovation to flourish in the future. Our carbon tax is not encouraging innovation. A great example of Sask technology is the work being done by the Crop Development Centre in Saskatoon, which has provided world class pulse crop varieties that will place Saskatchewan in the forefront of pulse exports. Developing varieties adaptable to our prairie conditions resulted in pulse crops now being grown on millions of acres on the prairies. This has resulted in a reduced carbon footprint by agriculture and will help this government in its drive to grow our exports as we continue to develop new markets and expand existing markets for what we produce here, checking boxes in both our Prairie Resilience plan and our new growth plan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in August of this year I was honoured to be appointed Minister Responsible for Seniors. I am looking forward to advocating on behalf of our seniors at the highest level of government, the cabinet table. Mr. Deputy Speaker, seniors represent a very important demographic in our province. We are anticipating by 2027 that seniors will compose over 20 per cent of our population.

There are a number of initiatives that we have begun that will continue to support our seniors now and into the future. Currently over 50 per cent of our health budget impacts seniors directly, which sets the table for senior care into the future. Operating funding for long-term care facilities is up \$236 million since 2007, which now stands at \$744 million in 2018-19. We are continuing to invest in front-line staff in both long-term care facilities and in the area of home care. We also continue to work on an initiative called individualized funding which provides clients who want more choice to manage their own support services. Many times this has resulted in keeping seniors at home where they're surrounded by their family and support network, a situation where they do their best.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government continues to invest in building long-term care facilities. We have completed 12 facilities throughout Saskatchewan, in addition to starting a new build in Meadow Lake and developing a plan to replace Pioneer Village in Regina and in Grenfell. Mr. Deputy Speaker, more work will be done in our future to provide quality care facilities for our seniors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, an important statistic is less than 5 per cent of our seniors live in a long-term care facility. The greatest majority live at home their entire life. We will continue to focus on providing services that will help our seniors maintain their independence and well-being living in their home.

Another new initiative that we're supporting is community health centres. Just this noon hour, I had the pleasure of attending the

official grand opening of the new Four Directions Community Health Centre on Albert Street in Regina. This is a key component of the Connected Care strategy which is enhancing team-based care in the community. Community health centres deliver on the on-site and home-based outreach services through co-located interdisciplinary teams. These sites are strategically located to provide services tailored to meet specific neighbourhood needs. The centre we opened at Market Mall in Saskatoon features specialty care for older adults to bridge the gap between the family physician's office and the hospital, and supporting patients dealing with one or more chronic conditions, mental health issues, medication-related problems, and social vulnerability. The centre also provides consultation and support to family physicians who may not have easy access to specialty care for their frail, elderly patients. The centre also works with the on-call services of patients' existing physicians to provide coverage after hours.

There is a core Seniors First team that goes to patients' homes utilizing registered nurses and physicians. As a result of this strategy, there's been a measurable drop in avoidable emergency department visits, improved patient flow, and the ability to help patients avoid unnecessary hospital admissions. Those that are admitted are released with a follow-up strategy to enhance their recovery at home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another initiative that has proven successful is the Seniors First and Seniors House Calls. This program provides at-risk seniors in Regina and Saskatoon with home visits by nurse practitioners and community paramedics. The program receives referrals from the emergency department, hospital acute care units, home care, and family physicians. This initiative has proven to have resulted in at least 100 cases per month where unnecessary emergency room visits have been avoided.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have identified First Link as another extremely valuable program that we will continue to support and improve in the future. It is a referral program that assists physicians, health providers, and other community service providers to directly refer people living with the Alzheimer's disease and other related dementia and their families to the Alzheimer Society for services and support at the time of diagnosis and throughout the duration of their disease.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, during my short time as Minister Responsible for Seniors, I've been introduced to many passionate and knowledgeable individuals who are supporting seniors. In particular I've been introduced to two highly motivated, energetic individuals who specialize in geriatric research in the province and the country: Dr. Jenny Basran and Dr. Brittany Ellis. Dr. Basran is an associate professor of medicine and the head of the division of geriatric medicine. She recently became the senior medical information officer for the SHA. Dr. Ellis is the provincial lead of geriatric emergency medicine at the SHA. Both women are extremely engaged in the role of geriatric medicine in the province and will be making a difference in how we approach geriatric medicine in the future. I look forward to working with them and many others as we move to improve senior care in the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are just a few of the many initiatives that this government has started to better able to serve seniors in

our province. I continue to work with a number of seniors' groups as they provide their input on the key issues that affect seniors. I am excited to continue developing this role in supporting the seniors of Saskatchewan. As our provincial motto states, "from many peoples, strength."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government has a vision for the future, a vision to see this province continue on its upward trajectory of growth. As I tell our grade 12 students at graduation, it is quite possible that your dream job doesn't even exist yet. We will continue to provide opportunities for our youth and young people to pursue their dreams without having to leave the province. We will continue to see our role as exporters grow to be exporters of raw and processed products but also producers of technology. I can't wait to see what the future brings for my kids and grandkids in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I support this government's Throne Speech and will not be supporting the amendment.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Central Services.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to enter into this debate on the 2019 Speech from the Throne. It's an honour to represent the constituency of Saskatoon Willowgrove, and it's an honour to be able to talk about the great work that this Premier, this government, and this team has been doing over the past 12 years and, more importantly, as we look towards the future.

I want to begin by thanking my family and staff. As many members indicate, we do not come here alone. We do not do this work alone and we have several people to thank. I'd like to begin by thanking my wife, Trish, for all that she does. And she's very busy in her own career these days, working with the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, working on the work of her own company, a small company that does work for various agencies around Saskatoon and area, most notably Jubilee Residences, a long-term care facility in Saskatoon. They recently had a very successful Oktoberfest that many members were able to attend, and it was an exciting event that raised some much-needed funds for those little extras that go into facilities such as Jubilee Residences.

My son Carter is in fourth year at the University of Saskatchewan. He's pursuing a degree in commerce and he's at the Edwards School of Business. And most recently he's very pleased he completed the Canadian Securities Course and successfully achieved that. So I am sure that will help him as he looks towards career endeavours here in Saskatchewan.

Our daughter Paige moved away from home last year to attend university in Hamilton, McMaster. She's a swimmer and she's on the swim team there and is very much enjoying living in Hamilton and competing at that level. Luckily we have various family members that are in that area that are able to assist Paige when it comes to Thanksgiving and holidays and all of that. So I'm very, very blessed and very, very pleased to say that my family is all doing well.

I want to talk about my office staff in the building here. My chief of staff, Michael Kindrachuk, he's been with me for some time now. He's a young leader in this province in his own right and is

doing very, very well as a chief of staff.

Brittany Gogel is the ministerial assistant. Brittany is a young mom and she recently joined our office team and has been a welcome addition. Administration is Elaine Peake. And many of the people in the building, I'm sure all members and many people in the building know Elaine very well. And she recently received a long-service award from the Government of Saskatchewan, a well-deserved award and I congratulate her on that.

I have a new constituency assistant, Pamela Hujber. Pamela comes to me from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, where she had a long career there, and is very excited to learn about politics and to work for the people of Saskatoon Willowgrove, and indeed across Saskatchewan. I'd like to thank former constituency assistants Barb Wright and Jenny Alamares for their good work, and I wish them well in future endeavours.

And of course, my newsletter that I'm very proud of, the *Provincial Point of View*, that goes out to some 15,000 people across Saskatoon Willowgrove, across the province, and indeed, to various places across North America as well. Jacquie Klebeck does that and she does an excellent job. So I would like to thank all of the people that enable me to do my job and thank them very humbly for all that they do.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very positive and optimistic, unlike members opposite, about the future of Saskatchewan. Our government has been one that's been instrumental in stewarding incredible growth in this amazing province over the last decade, unprecedented population growth, Mr. Speaker, that we have not seen very often in the last 100 years. Thirteen years of continuous growth, 52 quarters as they're measured, of continual each and every year, more and more people calling Saskatchewan home. And that is something to be positive and optimistic about for sure. Our new decade of growth, our plan for the future will see 1.4 million people in our province and 100,000 more jobs to strengthen our province, as outlined in this Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatoon Willowgrove has seen a substantial portion of that growth. New areas such as Brighton, an area where there was nobody living there in the last election, not one voter in that area of the city, and now about 700 people call that portion of our province and of the constituency home, so indeed that's evidence of the growth that's taking place. People from other provinces coming to Saskatchewan, people from other countries and around the world coming to places like Evergreen, Aspen Ridge, and indeed, Willowgrove itself.

New schools, Mr. Speaker, is something that you will see across the constituency of Saskatoon Willowgrove. And again, it came up in the legislature today and it came up in question period. And it's something that our Education minister and members on this side of the House can be very, very proud of: four new schools in the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency alone. That talks about our commitment to ensuring the finest education for our students across the constituency and across the province.

If members opposite want any examples, they need only look at the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency to see that the children there are receiving the finest education possible. And for that we should credit our Education minister, and let's give him a hand

for that.

[Applause]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I might need another new school in the near future, so I've got to lay the foundation for that, absolutely.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, we are ready for that growth that will continue in the next decade, and we will continue to manage the challenges of growth now and into the future. Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the work that we have already done in managing the economy and our provincial budget through what have been difficult times across the country. We have restored the budget to balance despite resource prices that plummeted leaving a \$1 billion gap in our finances.

In a move to effectively distribute money where it's most needed in 2017 in the Ministry of Central Services, we ended the executive air service. We sold the two airplanes, saving taxpayers \$1 million per year. The third plane was transferred to the Saskatchewan air ambulance. The additional planes ensure that there is always two planes available for medical flights with one backup available and one for scheduled maintenance.

The availability of a third backup aircraft has eliminated the need to charter a plane to meet additional needs at an average cost of \$9,000 per charter flight, including standby fees and mileage. From 2013 to 2017 air ambulance chartered 139 flights to meet additional needs at a total cost of \$1.25 million. Since the additional plane has been available in 2017, no charter flights have been requested.

The repurposed aircraft is also available for life-saving trips to support the organ transport program, making 74 total flights, transporting patients and organs in 2017 and '18. Additionally, Saskatchewan air ambulance is the only air ambulance service in the province capable of transporting pediatric and neonatal transport teams and their patients. A good combination with the new Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in our province. With the addition of the repurposed aircraft, we now have greater capacity to care for the youngest and most medically fragile of our population. This is just one example, Mr. Speaker, of the way our government has been able to balance the budget and at the same time improve services for the people of Saskatchewan.

In Central Services we continue effective leadership by consolidating the Provincial Archives. We all know that the history is a very important record from which to learn and study. And the important way that we keep the records, the way it was being stored before, it was very, very challenging. There were issues of capacity. There were issues of safety. There was storage costs and movement costs for these records. This is also a matter of public accessibility, but our government is committed to protecting and preserving important historical documents and photos from the past for the benefit of future generations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's an important point because anybody who was listening to the member from Athabasca yesterday, or the member from Saskatoon Centre, will know that their revisionist history is not very accurate. It's sometimes

entertaining. And we need an important resource like the Saskatchewan Archives to go and to fact-check those speeches that late into the night are somewhat suspect, but we will continue to do that.

And speaking of suspect, you know, we have to look no further than what the Leader of the Opposition brought up in question period today. It took him one day, colleagues, one day to get his facts all wrong. He came into question period and he had all his papers, and he came across with all this information that was totally wrong. It took him one day to do that.

Mr. Speaker, getting back to the archives, we needed a solution. We worked to consolidate records from five different locations and centred in one building, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation building. The Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan is making improvements to keep important historic records safe and secure. Renovations are under way with no new budgetary funds, I may add, being requested for the renovation. Both the Provincial Archives and the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] will be sharing the cost of this renovation.

We are very proud of the fact that this project isn't even complete and has already enhanced customer service to the public and the research community by increasing its access and its hours. Since August 1st of 2019, the Regina reference room has increased services from three days a week to five days a week, Mr. Speaker. This provides the opportunity for researchers to consult with an archivist, view records each and every business day in person or by distance, by phone or email.

Previously, 85 per cent of the provincial collection was stored without fire suppression or protection. All essential security and environmental measures will be in place to protect these invaluable records, including humidity and temperature control and fire suppression. Having all the records in a single location will mean archival best practices are being followed in Saskatchewan, as transporting between locations puts records at risk for damage or loss. It also fits with the Provincial Capital Commission's mandate to enlarge education and research opportunities within Wascana Centre.

Our government is committed to the Prairie Resilience plan, the reduction of our carbon footprint, a much better plan that's been put forward by the NDP members opposite, as each and every one of them supported their national leader in the recent federal election. We know how that turned out in Saskatchewan, the 0 for 14 in the province. But each and every one of them — I know that for a fact because I've never heard any of them dispute that — they support a carbon tax. And they want nothing more than a higher carbon tax because more of a good thing is better for the people of Saskatchewan.

So you know, we'll wait and hear and we'll be sitting with bated breath to hear throughout this legislative session more about their opinions on the carbon tax and how we can increase it to better benefit the people of Saskatchewan as they put forward their idea. They will hear nothing more than opposition to that from this government, and better ideas.

One of the ways we are supporting our plan is through a pilot project, using technology to monitor and measure electricity consumption at Cooper Place in Regina. Since January of 2018,

this effort has resulted in a 30 per cent cost savings amounting to nearly \$40,000 in savings in one building alone, and a reduction of more than 500 tonnes of carbon emissions per year. This required zero capital investment and upgrades to the building. The technology can also be used to analyze consumption of energy, water, and gas to influence a long-term reduction in our footprint with capital investment in greener methods and technologies.

Based on this success and following an RFP [request for proposal] in the spring of this year, we have expanded this type of green monitoring to 11 additional government buildings, including five commonly referred to as the legislative loop: the Legislative Building itself, Mr. Speaker, the powerhouse, the Walter Scott Building, Lloyd Place, and the T.C. Douglas Building. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a way to actually show leadership in reducing emissions and ensuring that we have the greenest possible buildings possible. And it's possible to do it without increasing the taxes on the people of Saskatchewan, and that's something that the NDP opposite have failed to grasp. It's something that we will continue to try to educate them on as we move forward in this regard, Mr. Speaker.

Work is under way to install monitoring devices to allow us to analyze each building individually and support individual changes to the performance of each building. Greenwave technologies, a Regina-based company, an innovative company for sure, provides data-driven energy management solutions including electrical, water, natural gas in support of their clients' sustainability initiatives.

Greenwave has successfully collaborated with various Crowns and ministries in an effort to add value to their business for the province of Saskatchewan. They have partnered with the Ministry of Education, eight school divisions, 16 school pilots where their focus has been on energy conservation and educational engagement with students. They are supporting the Government of Saskatchewan's Prairie Resilience plan with the Ministry of Environment by quantifying carbon emission reductions within buildings and consulting on the development of the province's carbon offset framework.

Yesterday the member from Regina Northeast talked about carbon emissions in our province. He failed to mention the NDP record on that. Sixteen long years saw the largest increase in those emissions ever in the province's history, but he chose not to mention that.

We continue to work with the Crowns, with SaskTel, and in covering sales opportunities, energy dashboard development, housing energy performance data, predictive monitoring services with SecurTek, and developing future energy management solutions.

Mr. Speaker, we believe this is the way to achieve those targets, not through further taxation of our Saskatchewan residents. They're already taxed enough by the federal government, propped up and supported by the NDP and by members opposite who chose to support the federal NDP leader as he ignored Saskatchewan and Western Canada throughout the federal election campaign.

Also SGI Canada are offering a 5 to 15 per cent insurance

premium discount for commercial clients to utilize Greenwave's risk and reduction technology. This is a great opportunity to expand on programs as Greenwave works to add real-time water and natural gas leak detection.

SaskEnergy is working with Greenwave to integrate existing smart meter interval data into Greenwave's real-time dashboards, discussing using Greenwave's data and analytics to assist with further decisions towards efficiency projects, evaluating a conservation pilot project on the internal facilities of government. Greenwave is also committed to working with SaskPower and SaskWater on efficiency programs, demand management, and exploring all other possibilities that will help government and communities to save on energy.

Greenwave is currently partnered with SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and working with municipalities in an effort to bring solutions to communities throughout the province and has a strong desire to assist First Nation communities with the same initiative.

Greenwave recently won an award for new venture at the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, the ABEX [Achievement in Business Excellence] Awards, on October 19th. And I had an opportunity to do a member's statement on it, Mr. Speaker. It is an interesting fact though. When we go to the ABEX awards and we see the innovation from companies across Saskatchewan, it's driven by those private-sector companies, something that was very different. This government is choosing to partner with those companies, not to take them over, not to buy them out, not to prevent them from expanding like the members opposite and their government did for 16 long years in Saskatchewan.

And in fact, innovation is thriving in Saskatchewan; entrepreneurship is thriving in Saskatchewan, and this government is willing to support that and to partner with those companies whenever possible. The work they are doing with government and across the province is certainly valuable. And we look forward to more projects which will save taxpayers money and reduce our carbon emissions and provide a better way than the federal NDP and federal Liberal parties put forward in the last election, as we look to what's next with the carbon tax in our country and in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to switch gears a little bit and talk about some of the great projects that are happening in Saskatoon and in Saskatchewan. Very recently we had the announcement of the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan project, the enhancement of that wonderful facility, something that's been an institution in our province and in the city of Saskatoon. Our government proudly contributed \$1.4 million, and with ingenuity the community was able to raise over \$3 million in private donations.

This is a proud moment when governments, our provincial government, our city, and private sector partners can come together to build a brighter future for the city of Saskatoon and for the province. The funds will go towards construction of a new amphitheatre, base for the stage, audience seating, and park-style pavilions for dressing rooms, the box office, and concessions, making a real jewel of our province even better as they have the infrastructure necessary to continue to grow and to continue to accommodate our growing population in the province.

The organization will purchase a new tent structure to accommodate the larger amphitheatre, along with new energy-efficient lighting, sound equipment, and riser decking for the stage. Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, has played a vital role in Saskatoon's rich cultural history for more than 30 years. The new construction will be a great addition to the Meewasin Park during the summers in Saskatoon and allow for enhancement of experience and extend the cultural research of the company.

Mr. Speaker, as an MLA representing a Saskatoon constituency and also as a sports enthusiast, I was very proud of our government's announcement about the investment and advancement of Saskatoon's Gordie Howe Sports Complex. The Government of Saskatchewan is contributing some \$32 million towards this and 11 other infrastructure projects across our province. The expanded Gordie Howe Sports Complex will house a new multi-sport complex, an outdoor artificial turf field, a state-of-the-art track and field facility that will be able to host national and international competitions, an outdoor and indoor baseball training facility and practice complex, Nordic ski trails, as well as a new ticket booth facility and bleachers.

Mr. Speaker, people from across the country, indeed across North America, are coming to the Gordie Howe Sports Complex to see how different levels of government were able to partner and to provide a facility that is indeed state of the art. It will benefit our children for many generations to come, and thousands and thousands of individuals will be using that facility each and every year.

[15:15]

The improved facility will contribute to better communities and a better quality of life for all people of Saskatchewan. Sports and physical activity, as we know, is very important for all people as it supports our mental and physical health, not only to mention team building, perseverance, and a positive work ethic. In a time when the world can feel more divided than ever, we hold on to moments that bring us together. And sports, Mr. Speaker, does just that.

This past weekend I had the pleasure of attending the Tim Hortons NHL [National Hockey League] Heritage Classic. The sporting event brought thousands of fans and tourists to pack the sold-out Mosaic Stadium to watch the Winnipeg Jets and the Calgary Flames go into overtime while the snow made for a picturesque event. Mr. Speaker, yes the right team won, of course. The Winnipeg Jets were successful. It was a little tense for a while there but . . . No, all kidding aside, both teams did very, very well and provided great entertainment for all of the residents from Saskatchewan that attended, but many attended from Alberta, from Manitoba, and really from around Western Canada and the northwestern United States.

This event filled up every hotel room in Regina and area and brought 15 to \$20 million to our local economy. It allowed us to show off our wonderful Mosaic Stadium to all of North America. And as Gary Bettman said, he said it's one of the finest facilities that he has seen across North America. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm willing to bet that he's seen a lot of those facilities. And we're very, very proud of his compliment towards our facility.

Accolades have to go out to Mayor Fougere and the city of Regina for the work that they've done, and Tim Reid at Evraz Place and his team, and the many volunteers who volunteered for the wonderful weekend as well. I know one individual talked to me and said he couldn't believe it — his job was to drive Don Cherry and Ron MacLean around for the weekend. So you can imagine the smile that he had on his face when that happened.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank you for this opportunity to reply to the Speech from the Throne. It's getting near time for me to wrap up my comments. But I want to say that there's one theme that rings through this Speech from the Throne and that's growth. Growth in our population and with that, growth in the services to the people of Saskatchewan and the growth in their quality of life in this province that they've had since this government has had the honour of sitting on this side of the legislature.

We're very proud of our record over the last 12 years, and we are prepared, very humbly, to lead if the people of Saskatchewan choose us into the future to lead another decade of growth. And that's been outlined in the Speech from the Throne and talking about . . . We're not afraid to set targets. You know, when we set a target of growing the province by 100,000 people — we all know it's a story that's been told many, many times — members of the opposition said it was statistically impossible for that to happen. Well nothing could be farther from the truth. And as we set goals of our population of 1.4 million people and goals of 100,000 new jobs in Saskatchewan, that's what's outlined in this Speech from the Throne and that's what the people of Saskatchewan have to look forward to.

Our government will continue to ignore the doom and gloom that we started to see last night and I'm sure we'll continue to see from the opposition, whereas we'll be very positive as we look at the new schools that we have in Saskatchewan, the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan, the Gordie Howe Sports Complex, Mosaic Stadium, and the bypass that we had the opportunity . . . Indeed it was history in the making yesterday when members from both sides of the House had the opportunity to take in the announcement of the Regina bypass.

So that's what we have in Saskatchewan. We have new hospitals. We have new schools. We have new sporting facilities. We have new transportation infrastructure in our province. All things that are necessary to ensure that we have another decade of growth in our province. That's what this Speech from the Throne has enabled us to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, from a very humble member, I want to thank the people of Saskatoon Willowgrove again for allowing me this opportunity to be part of this wonderful team. Women and men from all walks of life who have the honour of serving in this legislature are a part of a cohesive team led by a fabulous premier, somebody who understands urban Saskatchewan, somebody who understands rural Saskatchewan, understands northern Saskatchewan, and has made his mark already on the province going forward.

So again, Mr. Speaker, thank you to the residents of Saskatoon Willowgrove for allowing me to take my place. Thank you for the opportunity to have my thoughts put forward. And I look

forward to a very productive session, and a positive and opportunistic session going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on response to the Throne Speech. Before I start, again I want to thank my CAs. They do a great job. And I just want to thank Devin for the good work he does. When people come in to the office and they need help, when it's situations where they're very stressed and concerned about maybe dealings that have to do with the ministry, and Devin goes beyond and helps that. We also have Willy Billette, Pearl. We're lucky. We've got people who are wanting to fill in, want to help people, and that's a good thing. So I want to thank them for all they do for the constituency that I represent. And I am very proud to represent and honoured to represent the good people of the Cumberland constituency.

I also, you know, I want to mention my wife and my family. I've got 17 grandkids so it keeps us hopping and busy. And it is an opportunity to do the job we do, to educate my grandchildren on the challenges. And you know, I'll get into that a little more about the struggles people have, the struggles we have as Aboriginal people, the struggles that many of our community members struggle with that unfortunately some of the powers that be don't understand, don't have a clue. But I'll get into that when I do my response, but with that I want to just thank those individuals.

Also I want to thank the executive of the Cumberland constituency. These are great volunteers, people who are very passionate, care about our province, are very dedicated. And there's many of them, whether the youth or our members who have a lot of wisdom that are on our executive. I refer to them as the elders and the knowledge that they share with us, and that's so important to have that, so I want to thank them.

But before, you know, I go on like everyone else, there's always issues, you know, back home. And we've been through, in the North, we've been through our fair share of many issues. And I want to thank the leadership, whether it's the band chief and council, our mayors, our Métis leaders, the good citizens, the board of education members. There's many different groups and people in the community that are recognized as leaders. And I want to thank them for their great work and advocating all the time for the North, for the Cumberland constituency.

I want to thank them for . . . I know sometimes it's frustrating. But I'll get into some of the comments. And, Mr. Speaker, where I see a government who introduces a Throne Speech, most people would say a Throne Speech. I've been here a short while. It's supposed to talk about the great things you're going to do over the next coming year, about the exciting things and things that you'll be doing for residents of this great province — not just for certain members in their constituency, but the whole province. Government's supposed to represent the whole province.

And I can tell you from some of the comments I've heard back home, the frustration, people who wanted to see more . . . And I'll get into some of the details. But when I think about people's hopes, and I truly do, they go to their government and they say, the families. And I think about the families. They do the good work, and many families have worked hard for this province over the years. They've done their part as employees, as residents of

this province. They've done the good work.

You know, times are getting harder and they're willing to do. They roll up their sleeves, and that's what we know about Saskatchewan people. I know the people that I represent, that's what they do. They look out for their neighbours. And when times are tough, they gather around. They talk about what they can do, and they partner.

In the North, I've watched so many communities, organizations, individuals, leaders, partnership, and they find ways. And they're very dedicated and they want to do the right thing for the people that they represent. And they hope our province does well. And they want our economy to do well because if our economy's doing well, we hope the residents in our province, whether they're in the North, the rural, or the urban centres, are doing well. And that's what people want, and they hope that the economy goes.

And when they give governments a blessing and they say, we are going to give you a blessing and we're going to allow you to govern for four more years, or for whatever time, governments — and I've said this before, and I've learned this — governments don't get elected in. Governments get elected out for not doing what the residents of this great province have asked them to do.

And time and time again, when you don't hear the issues of our leaders, our community members, our Aboriginal people, our northern people — whether they're Métis, First Nations, Inuit — when you don't hear their concerns and you don't show them the respect, you will pay a price. Maybe some of you will have to have questions on the doorstep that you'll have to answer. You'll have organizations asking you as a government, how are you failing in so many areas? And yes, I know I've done this before. When you've done good as a government I have given you credit.

And at the end of the day I'm sure you'll check *Hansard*, because you love doing that. So go ahead and check, but at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, here's a government introduced a Throne Speech, did nothing but talk about recycled things that they've done. They talked about oh, this and that, but not about the issues that are facing many Saskatchewan residents. And I'll get into those issues that are affecting the communities that I represent and the constituency.

So they love, Mr. Speaker, they love to pat themselves on the back, tell them they're doing such a great job. But when it's families, when it's young people that are struggling, whether it's education, we see a government . . . As far as I'm concerned, you are not hearing what the people are saying. You are not seeing the challenges that people are facing. You could sit here and talk about oh, how great you're going to go and the growth plan and all this thing. There are so many people suffering in this great province. And that is a shame to all of us in here. We owe our grandchildren, our children, the residents of this province so much more. And a government that again, like I said, likes to pat themselves on the back about the great things they're doing.

But I'll get into some of that. And I think about the challenges. And I refer to some of the families. I think about affordability for many Saskatchewan residents — northern Saskatchewan, urban, rural. I think they're all feeling it — our power bills, the struggles. And when leadership up north and the constituents that

I represent raise the concerns about utilities and bills being too high, and government may go in there and government officials or, you know, their ministries may go in and meet with people and have discussions. And it's amazing. You think you would come up with solutions and work together because people are asking you. Leadership's asking you but what we get is the blame, who's at fault.

And I find that the government likes to blame. It's everybody else's. Oh, it's the NDP, the NDP. News flash: 11 years going on 12, you have been the government. You've had the policies, the decisions, legislation to make, to make our province better. You've had it . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well that's good. You just keep patting yourself on the back. We'll get to that. And there may be areas where, you know, the province is doing good.

But we've heard about the challenges, whether it's the construction industry with the PST. You know, you put a billion dollars more, say no new taxes, yet you expect families who are struggling . . . We have some of the worst poverty levels. We have some children going, so many of them going to bed hungry, not sure. Families struggling. But I'll get into that.

[15:30]

Because, you know, I also talk about a government. And I know today in question period we had an opportunity to ask the Minister of Social Services about the way he's going to carry on paying and supporting those individuals that have to go. They don't want to go on social services, but they're on social services. And they apply and they get the services that the ministry and the government's supposed to provide for them when they need it.

But when you change things on individuals, and maybe some individuals can handle their own budgets, that's fine, but when you change policies and you're the minister and you're the ministry, at the end of the day the government decides this is how we're going to do it. Remember this. When people get evicted from their home because maybe they didn't pay their rent, something's happened, they weren't ready for that. But you saying no, this is the way you're going to do it. Now if this is the way we're going to do it . . .

But to the government, I'm going to say listen to the Minister of Social Services. You've made your decision. You're going to go ahead with it. Even those that are saying this is not going to help. It's not going to work for everybody. It is not going to work. But if, for some reason . . . And I hope people in this great province will hold the minister and the government accountable. Because if people lose their home and they get evicted because of the programs and the policies they implemented and somebody ends up being homeless and end up losing a life in this province because somebody freezes to death — winter's coming — then I hope they hold him accountable and the government accountable because they need to.

Now there are many people struggling in this province, many people. I think about the suicide in this province. And I've heard members on that side talk about, you know . . . And that's right. If we have policies and we spend dollars in budgets and it saves one life, then I agree with those members. That was well worth it because you saved one life and that is worth it.

I want to tell you this from people back home who have lost their children, their loved ones to suicide. And to have a government, who I was hoping in this policy, in your Throne Speech, would be a commitment to say let's work together. First Nations, Métis, school divisions, everyone, health region, come together with the opposition, with government and say, to losing one more Aboriginal child, one more child in this province to suicide is . . . I don't know, my emotion is so hard. It's tough to support those families who lose their loved ones. A government that won't even support, I don't understand it. I went home, I've left here, this Chamber, and I've said I don't understand it. Are we that different that our grandchildren, our children can't have some type of a suicide prevention strategy to work so that we don't lose anyone to suicide? At least we can say we tried as a province. I'm honestly, I'm appalled that you would not support this.

I'm hoping, and there is hope. There's petitions, hundreds of petitions, people talking, letters of support. They're coming. People are seeing that something has . . . [inaudible] . . . We have a crisis when it comes to suicide, mental health, addictions. I was hoping to see more. Yes, you put a little more dollars in. Every time that is, I hope it helps and I hope it saves somebody.

But when you . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well that's really nice. There you go. So when we lose more children and more people to suicide, that's what you want to say? Unbelievable. But anyway it goes to show you, Mr. Speaker, it goes to show you what we're dealing with as a province when even in this Chamber we can't work together. We can't work together on such a serious issue, a crisis going on.

But enough said about that because I know there's going to be more support, more leaders, more people, whether it's the Métis Nation, I hope FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations], the tribal councils, chief and council, mayor and council, school divisions — I hope everyone sends in letters to this government saying it's a shame, after what they've heard today from members opposite, that you could even get into this. But anyway, having said that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going on to other situations. But I want to say to the families, to the mothers and the fathers, the môsoms, the kohkoms, the grandparents, families who have lost loved ones, on this side of the House you have our support, our understanding. You have our hearts. They're tore for the suffering you're going through.

And someday, on this side of the House we will be government. And I promise you, as long as I'm here I will do everything I can to fight to have a suicide prevention strategy for this province for people with addictions, with mental health. It is a crisis and it's going to . . . [inaudible] . . . And I hope someday the good people of this province will say, time for a change. This government's old, tired, and out of ideas. I've heard that from my colleagues.

It's unfortunate that you would not work with members on this side. We've done that on other pieces of legislation where we've said . . . We've had other individuals . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Go ahead. It's okay. You have a right to say what you want. When people are struggling, you don't have the compassion to understand it. That's okay. I understand that. I guess that's maybe where we're different as a party. You know, maybe we're different as a party. But as individuals, I hope someday we can come together and maybe fix some of the issues that need to be addressed.

But I'm going to go on, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to pay attention to the heckling that's coming from those members. You know, I look at the economy and I think about northern Saskatchewan and there's opportunity if we had maybe the industry — and I think about the uranium industry, the mining sector — for all those workers who lost their jobs. You know, I've had family members who lost their jobs. Lots of northern people from the South who worked in the mining up north, did a great job and provided for their families. A lot of jobs went away.

We were hoping that, you know, government would respond. And I hear that sometimes, governments will respond with grants and programs and they'll help those workers try to find new training, different ways to work with the leadership, work with communities. And those employees that are impacted with the loss of jobs, they find different ways to find training and support.

You know, I was hoping the rapid response team that was going to come to northern Saskatchewan . . . That's what we heard. Oh, we launched the rapid response team; they just haven't got there yet. We're waiting for them. And maybe the government . . . And I was hoping in the Throne Speech there'd be more talk about that, how we could work with the employees that have lost their jobs, for training and, you know, finding ways to work with the communities that are impacted.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, the list goes on of issues that are faced in the North. I look at our doctor shortage. You know, we have that. Many people will say they feel like that's a struggle. It's important when your loved ones are sick you get to go to . . . And you know, we talk about ER wait times and the list goes on. It's not me saying this. It's individuals telling us this, who are coming and struggling. It's not the members here who, as some of them will say, we're always whining and doom and gloom. These are Saskatchewan residents, the people that elected you, that elected all of us, who have said, come together and here's the issues that families are facing. And to have members say, oh doom and gloom and say . . . These are serious issues that are facing families today. And a government that makes comments like that, members that don't understand it, it's appalling. You be ashamed of yourselves.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, like I've said, there's enough issues that are facing. I think about some of the challenge in northern Saskatchewan when I think about long-term care. I'm going to talk about that. I know Creighton, the leadership in Creighton is working hard, and the residents want a long-term care facility. They need that for the east side of the province, whether it's communities like Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows, Deschambault — they're all over there, you know — Creighton, Denare Beach, La Ronge. They're asking for long-term care and they're going to put their petitions in. The leadership have asked and they're waiting. They're working hard. They need long-term care.

They want long-term care so their loved ones can stay in their communities. And as close as they can have to their communities, they would like their loved ones to be there when they have dementia, when they're getting old and they need the care. They've done their hard work in the North. They've worked hard. They would like to stay with their families, the culture, the language. It's important. I've heard many of our community members saying that, leadership saying we need to do that. So

let's just hope.

I think about cell service, internet, high speed. We've got residents in some of our communities, our biggest community, La Ronge. We've got an online petition going around. I give credit to those individuals who are saying enough's enough. SaskTel does great work. We know that. SaskTel is a Crown corporation owned by all of us, and we want to keep our Crowns. And I know that people want the high-speed internet. They want to make sure so that we're not having issues when it comes to technology for our schools, for our kids' education. We use technology. So they would like that. They were going to do that. They're asking so, you know, there's another thing that I wish would've been in here for the North.

Cell service, and I think about some of the communities that don't have cell service, and I think about some of the challenges in safety. I think about the Creighton area and Flin Flon, that whole area. When you go on the Hanson Lake highway back to P.A. [Prince Albert], there is no cell service for hundreds of kilometres in an emergency. If something should ever happen, there is no . . . And I thought about this. SaskTel could come up with a plan to do a certain thing, and it may be towers every so often in emergencies so people could have cell service in an emergency. There's different things we could do with the profits instead of using those profits for, you know, the special deals or for special programs, special projects that the government thinks they want to support with our profits from our Crown corporations. So they could do that. That's the one area.

I think about the airport in Pelican Narrows. You know, in light of the situation that's gone on in Flin Flon hospital where mothers cannot go there now when they go into labour, to birthing, and to have the birth of their babies. So then they're going to have to transfer, to drive, and if an emergency should ever happen and they have to go by air ambulance, well Pelican doesn't have lights. It's not paved. So they're asking and they're petitioning and they're asking for that to be done.

So there are things. And I'll be honest, you know, I've taken it upon myself. I know that the new Minister of Highways, I wanted to congratulate him on his role. I've sent him a letter, delivered to his office, explaining some of the challenges the North feels and some of the challenges that we're going through, and hoping so that for his file he'll know some of the challenges that our northern leaders and our communities are facing. So I wanted him to know about the highways, airports, and stuff like that. So I wanted to share that.

The other thing, I guess, the last thing . . . And I know my time's just about up unless somebody says I have more time.

An. Hon. Member: — Take what you need.

Mr. Vermette: — Okay, thank you. We look at the hope and I think about the hope of community members. And I think way up north and I think about Wollaston Lake, Hatchet Lake First Nation, and I think about their commitment that they were given by this government, 2008, for an all-season road to Wollaston for the community, for the residents. And it is about safety and they've said that. And we've seen the federal government say, well we're ready; now we're ready. And then we see the province say, well we'll have to look at it. And then we see that change

and then it's back and forth. For years it's been going back and forth. The leadership and the community members of Wollaston deserve the road, once and for all, about safety. They've lost loved ones. They've lost teachers who are from out of the community who come there to teach on the ice road. It's unsafe. They are asking and they need that, and I think it's the right thing to do. When you make a promise and a commitment as a government, you should honour that and fulfill that. And you've had record revenue for years — record revenue for years — and you did nothing. And that's sad, sad.

But having said that, I guess I wanted to . . . Now you know, the other thing I want to talk about is housing for seniors, people who can't afford to pay the utility bills because they're so high up in the North, utility bills, and they get evicted. They can't afford to pay their rents because of the cost of food. Some of them are isolated communities. They struggle so much. They're very proud people. They are. They try to do their part.

Our trappers, look what you've done to our trappers. No funding. You don't support them. And that's how they feel and that's what I hear from trappers. You talk about the forestry. You talk about the challenges. People, residents are saying, trappers, many groups are starting to ask some tough questions. And again government will have to answer. And we'll wait for the response, whether there's letters, whether there's petitions, awareness. We'll see what the government's response is to those individuals who are raising those concerns.

I think about the businesses and the outfitters in the North who have seen the lease fees go up, who are shutting down because they cannot afford the lease fees. And some of them have said it's almost like 4 or 500 per cent increase in their lease fees. And then you get a response, well we didn't increase those for 10 years, so all of a sudden we're . . . We spent all the money. We're broke and we're trying to find money.

[15:45]

There's groups that are very upset with the way the government's handled that. And I know the government is hearing it. They'd better be hearing it because I'm being told that they're letting the minister know and they're letting the officials know about their concerns. So that's one area. I'll say that whether it's outfitting, whether it's leaseholders who are getting those bills and seeing the increases, they're very upset, and they should.

The last area, you know, I think . . . I'm just about done here but the last area, you talk about schools and infrastructure getting old in the North, and I do know the school divisions do their part as a priority list and they try to do their part on behalf of the communities and school divisions that represent the North and the Cumberland constituency. They try their best, like other school divisions, to prioritize which schools need new schools, which ones are overcrowded, and all that stuff. And we see some of those challenges. But again we'll let those individuals do the good work that they do, the school divisions, to bring that forward to government, but we see issues facing our children, whether overcrowded, and the challenges.

I guess the last thing I'll say is the government has an opportunity. The people have entrusted you and they'll hope in the next year, in the next budget, you will deliver. You talked

about, some of your members talked about harvesting and taking resources out of the North, and that's good. We want to be part, our northern people want to be a part of the economy. We want to share. Our trappers want to share, our leaders. Everyone wants to share. We think we need to. But when your government forgets about northern people, about the Aboriginal people, just remember this. Actions speak louder than words.

So I'll leave that with you, Mr. Speaker. The last thing I'm going to say is I will not . . . And the reason I will not be supporting the Throne Speech, the reason I'm supporting the amendment, is because of the issues that are facing many northern Saskatchewan residents and the people that come into my office and share with me the frustration and the unhappiness about the way they're getting treated by this government. So with that said, I would like to thank Mr. Speaker for allowing me to share a little bit about the challenges constituents back home are facing, and the good people of our province. If I've missed areas, I know that my colleagues will have opportunities to talk about many of the challenges facing Saskatchewan residents in these tough times. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I'm pleased to be able to enter into this reply to the Throne Speech. Actually I think it's been two or three years since I've had the opportunity to enter into the debate. I'm not sure exactly over the 19-plus years — 20 years, I guess, since I've been elected to this Assembly — how many Throne Speech debates I entered into.

I certainly remember the first one for sure, and I'm sure most members will remember their first Throne Speech reply. I remember I was scheduled to speak on a Monday, so that weekend I'm in my constituency office writing and rewriting my speech, practising it, and then going back to the drawing boards and so on. And as it turned out, I thought I was going to have an opportunity to stand on my feet in the afternoon, but as it turned out I was the first person up right after our break, because back then we did also sit in the evenings and so on.

And so I come back in here. You know, my papers were wiggling quite a bit and I'm fairly quite nervous and I start into my speech. And the premier of the day, Premier Romanow, not realizing I was doing my maiden speech, began to heckle me, which certainly didn't help my confidence because Premier Romanow was a pretty fierce debater and, you know, when you're a rookie in here you didn't really want to take him on. But anyway we got that all sorted out and I managed to get through it and I think it went reasonably well. I mean I certainly knew that I could have probably done a whole lot better but I got through it, and that was the main thing.

So I'm going to try and get through it here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. This'll be the last, my last opportunity to speak in a reply to a Throne Speech and I'm going to take a little bit of time. And if the clock goes past my allotted time, so be it, because once a member's on his feet, Mr. Speaker — when you sit in that chair you can sometimes take an opportunity to read some of the rules — and as long as the member's on his feet and speaking to the business before the House, the member can carry on. And I may have to go a little bit beyond my time.

I'm not sure . . . I've got several pages of notes and I've got a few things that I want to say. And this kind of reminds me of the Seinfeld episode of the holiday that the name is . . .

An Hon. Member: — Festivus.

Mr. Hart: — Festivus for the rest of us. And I have some complaints with some of you folks here and I may have to voice them, so pay attention.

But anyway, I'll start with the traditional things that most members do, and that's the thank yous. And I too have a number of people that I'd like to thank for the past number of years that I've been given the great privilege of serving. And I, you know, and one thing I really don't need is heckling from members on my side of the House. We'll leave that till a little later, and if we want to get into it I might be ready for it. So just saying.

So anyway, first of all I'd like to thank my good wife, Marlene, who has put up with me for many years. We've actually developed a relationship that seems to work for us when the House is sitting, and that's called living together apart. Because of course when the House is sitting, I come in to Regina on Monday morning. I have the advantage of being fairly close to Regina so I can come in Monday morning. And I don't get back home till, at the earliest, sometime Thursday afternoon or evening.

And I'd like to thank our two granddaughters, Tenaisha and Alyx, who have been living with us for the last nine years. They certainly have been supportive most of the time. They certainly have presented some challenges over the years, but we're getting through it. The oldest, Tenaisha, is 23. She's got three years of university at FNU [First Nations University]. She's decided to take a year off to refocus. And our youngest granddaughter, Alyx, is finishing grade 12. But they certainly have been there to support me and to support Marlene.

Someone else that I would certainly need to thank is my current CA, who is a constituency assistant, Donna Klein. She's been with my office since, well actually before the 2016 election. She was working as a part-time casual in my office, and then after the 2016 election took the position on a full-time basis. And some of the things that she's doing besides working in my office and supporting me, she does come in — again because we are not that far out of Regina — she does come in to help with the Speaker's tea. So she was here last Wednesday pouring tea in the library.

Another person that I definitely need to thank for her years and years of support and friendship is Marilyn Kleisinger. Marilyn was my business manager for the first four elections. Marilyn is undergoing some health challenges and I want to publicly thank her for all her hard work and support and wish her all the best in facing the challenges that she is currently facing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't thank the voters and the constituents of Last Mountain-Touchwood for giving me the honour of serving them for the last 20 years. And it'll be 21 years when I finally leave this House. I can't tell them enough how much I appreciate their trust that they have placed in me. And I have always said to them, I said, I may not be able to make everything happen that you would like to see happen, but I said, it won't be for lack of trying. And that certainly is the way I've

conducted myself over the last 20 years.

Last Mountain-Touchwood was a bit of a unique constituency back in 1999 and the probably 40 years prior to that. It was always considered to be a bellwether riding. In other words, we always elected a member to the government side of the House. So when the members opposite and their party were in power, our representative was a member from their party. Gordon MacMurchy would be one of the names that most members would remember. Of course then when that changed, we had my neighbour and good friend, Arnold Tusa, who served as Speaker in the last term of the Devine government. And he tells me that was a more than interesting time to have to deal with a lot of rulings and challenges that the Chair encounters. And he did get through it. And we still have coffee every so often, not as often as I'd like, and he seems to be doing quite well, retired from farming and getting on with his retirement.

It was interesting, Mr. Speaker, when I announced that I wouldn't be seeking re-election, interesting in some of the reactions I got from my constituents. You know, I've been successful in five consecutive elections; this would have been the sixth. You know, you'd think maybe . . . My wife was telling me that your constituents are probably getting tired of you and it's time for you to step down. And I believed her. However when I was out and about, I would have people come up to me and say, hey, I hear you're retiring. I says, I was quite surprised, and Marlene says, yes, those are the people that just want to make you feel good, she said, so don't let it go to your head. So I'm not sure but it was, you know, it was gratifying I guess. And particularly, I mean you do expect that from your loyal supporters and so on, and so it really wasn't totally unexpected. But when you meet constituents who you know, and they know that you know that they didn't vote for you in the last election, and they come over and shake your hand and say, we haven't voted for you but you did a pretty good job. And I think that's where I really feel quite good about the job I've done and so on.

So it's been a great ride. I'll recommend it to anyone who was thinking about it. I'll have a few more words to say in a moment about some of the things I've done as far as encouraging people to succeed me. And there's certainly no regrets. Over the years I've been asked many, many times, what's it like to be a member of the legislature. And one of my standard replies was, it could be the most interesting and most infuriating time of my life, and all on the same day. And I think members certainly can identify with that.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments and congratulate our new Lieutenant Governor, Russ Mirasty. I had the opportunity to first meet him in the early fall out at the Motherwell Homestead with Symphony under the Sky. Lieutenant Governor Mirasty and his wife, Donna, were there and so there was an opportunity to go over and introduce myself and tell him how pleased I was when I heard that he was going to be our next Lieutenant Governor. I mean we had just . . . It wasn't I think a month or so before that, or probably less, that we'd been to the state funeral for former Lieutenant Governor Thomas Molloy. So when the announcement came forward that Russ Mirasty was going to be our new Lieutenant Governor, I just felt that there couldn't have been a better choice for that at this time in our province's history.

[16:00]

I would like to also, Mr. Speaker, pass my condolences on to the family of former Lieutenant Governor Thomas Molloy. He wasn't in the office very long so we really didn't have a chance to really get to know him very well. I had never met the gentleman before he became the Lieutenant Governor. And you know, he was always very well dressed, and you felt that he was quite reserved. I mean that's the impression at least I had until I had the honour of attending his state funeral and hearing the people, including his family members, talk about his private side. And he was quite a character, Mr. Speaker, as you would know, because the two of us drove up there. And we had Glen maps, which that's a whole other story, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, I remember one of the things well that I certainly didn't know is that the Lieutenant Governor's wife passed away at an early age and that he ended up with four teenage daughters that were . . . And his wife had passed away, and he was doing all his work that he was well known for. And his daughters talked about that and how they, as a family, got through that. And I believe it was his oldest daughter that was speaking and she would say, well every time one of us got married, dad would say, well three more to go, two more to go, until finally he had them all married off, and so on.

Ralph Goodale was there. Of course Thomas Molloy was a background supporter of the Liberal Party, and Ralph Goodale talked again about the dress code, Thomas Molloy's dress code. But he did say that he knows for a fact that Thomas Molloy owned a pair of blue jeans, but they had cuffs and they had pleats. He said he saw him wear them once in Humboldt. He thinks it was some 40 years ago. So I mean all those kind of stories gave you a much greater appreciation of the man and, you know, as we all, I think, feel that his time was far too short.

Mr. Speaker, I would . . . as soon as I get my papers straightened up here. I'm not quite like the member from Athabasca who has the same two pieces of paper and just uses them to keep the mosquitoes away.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments about our recent federal election. And you know, it was filled with lots of emotion. And I mean we all know the results and, you know, how different parts of the country aren't represented, and us here in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and all those kind of things. And we are, as a country, going through a bit of a difficult time. It's not something that we haven't faced in the past. And I would like to say to the people of this province and the people of this country that we live, in my opinion, in the best country in the world. And if you had an opportunity to travel a bit to other parts of the world, you come back and it's just reinforced in spades what a great country we have. And I think, all of us, it's our responsibility to make sure that this continues.

And I mean some of the things that happened shortly after the election, and one of the things that really upset me, I guess, is the incident in Ottawa with the defacing of Catherine McKenna's campaign office. I mean we can debate. This is a house of debate, and so we debate. So is the House of Commons. We debate issues. We have different opinions, but we need to respect one another. And I think we've lost some of that.

And particularly women who have entered politics . . . We have organizations, the Canadian women's parliamentary association where one of our members is the president of that. We're encouraging more women to enter the profession. And it's a profession and maybe we better remember that a bit — that it is a profession — and act accordingly.

And so when we see something like that, that is absolutely not acceptable in this country, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's incumbent upon all of us to speak out about that. Because it doesn't matter what our gender is, what our race is, what our sexual orientation is, we need to respect. People need to respect all the other people in this country. And I think it's up to us as elected members, whether it's provincially or federally, we need to speak up and say, this is wrong; we cannot do that.

I did my small part, I believe, in trying to encourage more female participation in this House. I talked to a couple of very capable young women who I thought would make great members of this legislature. And we sat down with them, explained what it's all about, answered their questions, you know, and as I said, tried to encourage them. And unfortunately both of them have young families and they just said, the time isn't right. We do have a couple of individuals who have filed their nomination papers, but they look a lot like I do and that sort of thing. But we need to continue that, Mr. Speaker, because I think it makes this place a better place if we have more representation and that sort of thing.

So, Mr. Speaker, another thing about the federal election, of course, is the unfortunate sentiment of Wexit, and that's not helpful at all. That is absolutely not helpful at all. As I said earlier, Canada, in my humble opinion, is the greatest country in the world. I'm proud to be a Canadian. I'm a Canadian first and foremost, Mr. Speaker. And we need to do, I believe, everything we can to make this country better. We have issues, for sure, that we need to fix. It was not the first time that we've had issues; it won't be the last time.

But I think if we follow Premier Brian Pallister of Manitoba and his comments, and I quote, he says when asked about this all and he was quite animated about it, he says, "I've no time for that kind of thing . . . we're going to make this country work." And I think if we use that, I think that'll go a long way. And I think I would challenge all elected people to take a leadership role in this and explain exactly what it is. I've had calls to my office and that's exactly what I've told them. I say look, this is a great country and we need to make it work, and don't talk to me about separating and all that sort of thing because that's not going to do anybody any good.

Mr. Speaker, I'm down to page 4 so I'm getting there, and I've got a half a glass of water left here, too. So I remember my good friend, my seatmate, the member for Arm River, when he first arrived. Of course we were all nervous and what do you do? Your mouth gets dry, you start drinking water, and there was a heckle from . . . We were sitting on that side of the House, and that's an entirely different side of the House. And for those members who have never sat there, try it and see how it works. It brings a different view and you appreciate, I think, more of the role than there is a role. It's Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

And, you know, I mean when we were there, we worked hard to defeat the government of the day. Those members opposite are

doing the same thing. That's their job. And it's our job to govern and govern effectively. I remember some time after the 2007 election, people would ask me, well what's it like to sit on the government side of the House? I said, you know what? Some days things haven't changed much. If I close my eyes, the questions are the same. The answers are the same. Just different people asking the questions. I mean, the reality of governing does set in and, you know, there's things that we need to do and there's a number of things that you could do differently to achieve the results that I think we all work forward to.

However getting back to what I was going to say earlier, before I got distracted on this opposition and sitting on the government side of the House, is I was listening carefully today to the member from Melville-Saltcoats when he was proudly talking about his new grandchild. And I too have a new grandchild. That's number 11. Our oldest is, well I'm not sure, in her twenties, and our youngest is six months old. And the Minister of Environment spoke about my new grandson very briefly yesterday afternoon because my grandson and his daughter were born in the Regina General Hospital in the same early morning. And I think the rooms were across the hallway or whatever because I remember that evening going to see our new grandson and here the minister and his two young sons and mother-in-law were just coming out. And we exchanged congratulations and went on our way.

I would just say my six-month-old grandson, his name is Noah and he lives on a farm with his parents. And he was out last Friday afternoon in the combine. They were straight-cutting durum. And I'm happy to report that Noah got the harvest done. So congratulations, Noah.

So now, Mr. Speaker, this brings me to another topic that has been near and dear to my heart. And I'm not so sure whether my view of this topic is exactly the same as everyone else's, but I will put on the record what I believe in this whole area of climate change. And when you have a new six-month-old grandson and you're driving home from Regina on a later evening, sometimes . . . I'm not a believer in visions, but sometimes you have some thoughts that you normally wouldn't have.

And when the Minister of Environment was talking about his daughter, and I was thinking — well I was, I think, here, not in your Chair, Mr. Speaker — I was thinking about what's the world going to look like when these two six-month-olds are the age of the Minister of Environment. Well I had to ask him how old he was. And he's a little bit older than I thought he was, but he tells me he just turned 40. So that would put that time frame, move fast-forward to 2059.

So then I thought, well okay, so what's the world going to look like, and I've asked myself this question a few times. So what's the world going to look like when my grandson is my age? That is 2092. So that's a long time from now, but when you look at it in the overall scale of time, it's really not that far away.

And I have to say, for the record, I'm certainly not a scientist, but I believe that good decisions are based on good science. And, Mr. Speaker, when I think about not only the issues here in our province, not only the issues here in our country but the issues that we, that all mankind face, that are facing us — whether that be poverty or, you know, all the other issues — in my mind I

think the greatest single challenge that mankind has right now is climate change. And I don't say that lightly. It is a serious, serious issue. I know it's a very emotional issue. There's debate all over social media. I don't think it's particularly helpful.

And like I said, I'm not a scientist. I believe in science. Science tells me that if I drop this pen, let go of this pen, it's going to drop to the ground. I know I've had people say to me, well there's scientists that say we've got a big challenge, other ones that say it's no problem at all. Well my response to them is, if you've got a heart condition, do you listen to what your dentist is telling you? He's a doctor, the same as your cardiologist. I think I'm going with the cardiologist, Mr. Speaker.

[16:15]

It seems to me what's happening in this country and around the world that, as I said, there's a lot of emotion in there, and it's economy versus climate. And you know, people are worried about their livelihood, about their jobs. I'm not so sure whether our view of the world is completely focused. And maybe we need to readjust a bit because, Mr. Speaker, the two are definitely interrelated. They're in lockstep.

If you look around over the last number of years, when I drive out to my constituency and I see the money that has been spent by municipalities on raising grid roads — those are primary gravel roads out in rural Saskatchewan — 10 and 15 feet because they were flooded. And then now the water has receded somewhat, all within a period between 2010 and 2019.

I'm the oldest member in this House. It doesn't give me any particular right of better ideas or smarter than anybody else, all those kind of things. That's definitely not on. But I've seen a few things in my life. I remembered my parents talked. My dad and mother talked about the wet years of the '50s. And I was around in the '50s; I mean if you're born in '46, you're going to be there in the '50s. And yes, it was wet. You know, roads were flooded. They weren't grid roads. They're not the kind of roads we have now.

I talked to neighbours and people in my constituency who are a lot older than I was. And I asked them, I said, when we were in the midst of our current wet years, 2010 to 2014, I said, how does this compare in your mind to the '50s? And I remember an individual whose opinion — you know, and I'm just using this as an example because I got this reaction quite often — an individual who had just left the farm, a farm that he grew up on, that his parents homesteaded, and he said, there is no comparison. This current wet years, if we want to use that term, much wetter than whatever happened in the '50s. And I heard that from a number of people whose opinion I value because they give you the straight goods. They called a spade a shovel and they don't cover anything up.

So what I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to do everything that's possible. I don't know what the answers are. I'm not going to get into this whole thing of carbon tax versus other approaches and so on, but what I am saying is it's a serious, serious problem that we as a province, we as a country, that we as a world need to address. And we have to do our part as much as we can.

Certainly our emissions on a world scale are — what is it? — Canada's 1.6? So people will say to me, well why bother? Why don't you go talk to the big polluters like China and India and so on? Well I said, how are we going to talk to them if we haven't got our house in order? We need to get our house in order and then talk to the rest of the people and say, hey we need to deal with this issue and we need to do our part.

And the reason why I bring this up today, I mean here as a private member sitting on the government side, what is it that you can do? Well not a whole lot. You can participate in government policy decisions and so on and try and make a difference and talk about it here in the Assembly and those sorts of things. And so that's what I'm doing here today. And why am I doing that? I could sit here and be quiet and not say anything. And 30 years down the road, I may or may not be here. Probably not. But 25 years down the road I may be still around, and if my grandson comes to me — and if what the scientists are telling us, if only three-quarters of it comes true — and my grandson comes back to me and says, Grandpa, you had a chance to make a little bit of a difference. What did you do about it?

That's why I'm here today, Mr. Speaker. That's why I'm making these comments, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, this will be my last opportunity to participate in a Throne Speech reply, and I felt that it's time to get off the chair. That's why I got into politics back in '90s. You can sit on the chair and complain as much as you want. It's not going to make a bit of difference. So if you feel strongly and you feel you can make a difference, get off the chair. Put your hat in the ring. See what happens. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Not really sure how I'm going to follow that. But I do want to maybe open with a thank you to the gentlemen who will be giving, or have given, their last reply to the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker. I think it's been interesting listening to some of my colleagues who have a lot more history in this building than I do. And it's been a great lesson in politics, I think, in some ways, and in political history. And I want to thank them for that.

I also, as is customary, I think I want to start off by thanking my kids. You know, it's funny as I think about all the things that have happened over the last four years since I got elected, Mr. Speaker. My daughter today is probably the young lady I wish I had been at that age: way, way more together, way more responsible, high-performing, has her goals in life, is really quite amazing. What an amazing young person she is.

And a lot of people complain about young people today and think they're entitled and think they're . . . But I am just amazed at some of the things that our young people today can do. I'm amazed at some of the things they think about and they talk about, and my daughter's an amazing example of that. And if that's what the women of the next generation are going to be like, we'd better look out because they are coming for all of us and they are going to rule the world.

My son, you know, my son, he's got all of the best qualities of

my father: calm and patient and incredibly private. He's a great athlete and I would like to think that he has his mother's stellar sense of humour, Mr. Speaker. You know, my kids are . . . I'm so very proud of them. This is their grade 12 year, and I'm really trying to make adjustments in my life so that I can be there for them as much as possible.

And I just don't know what I'm going to do. I was sitting in the football field last week and I didn't realize until the game was in the last three minutes and there was a terrible reffing call — and I'm a football mom, so I can go off about that for a minute — but there was a terrible reffing call. I suddenly realized that that was my last high school football game, and it hit me. And I think I've got a couple of weeks left of volleyball, and then I don't know what I'm going to do with this so-called free time I'm going to have. I'm going to feel a little lost not to go to the football field or the volleyball courts anymore.

My son is thinking about coaching. I hope he does that. I think he was born to coach, as my daughter said, and I'd love nothing more. He thinks he's going to own a football team at some point. I hope that happens. He'll look after his mother as well. Anyway, I'm so proud of my kids and it's just amazing to see what young people they've become.

My son in particular, we have the greatest political conversations. And my daughter as well, my daughter's very, very headstrong and doesn't always want to listen to alternative perspectives. My son and I have a lot more engaged conversations. And it's just amazing when I think about, sometimes they surprise me. I can't believe the things they pick up that they have thought about, that they think about, that they read about. It's incredible.

My parents, who have become . . . A lot of members across on both sides of the aisle have talked about how extended family members really make this thing all work, and my parents have been incredible. Since my kids were little, my parents have had lunch with my kids once a week. And when they were smaller, my dad would pick them up in the truck and they'd have this game where they'd say, you know, what's for lunch, grandpa. And he'd be like, it's a surprise. And they'd all laugh and they'd laugh at how slow grandpa drives. And then they'd get to my mom's and she'd made some ridiculous lunch that had, like, angel food cake and all this. And I'd feel completely inadequate because I was stuffing a PB and J [peanut butter and jelly sandwich] together or a cheese sandwich together for lunch.

But even today they have my kids over for lunch or for supper now when they're not working or they have sports, about once a week. My parents are at every game. They're at every volleyball practice. They're at every football game. They stay after. They take my kids. You know, they'll meet my son for lunch or my daughter for dinner. And I just can't thank my parents enough.

They celebrated their 50th anniversary this year, this summer. And it was an amazing event, particularly because we've had a rough ride as a family. I mean things weren't always easy in my house growing up. My dad was in the trades and my mom was in and out of work and so we moved, I think, 21 times in 18 years, Mr. Speaker. So you learn at a very early age to sort of fend for yourself, and we did that. And there were some issues in our family that we overcame, and so it was really incredible to see my parents celebrate their 50th anniversary, many, many friends

that came to see them and be with them, and it was just wonderful.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank . . . I've got a pretty amazing team in my office here at the legislature. We only have one guy in my office and . . . poor guy. Yes, he's either super lucky or super unlucky, depends on the day. But Dan does amazing work on my comms. Of course Dawn and Michelle, who we fondly refer to as Laverne and Shirley, run the front of the office. Megan has just joined us. She's a student in the Hill business school, competes in JDC West [Jeux du Commerce West], and is helping organize that. And then of course Tessa Ritter, who's my chief of staff, who is absolutely incredible as a chief and also as a leader in our office. And then Wendy Ward, who is in my constituency office, who does an incredible amount of work as well.

And I also, I think, want here to thank my colleagues, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's funny. We spend a lot of time in this place. We spend a lot of time working here. And we get to know each other a little bit, sitting next to each other or having some laughs, whether it's shooting across the aisle about people's kids, commenting on the member for Rosemont's son, or making comments about the game on the weekend, and so on. And it means a lot. I've had some great colleagues come over the last year and offer support in a number of areas in my life, and certainly mentorship and guidance as a I learn how to be a better MLA and minister. And I just want to thank them for that.

You know, we've been really busy, Mr. Speaker. I was thinking about it. And I was looking at my calendar over the last number of months while we haven't been in session, and in some ways I really enjoy being in session. But I think I enjoy being out of session more so we can get out in the community and be out with the people that elected us to be here. And so, you know, we've been really busy engaging with stakeholders in my files. Spent some time with the good people at Northlands College, of course door-knocking in my constituency, and then consulting very broadly on the growth plan.

The Premier was also pretty enthusiastic about making sure that we continue to engage with people across the province, and so we moved our cabinet meetings around out of session. And so in addition to meeting at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], the U of R [University of Regina] hosted us on the College Avenue campus, Mr. Speaker, where President Timmons made a presentation to us. And then, I think as the member from Weyburn pointed out, we went to the Weyburn oil and gas show. We also had a cabinet meeting in Rosetown and in Melfort, which is I think really important for those communities to see their cabinet ministers get around the province. And I want to commend the Premier for taking that initiative, and I think it was great experience for all of us.

I also attended the U of S graduation powwow, which was an incredible event. I'd never attended a graduation powwow previously, and I really, really enjoyed that experience. Of course with yourself, Mr. Speaker, we were part of the Pride celebrations along with our Sask Party youth again, and we were joined this year by Minister Merriman which . . . pardon me, the Minister of Social Services, part of that.

And then of course I want to give a shout-out to our U of R

partners, Mr. Speaker, who helped the evacuation of First Nations communities in northern Ontario in July by housing individuals from those communities in the residences on campus. It was difficult in many ways, and the U of R stepped up as good community citizens and helped out all of those folks. And then just a few short days later they hosted Team Mexico and their parents for the International Bowl in football against the South Selects representing Team Canada.

We also attended CMEC [Council of Ministers of Education, Canada] in July. And on this I want to say that the very first First Nations woman, Minister Mark from BC [British Columbia], handed the Chair's role over to the very first Métis woman, the new premier of Northwest Territories, Caroline Cochrane. And we will assume the Vice-Chair's role. I think it's really fantastic that at this point we've had the first First Nations woman and now the first Métis woman chairing CMEC, and certainly to Premier Caroline Cochrane of Northwest Territories who I think has literally held every single file I know, and I've seen and interacted with on many occasions.

[16:30]

In August, Mr. Speaker, our constituency held our annual Tour with Tina here in the Legislative Building, which is always great. It was a record turnout, lots of newcomer families, Mr. Speaker, lots of little kids. And we actually came here into the Assembly where many of the kids sat in chairs around the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and I dare say that in some cases there was a remarkable improvement with some of the kids that were sitting in our seats.

Regina MLAs were also really pleased to see and be a part of the announcement to renovate the Globe Theatre here in Regina.

In September I was really excited to be a part of the Startup Summit hosted by the Cultivator here in Regina, powered by Conexus, where investors from Silicon Valley packed the room with entrepreneurs who were doing pitches to some of those investors. The room was absolutely packed. And I want to thank the Cultivator for also hosting a Future Founders event, where a number of high school students came to find out what it was like to begin a start-up company and be an entrepreneur and actually talk to some of the entrepreneurs and business leaders in a number of high-performing entrepreneurial companies. And I think that was an incredible opportunity for high school students. It was great to see that packed room and I'd love to see a lot more of that. I think it was fantastic.

In October we participated in a future of learning event on blockchain and the gig economy, of course. And this is just a snapshot of some of the things that have gone on.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, that when I sit here, and we've only been here a few days but I would think that the world is terrible sometimes when I hear what goes on, particularly some of the characterizations of things that come from across the aisle. And I just disagree. I think there's so many amazing things happening here in Regina — which this past weekend was also a testament to — but also across the province. And I think Saskatchewan is really punching above its weight on so many fronts.

Our Premier hosted the Council of the Federation on a First Nations reserve for the first time in history, Mr. Speaker, in July.

And I think these are just small representations of the big picture that we are all doing in our respective communities and in our files on this side of the Assembly, which I think is really forward-thinking and optimistic, not punctuated by sort of doom-and-gloom scenarios that we hear over and over again. Mr. Speaker, I think we're excited to champion our province and we have really big aspirations for it. And I believe that in conjunction with our very strong leadership, this is a critical defining characteristic between ourselves and sometimes our colleagues across the way.

Now with respect to economic management issues, Mr. Speaker, you know, we did deliver on our three-year plan to get back to balance. And our budget last year was *The Right Balance*, a mix of efficiencies found through better processes, revenue incentives, and targeted spending to those areas that we've heard about most as we've travelled around the province and have engaged with people.

You know, I've noticed that across the city the NDP has a slogan called Putting People First, and I would just say that this is something that we agree with. Certainly the folks on this side of the House share that aspiration.

One example of improving processes is through the execution, Mr. Speaker, of the new delegation agreement with the Saskatoon tribal First Nations child and family services agency. This will bring us to a total, Mr. Speaker, of 17 First Nations delegation agreements across the province, which work to ensure that First Nations communities guide the care of First Nations children who are at risk. I think this is a really important part of reconciliation efforts and much-needed partnership to reduce the number of children in care. It puts people first and I think it recognizes the commitment of my colleague the Minister of Social Services to fostering very productive relationships on behalf of children in this province. That puts people first.

Mr. Speaker, one of the examples of targeted spending we hear about most has of course been our investments in health. We've opened the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford and the new Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. The latter of which, Mr. Speaker, is located on the University of Saskatchewan campus, creating a direct, physical relationship between the College of Medicine and the children's hospital, giving medical students, clinicians, and researchers unparalleled opportunities to be leaders in Canada for children's health and for pediatric medicine, Mr. Speaker. That also puts people first.

Another example would be our investments in mental health and addictions, something which we have heard about from people all over the province, over and over again. Our last budget contained a record investment and an 80 per cent increase since we formed government, Mr. Speaker. And of course we know that we'll continue to make investments into the future, Mr. Speaker. That puts people first.

And of course to the legislative interventions designed to help people, like Clare's Law, that puts people first.

And, Mr. Speaker, I've had this on my mind a lot lately because we're all wearing poppies. I want to remind folks that our government established the Scholarship of Honour back in 2009 to help support our men and women serve, have access to

post-secondary education. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to share that one of the great joys I have in this portfolio is writing those scholarship award letters which highlights that opportunity to me.

And true to form, Mr. Speaker, every year I receive handwritten notes from members of our Forces, those who serve and receive the scholarship, you know, talking about the scholarship, talking about their program and their aspirations. And it is one of the definite highlights I have in my portfolio. The ceremony honouring those who are able to attend and who may not be on a tour of duty will be next week, and I think it's a proud moment for members on both sides of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, another way we've managed the economy to ensure our growth is maintained and continued, a great job, is through our investments in infrastructure. Not only do our investments keep people working, they also help ensure that our growing population, Mr. Speaker, has the quality of life that they deserve. I'd be remiss, as have many members on this side of the House, not to note the opening of the Regina bypass, the single largest investment in our province's history.

Arcola and Victoria Avenue have been the busiest arterial roads in the city of Regina for many, many years. Removing truck traffic in this area and the surrounding communities is critically important for quality and safety. And I would suggest that critics of this project don't come from southeast Regina or the bedroom communities of Balgonie, Pilot Butte, White City, or Emerald Park because folks that come from those areas in particular know how critical this project is.

Yesterday we heard from the White City fire chief. And I think there was some news about this, Mr. Speaker, because I think his words were very poignant. He said he used to be on a first-name basis with the coroner's office, and since the bypass project, he's not had to use the jaws of life once, Mr. Speaker. That is putting people first.

[Applause]

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thanks, Greg. We also heard from Wanda Campbell, whose son left their home in Balgonie, crossed the intersection in his car on the way to Dairy Queen, and never came home. Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you how many times my kids have been out in that area since they started driving and have crossed that highway to go from one end to the other. And I've thought about that story and worried about that story. We have many friends that live in the Emerald Park or Pilot Butte or Balgonie area. Because my kids play sports, they have friends in a number of communities. And that highway has scared me for a long time, Mr. Speaker. And that story from Wanda Campbell really hit home because her son would have been about the same age as my own kids.

Mr. Speaker, you know, the members opposite have been critical about this project from day one. And it's just, I think, one more example of where we don't see a vision where Saskatchewan can punch above its weight and, in this case, deliver on time and on budget. Sometimes we're too busy gazing at our navels to be aspirational, and I think sometimes it shows.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to economic diversification, you know,

70 per cent of what we produce in this province is exports. And we've seen, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's important that we can't rely on the federal government to represent our trade interests as a province. I think in many cases they're still stuck in a very hinterland mentality.

And if we left it up to the Leader of the Opposition, we would stick our heads in the sand and do nothing because he seems to think that standing up for Saskatchewan is, Mr. Speaker, adversarial or uncooperative. Mr. Speaker, nothing illustrates the difference between the strong leadership on this side of the Assembly and the weak leadership over there than, I think, this attitude or reluctance to do something.

People are struggling, Mr. Speaker. I only need to drive 10 or 15 kilometres out of my community in Regina University to hear how angry and disaffected people really feel in this province because people are struggling because of the ill-conceived and, I think, Eastern-centric policies enacted, Mr. Speaker, by the federal government. Outside of even the energy industry, I've heard business leaders say, as we've been consulting on the growth plan, over and over and over again that federal policies on a range of issues from taxation to regulation have created a climate of uncertainty that is unhelpful for attracting investment and increasing our competitive advantage as a province, Mr. Speaker.

It is our job to raise those issues, Mr. Speaker. It is our job to have what might sometimes be uncomfortable but candid conversations about exactly those things, Mr. Speaker. Because here's the thing. You can't put people first if you can't grow the economy. And you can't grow the economy where we export 70 per cent of what we make and have federal policies that obstruct us at every single turn, from the carbon tax to transportation policies, to reluctance to build pipelines, to advocacy on trade agreements. And if you can't grow the economy, you have no way to pay for important investments that matter to people like children's hospitals or mental health and addictions beds or inclusive neighbourhood homes for people with diverse abilities, Mr. Speaker.

This basic math seems lost on the Leader of the NDP who would rather we just wait and let somehow everything work out on its own, Mr. Speaker. Let's try to be nice, not rock the boat, and somehow it'll work itself out. Well I remember how that worked out, Mr. Speaker, in record numbers of young people, some of the best and brightest of this province, who I wrote reference letters to leave this province when we took that approach previously under another government, Mr. Speaker. I say no, no, and no. We're not going back there.

Mr. Speaker, it's because our Premier is strong and willing to stand up to that, and not only stand up to it, Mr. Speaker, but also put forward some pretty clear solutions. We've seen time and time again that we have the leadership on this side of the House to drive our economy forward so we can make the kinds of investments that we need in order to put people first. And not only that, but perhaps more importantly, we're also bound on this side of the House by the aspirational belief, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan's best days are always ahead of us. And so we always keep pushing towards that goal.

We believe that we can lead and not just follow in the province

of Saskatchewan. The tremendous growth in our population, Mr. Speaker, is evidence that as we are seen as the place to live and work and invest. People see opportunities here, and that is why we host folks from 170 countries around the world, Mr. Speaker. You know, as we look forward, I think we can harness that.

Our universities have played a key role in attracting students, Mr. Speaker, from all over the world. The University of Saskatchewan has 289 international partnerships when I last looked. Now that was before they were in Korea just recently, so I imagine that number is probably higher today. The University of Regina has 295 international agreements. Sask Poly now has 34 but that number is growing. We are literally, Mr. Speaker, bringing the world to Saskatchewan.

These are aspirational goals of increasing the number of students as well, Mr. Speaker, by 75 per cent over the next couple of years. These individuals and families, Mr. Speaker, I believe, add to the richness of life in our communities. And our motto here is, “from many peoples, strength.” Canada is also I think, Mr. Speaker, one of the other reasons why people are moving here, is because we’re an attractive destination of choice, especially in light of Brexit and certainly in light of the administration to the south of us.

How our students can increase their global competencies, Mr. Speaker, and researchers that can lead in important areas of research are also of critical and global interest. I think we’ve had a 41 per cent growth in the number of students studying abroad since 2012 and 2013. That’s just over 1,000 of our students that are studying in approximately 71 countries around the world. Mr. Speaker, that’s also bringing Saskatchewan to the world.

Our indicators project that we do in our ministry, Mr. Speaker, talks about the number of students who stay and are employed. Mr. Speaker, this is a testament to economic growth and opportunity in this province. And here I just need to correct the member opposite, who in her speech last night said that we were gutting, and I quote, we gutted the graduate retention program. Mr. Speaker, we didn’t gut the graduate retention program. The graduate retention program is still being offered, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, has 71,000 to date. Young people have used it to stay and create their life here upon graduation in the province of Saskatchewan. That is a critically important program in the province of Saskatchewan.

[16:45]

Now looking forward a little bit, Mr. Speaker, you know, I’ve heard some of the members opposite say that we’re not being aspirational, we’re not thinking forward. And I just want to reject that notion, Mr. Speaker. For example, we know that we’re in the middle of a digital revolution. And we know that a part of the Speech from the Throne focused on the Wireless Saskatchewan initiative, expanding wireless coverage across the province of Saskatchewan to many rural communities, which can only help some of our digitization and technical innovation, especially in the agtech space.

Mr. Speaker, I would also add that, you know, we are working hard with our partners at SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies] and certainly with Sask Poly about applied learning opportunities, which is something the entire world is

talking about increasingly, Mr. Speaker, as well as lifelong learning. The ability to educate, retrain, and upscale people over the course of their lifetime is at more conversation than I’ve ever seen it in all of my years of being involved in the education system, Mr. Speaker, certainly the advanced education system.

We’re trying to train for jobs not just of today, but for the future, Mr. Speaker. And that’s going to require some digital and innovation, economic thinking, Mr. Speaker. And to some of this, you know, we’ve been having many conversations about coding and robotics in the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system and the importance of financial literacy, Mr. Speaker, in the K to 12 system. That is critical to equipping the next generation of students to be able to succeed in an environment where the Conference Board of Canada indicates that 7 out of 10 jobs are going to be digital.

And now, Mr. Speaker, a lot of folks will say, well not everyone will have access to those opportunities, which is why I’m really, really, really proud of the work that Innovation Saskatchewan has done in conjunction with our partners at the Saskatchewan Science Centre on RoboX.

RoboX started with a previous program called RoboYou. And that program did a pilot test of coding and robotics exercises on two First Nations reserves, one of which was Cowessess. And what they did was they went out over the spring and they did coding and robotics exercises with kids in grades 4 to 6, Mr. Speaker. And then they had a robotics Olympics, where those kids got to compete with the robots that they built. And I’m really proud to say that a young female student won that, which is really great to see because we have some work to do to encourage women and girls to get into the STEM [science, technology, engineering, and math] field still, Mr. Speaker. But it was wonderful and it was very well received.

And so we started discussing with the Saskatchewan Science Centre about how we could expand this program. And so what we’re going to do, Mr. Speaker, is RoboX will train 100 teachers in the northern part of the province on coding and robotics exercises, Mr. Speaker.

We did a bit of a survey to say, how comfortable do you feel with these things? The comfort level was very low. And so we did some workshops offered by the Science Centre in conjunction with Innovation Saskatchewan, and we found after that 97 per cent of teachers felt very comfortable in doing some of those basic exercises.

And here’s why it’s important, Mr. Speaker. Because if the jobs of the future are going to be largely digital, we need to make sure that everyone has access to the digital literacy skills. They need to succeed, and we need to pay special attention to those who are normally in more vulnerable groups, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, of course, we’re working it through computer science and software engineering programs.

And I’m really also proud of our work with ComIT, which is an organization that has been providing retraining and upskilling opportunities to people who are underemployed or unemployed, on digital literacy skills, Mr. Speaker, so that they can provide some of the skilled labour shortage that we have in the digital space, Mr. Speaker, right now, which I hear about all the time.

So this is another way of trying to engage people who would normally be left out of the digital revolution and that are being engaged through a number of creative, I think, means and forward-thinking means.

Of course in post-secondary I'm going to be involved, I think shortly after session, in another discussion around women in STEM. We have a lot of work to do here. A lot of women and young girls, particularly around the ages of 13, 14, start dropping out of the STEM fields. And those are the areas, if you want to talk about the wage gap, those are the areas where the really well-paying jobs are. And so we have some work to do to make sure that women and girls, and certainly Indigenous students, are also able to access some of those opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend our post-secondary institutions, particularly Sask Poly, on being ahead of some of the major trends of the world in terms of innovation. Sask Poly has a 3-D [three-dimensional] manufacturing centre of excellence. Additive manufacturing is a huge part of the innovation revolution and innovation economies. And they're using the 3-D manufacturing centre of excellence, Mr. Speaker, to prototype products for small- and medium-sized enterprises, Mr. Speaker. And what's so amazing about that is they're also allowing students to have the opportunity to work on those prototypes, thereby getting really hands-on skills in some really critical innovation technology, Mr. Speaker, and also in being incredibly responsive as an institution to industry needs. It's fantastic.

Other examples would be the genomics research that's going on at Global Institute for Food Security, the Fedoruk Centre or, of course, Mitacs.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on about this. You know, we have spent time on ladies in tech events, future founders, trying to get young people to think about some of these things, of course the accelerators, the new cultivator powered by Conexus here in Regina, what Co.Labs is doing, absolutely wonderful work up in Saskatoon, which is now the second-fastest growing tech hub in Canada next to the city of Waterloo. And I think we can overtake Waterloo. I think we have the leadership to do that, which is helped in part by the Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive, the most aggressive angel investment tax credit in Western Canada, Mr. Speaker. And that is critically important because it enables investors to come and invest in companies like Vendasta, for example, who then become the anchors of the ecosystem that we need to mature all of the other companies in that ecosystem and provide additional opportunities.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of positive energy and motivation and excitement around these sectors happening, not just in Saskatoon or Regina, but around the province. I'm incredibly excited about the fact that Silicon Valley investors are looking at Saskatchewan as a great place to invest in some of our technology start-ups. It excites me when I see that Vendasta has gone from approximately 30 employees to now hiring 600, Mr. Speaker. These are all incredible signs of an economy that is moving forward, and not just moving forward on commodities, but moving forward in the innovation economy, Mr. Speaker, which is critically important.

So on this side I think we're demonstrating that we put people

first. We've demonstrated that we're building people's competencies, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be looking a lot at ag tech and our global competitiveness, Mr. Speaker, not just now but also into the future.

And I think what makes us different, as I wrap up, is that we have a government with a very strong leader, Mr. Speaker, and a strong team that's not afraid to stand up for Saskatchewan, isn't afraid to elevate our province into leadership roles nationally and internationally, and with the aspirational vision of continuing to make our province the best place for people to live, work, and invest. We're on the map both nationally and internationally because, Mr. Speaker, we're very clear and united as a team about why we do what we do every single day. And for that reason, I am very proud to support the Speech from the Throne and cannot wait to see what we can accomplish next. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join with my colleagues and enter in the debate on the Speech from the Throne . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm being heckled already. I've just started.

Mr. Speaker, now of course at the end of my comments, I'll be supporting the motion, the Speech from the Throne. I won't be supporting the amendment by the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

But off the beginning I want to also acknowledge a lot of my family members of course. As we all know, we wouldn't be able to do this job and be here without the strong support of our families and those back home, Mr. Speaker.

So my wife Leone and I, we celebrated a milestone, another milestone anniversary this last year, 33 years married and 39 years together. And our kids are doing really well. Our oldest daughter, Katelin, of course I talked about her last year. She got married just over a year ago. And with Mark, her husband, and the two daughters that she gained through the marriage to Mark, we've just been really blessed by those two, Mr. Speaker. Their oldest grandchildren . . . Raya is 17. She's quite an athlete, very accomplished in gymnastics and also kayaking. She just competed in the Western Canada games down in Swift Current. She's actually competed nationally. She's trained in the States as well and she's really doing well, Mr. Speaker. We're very proud of her. She's in grade 12 and will be graduating next year and possibly coming to Regina for ongoing education.

And her sister, the younger of the two, is Malaya, 10 years old, taking of course elementary school in Yorkton. And she's also a very accomplished athlete, a gymnast, but also very scholastic and academic. And we're very proud of her as well. And she's also one heck of a babysitter, looking after her younger cousins, Mr. Speaker, the children of my next daughter, Rayanne, who works in the banking industry in Yorkton. She's also an accomplished singer, sings with Odd Man Out from time to time at different events around the province.

And they've just been blessed by the addition of a third child in their family. I've talked about Wynnslet, our first-born granddaughter, a number of times. She's four and a half years old

now, just becoming a smart little firecracker, just the apple of grandpa's eye, that's for sure. I really enjoy her company. And in fact I've been teaching her how to fly a little bit, Mr. Speaker. One recent trip to Regina, she decided she needed a front seat. She actually took control of the aircraft leaving town and flew over the legislature and the Conexus Arts Centre. So that was . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Totally legal, totally legal. And so, you know, I really enjoy her company. In fact I talked to her and I said, you know, once you can reach the rudder pedals, we'll give you full-on flying lessons. She said, what for, Grandpa? I know how to fly already, so I don't really need any more instruction. But that's just her independent streak. She's just really an amazing young lady.

And of course Otto was born a year and a half ago. He's growing like a weed and really becoming just a fun little guy to be around and a real joy to have around. And just over three weeks ago we had Crew. Crew William Krahenbil got added to our family and we were able to be there in the hospital as he was being born. It was just a real great time. He's doing well. So we're really blessed by those grandchildren, Mr. Speaker. And I'm really, really a good grounding exercise when you get home to spend a lot of time with them, as much as I possibly can, Mr. Speaker. And I think we all put our families first, but realize in this job you do have some challenges when it comes to that. So this job does pull you away from time to time, but I know all of us try and put them first as much as we possibly can and spend as much time as we possibly can with them.

Of course I wouldn't be able to do the job that I do here without the staff, both in Regina and back home. Laurretta and Rachelle back in the Yorkton constituency office do a great job representing me and the constituency of Yorkton. In the constituency office, they do some just amazing casework and really do represent well. I'm really blessed to have them there, and also the staff here in Regina, Mr. Speaker.

Of course just recently, a couple of months ago, I got moved over from Health to Highways and Infrastructure and Water Security Agency. And I've got to admit, I really miss working with the Minister of Health, the member from Rosetown and the staff in his office, and also the staff that I had in my office as well, Mr. Speaker, really qualified staff, hard-working staff that do represent those ministries and represent those offices very well.

And of course now my new staff in the Ministry of Highways office, David Cooper is a great chief of staff, very knowledgeable, and he's keeping me out of trouble and keeping me up to speed on a lot of issues. Of course Bonnie Malakoff, the head admin, is just an amazing lady that really keeps things on track. We've got Robyn Lekien in the casework and she's just an amazing hard worker that really takes her job to heart, takes it very seriously and wants to represent everybody calling in that might have an issue very seriously and deal with their issues as best as we possibly can. And of course we have Sean in the communications department who has been a friend of mine actually. I've known him for quite a few years and just happened to be able to start working with him since he was in that office. But Sean Wilson there has been a real blessing to have working in there as well. So we're really happy to have them.

Of course our campaign teams that we'll be utilizing here very quickly again over the next year, I've got to acknowledge them.

I wouldn't be here without their hard work, and also the constituents that chose to vote in favour of having me here. And I'm hoping they'll do that again next October 26th, Mr. Speaker, as well.

I'd be remiss if I wouldn't acknowledge a lot of my colleagues here. One of the ones that I really have enjoyed working with over the years and get to work with again is the member for Lumsden-Morse, our former minister of Agriculture, very knowledgeable in so many different areas and . . . Yes, that's the one. He's currently the Legislative Secretary to the Water Security Agency, Mr. Speaker, so when it comes to that file, I've got a bit of an understanding. He is very knowledgeable so I'm really lucky to have him to work alongside to forward that file as well, Mr. Speaker.

Of course the colleagues around the floor, they're very good colleagues . . . well you're over there for now. But really lucky to be . . .

The Speaker: — It now being 5 p.m., this Assembly stands recessed until 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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

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