

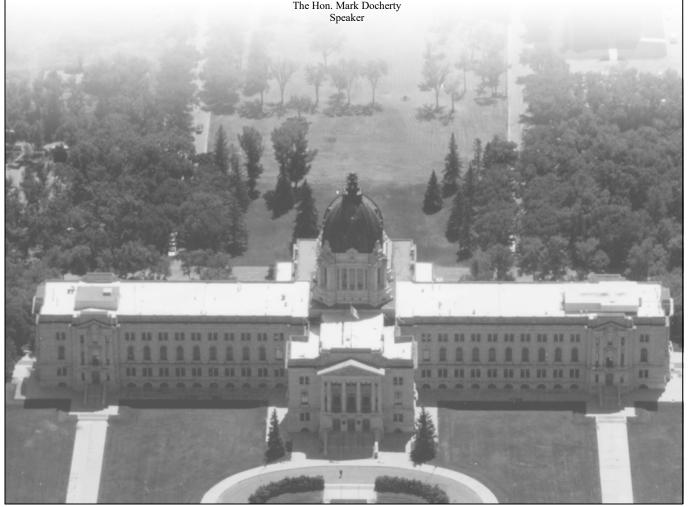
FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS

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



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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Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Walsh Acres
Vacant — Saskatoon Eastview

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Gregory A. Putz

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Principal Clerk — Iris Lang

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN December 5, 2019

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before routine proceedings, I would like to table the Provincial Auditor's report, the 2019 report volume 2.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to all members of this honourable Assembly, a group of 40 grade 3 to 8 students from the great town of Bethune, in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, and a fine-looking bunch they are. And they're accompanied today by their teachers, Tayler Riche, Grant Meyer, and sub teacher, Brenda Heaslip. Mr. Speaker, I hope that all members will give them a very warm welcome to their Legislative Assembly. And I'll be happy to meet with them in the Qu'Appelle Gallery at 11 o'clock.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce two individuals seated in your gallery: my spouse, Jared, and our daughter, Olivia. Olivia's not a stranger to this gallery. She's been here once before, but I didn't have the opportunity to introduce her. So she was born on July 11th. She's almost five months old and she's been an absolute pleasure to us.

Jared normally wouldn't be around to see me at work because he's usually at work, but he took the day off today so I could be here today. And he was on paternity leave, Mr. Speaker, so I could be in the legislature this session. He actually had to end, I will say, he had to end his paternity leave a little bit early this session to go to Ottawa to appear in front of the Supreme Court on a case. And I just wanted to say that we're very proud of him. We got to watch him make his arguments on Tuesday. So he put down the diaper cream and picked up the briefcase and went straight on a plane, did a phenomenal job. Both of us are really glad that he's back home now.

I'm very sad that he's off paternity leave again. You may have seen him, Mr. Speaker, walking around with Olivia throughout this session, bringing her in for her daily feedings. I'm so lucky to have such a wonderful partner, an equal, and such a good friend. So I wanted to take this opportunity to thank him. And I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them, Jared and Olivia, to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to take this opportunity to join the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to welcome her spouse, Jared, and her daughter,

Olivia, to their Legislative Assembly. We have much in common, Mr. Speaker. We're both been to or heading shortly to the Supreme Court of Canada.

But more importantly, just as importantly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to, through all members in this House at this time of the year, at the end of our session, Mr. Speaker, but just prior to the Christmas season, take this opportunity to thank each and every one of the members' spouses, the members' families. I always say each of us does not serve in this Assembly alone. We only serve with the support and the love of all of our families, our spouses, our children, our extended families, Mr. Speaker.

I want to take the opportunity to wish a Merry Christmas to both Jared and Olivia, the Deputy Leader and her family, through all of the members in this House, Mr. Speaker, to wish a Merry Christmas to each of their families.

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery today I am pleased to have the honour to recognize my dear wife, Giselle, and welcome her to her Legislative Assembly. She has become an incredible supporter of all of us on this side of the House, and she watches and listens quite often to House proceedings. And I certainly appreciate the support that she's given me. So please join me in welcoming Giselle to her Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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, people, businesses, and communities from right across Saskatchewan as it relates to the Sask Party government's hike of the PST [provincial sales tax] and expansion of the PST. Of course this has resulted in a doubling of the take of the PST, a historic billion-dollar tax hike, Mr. Speaker, that's hit households hard, households that are now paying more than \$800 a year more each and every year than they were just a few years ago. And of course that's hurt our economy as well.

And as it relates to this tax being imposed onto construction labour, well quite simply that's the epitome of a job-killing tax, and sadly the results bear out. Permits are down all across Saskatchewan in a dramatic way. Projects that are important to our economy and to people and communities have been shelved. Sadly, thousands of hard-working tradespeople have lost their jobs, have lost their employment. And many of those tradespeople have had to relocate and move from the province that they know and love in pursuit of employment. Certainly a tremendous loss for them and their family; a real loss for us as a province as well.

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 Saskatoon and Regina. I so submit.

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

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

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

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

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition once again calling on the Sask Party government to call by-elections in Regina Walsh Acres. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan want to bring to our attention the following: that the seats in the Legislative Assembly for Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview are currently vacant, and 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 Legislative Assembly] did not resign before August 6th, 2019. They did a few weeks after that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, unless a by-election is called, constituents in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon will go without representation for nearly 14 months until the provincial election is held late next year. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they've lost an opportunity to engage in the Throne Speech debate and many of the debates on bills that are before the House. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier does have the power and authority to call by-elections in these constituencies even though the Acts don't require him to do that. But it is the right thing to do.

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

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

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

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 the petition today reside in Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition calling to end unacceptable emergency room wait times. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that despite the Sask Party government's promise to eliminate emergency room wait times in 2012, wait times in Saskatchewan emergency rooms continue to grow; that instead of making smart investments to meet emergency room targets, the Sask Party government watered down targets to the point where they no longer exist; and that Sask Party has cut funding to address emergency room wait times and has no meaningful strategy to get emergency room wait times under control.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to fully fund and execute a plan, as they promised to do in 2012, to lower and eventually end ER wait times across Saskatchewan.

This petition today is signed by individuals from Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in my place today to present a petition for the provincial government to develop and implement a suicide prevention strategy.

The individuals who signed this petition want to draw these following points to your attention: that *The Saskatchewan Strategy for Suicide Prevention Act* was introduced in 2018 but

has not been passed because it has not received support from the Sask Party government. Suicide continues to affect First Nations and Métis families throughout Saskatchewan. Suicide rates for First Nations people in Saskatchewan are four times higher than non-First Nations people. The rate of suicide among First Nations girls is 29 times higher than other girls, and the rate of suicide amongst First Nations boys is six times higher than other boys. Nearly 1,900 people died from suicide in Saskatchewan from 2005 to 2017.

Mr. Speaker, 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 develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to address suicide in Saskatchewan.

This issue is important to all residents of Saskatchewan. We have petitions signed by people across Saskatchewan, but this particular petition is signed by residents from Air Ronge and La Ronge. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow, December 6th, will mark 30 years since the tragic mass shooting at l'École Polytechnique. This act of violence shook our country and led parliament to designate December 6th as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. And today we wear white ribbons in remembrance.

[10:15]

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow across our country, we will all pay tribute to the 14 young women who lost their lives. In response to the tragedy, the Prairieaction Foundation was created. This tri-provincial organization is affiliated with seven universities in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. The organization funds research to analyze the causes and solutions to violence, while also providing education and awareness grants, youth leadership awards, and community initiatives.

A 30th anniversary commemorative book has been published to honour the memory of the victims. Universities across Canada in every province and territory will recognize this day of remembrance and action on violence against women and girls. December 6th is about honouring those who have experienced gender-based violence. A tragedy like l'École Polytechnique massacre cannot be undone, but we can come together to realize a future free of violence.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave that after the MLA from Saskatoon Nutana's member's statement, we all rise and observe a moment of silence. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie

Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte, and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks 30 years since these 14 women were murdered at the engineering school at the Université de Montréal. We remember this massacre annually on December 6th, on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. To quote Francine Pelletier, this massacre of 14 women broke "... the seal that had kept resentment towards feminism safely under wraps."

Thirty years on we can understand the Montreal massacre is not an exception but rather the beginning of a new manifestation of violence against women. As recently as 2018 in Toronto, a lethal attack killing 10 is now seen as part of the ongoing pattern of misogynist serial violence. Every six days a woman is killed by an intimate partner, and our province has the highest rates of domestic violence in the country — double the national average.

We know we must do more. We wear a white ribbon today, not just to remember, but as a call to action as well. So along with the member from Regina Rochdale and all the Assembly, I would ask that all members on your invitation, Mr. Speaker, could pause for a moment of reflection.

The Speaker: — The member has asked leave for a moment of silence. Leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[The Assembly observed a moment of silence.]

The Speaker: — Thank you. I recognize the member for Lumsden-Morse.

Christmas Gratitude

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to stand today to wish you and my legislative colleagues on both sides of the floor a Merry Christmas.

It's hard to believe I have made 20 years of service, Mr. Speaker, and over those years I've grown to love these halls and the good work that goes on in this place. In such a grand building, dressed in our suits and ties, it's good to have a reminder each year that Jesus was born in a stable on the back side of an inn. He wasn't impressed with pomp or position and was born to a humble young lady. Today, Mr. Speaker, Christmas may have filled up with all sorts of busyness, distractions, and baubles, but when you pull off the wrapper, Jesus is still the reason for the season.

A year ago I was lying in a hospital bed being treated for cancer, Mr. Speaker, wondering what the future might hold for me. Now I'm not sure why God gave an undeserving old cowboy like me a second chance, but I'm very thankful he did, and I'm going to make the best of it.

God gave me so much more than just extra time, Mr. Speaker. This season I'm reminded that he gave his son for me and for you. I figured, after all he's done for me, the least I could do is give myself to him. Turns out some changes are in order, Mr.

Speaker. As we say around here, a lot has been done but there's more work to do.

So this Christmas season, I want to thank God for Jesus and wish the very best in 2020 for you all, your families, and the people of this great province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a place where we share a lot of barbed words and we have a lot of moments of conflict, but we also come together in moments like that. I want to thank the member opposite for those words. You've touched all of our hearts. I want to thank you for your service, and all the members in this House for their service.

There's some long days here, some hard days far from family, but we do this work because it matters. We do this work because we all care deeply about the people of this province. And I want to thank everyone in this House for the way that they demonstrate the love of the people of Saskatchewan throughout the year in this House and in their home constituencies. And I want to join the member, the Premier, and all of the members on this side of the House in wishing you all a very Merry Christmas.

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

New Chancellors Appointed to Provincial Universities

Mr. Olauson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to congratulate the two new chancellors at our provincial universities. This fall the University of Saskatchewan installed Grit McCreath as its 16th chancellor at their fall convocation ceremonies. And Pamela Klein was installed as the University of Regina's 9th chancellor earlier this summer.

Mr. Speaker, as chancellors, both women will preside at university convocation ceremonies, confer degrees, chair the university senate, and serve on the board of governors. Chancellor is a prestigious title, and we are very grateful that these strong women have accepted these important leadership roles. Their commitment to post-secondary education will help equip our students with the skills and experience they need to realize their potential and build their careers right here in Saskatchewan.

I'd like to thank the outgoing chancellors, the Hon. Roy Romanow at the University of Saskatchewan and Dr. Jim Tomkins at the University of Regina, for their contributions during their terms. Each man leaves a remarkable legacy and we are incredibly grateful for their service. I now ask all members to join me in showing our appreciation for these distinguished individuals and congratulate Grit McCreath and Pamela Klein on their new roles as our universities' chancellors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Luseland School Student Selected for Provincial Youth Council

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to

highlight the work of a young constituent of mine. Julie Patton is a grade 12 student at Luseland School and she was recently selected to sit on the Ministry of Education's new youth council.

Julie grew up on a farm just outside the town of Major where she got to experience everything that rural Saskatchewan has to offer. Mr. Speaker, Julie has everything you could ask for in a representative. She's athletic, musical, organizes community events, is a member of many clubs, and she's even in her second year as president of her student representative council. Mr. Speaker, Julie is a natural leader and is greatly respected by her teachers, peers, and community. Julie understands rural Saskatchewan and is in a great position to provide constructive feedback about what we can do to better serve rural schools.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very impressed with how engaged today's youth is in shaping the future of our communities, our province, and our nation. And I look forward to seeing what Julie and others like her bring to the table and how Saskatchewan education will improve with input from the new youth council.

Mr. Speaker, I now invite all members of this Assembly to join me in recognizing Julie Patton and all members of the youth council for their service to education in the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Opposition Statements on Regina Bypass

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Regina bypass has officially been open for just over a month now. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? An average of 5,630 vehicles go over that bypass a day, Mr. Speaker. That's 1,230 heavy trucks that use that bypass every day.

Mr. Speaker, I want some of the members to play along here. Does anybody remember a member saying, get heavy-haul trucks off of Dewdney Avenue, Mr. Speaker? Who was that? That was the member from Rosemont. He said it so many times, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Pages even at the time got sick of those words, Mr. Speaker. Over 80 times did he put those petitions forward.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP [New Democratic Party] never miss a moment to be on the wrong side of an issue, and this is another one, Mr. Speaker. They've opposed it since the day the bypass was announced and they oppose it as 1,230 heavy trucks are taken off of the streets of Regina, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again the opposition has bypassed a great project.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Strike Action at Regina Refinery

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, that member sure knows how to get rid of the Christmas spirit real quick, doesn't he.

Mr. Speaker, later this evening a lockout will begin at the Co-op Refinery here in Regina. The refinery has said they aim to maintain operations through the lockout and during this time. Saskatchewan people and of course Regina residents in particular need to know that any work being done at the refinery will be safe during this lockout. What is the government's plan to ensure safety during the lockout?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we're disappointed to learn that there is a strike action that has been taken and then a subsequent lockout by the company in the case of the refinery here in Regina, Mr. Speaker. And we would just say that, as we always say, that we believe the best agreements are always reached at the bargaining table, and we would hope that both sides are able to return to the bargaining table sooner rather than later. As we know, Mr. Speaker, that is where the most solid agreements come into place.

We have been in touch . . . The minister has been in touch with both sides of that bargaining table, Mr. Speaker. And we understand that the refinery does have a plan in place to keep the plant operational and safe with this subsequent job action, Mr. Speaker.

At this point in time, Mr. Speaker, we would just reiterate that the best agreements always occur at the bargaining table, and it is our sincere hope that both sides will be able to return sooner rather than later.

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

Health Care in Saskatchewan

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This session has made it clear once again that this government is failing Saskatchewan people when it comes to health care. We have brand new hospitals with major issues. We have crumbling, old hospitals with major issues. We have people waiting in hallways for days for care. We have numbers on the walls in the halls because they're basically being used as rooms. Understaffing, overcrowding. The Premier would rather point fingers and float random trial balloons to distract from his disastrous record on health care.

To the Premier: isn't it time that he and his government stop dreaming up ways to fulfill the dream of Saskatchewan people to fill out another tax form, and actually get serious about addressing what matters, admit the problems in health care, and get to work to fix it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, if we go back just a short number of years to, let's say, maybe the election in 2007, Mr. Speaker, and the conversation that we were having in this province with respect to access to our medical professionals, with respect to access to our health care facilities across this province, Mr. Speaker, this was top of mind of each and every family in this province, Mr. Speaker. It was top of mind for my family in a community that was underserved, Mr. Speaker. Underserved because of decisions that had been made for the years leading up to that point, Mr. Speaker, that had reduced the amount of physicians that we were training in this province, Mr. Speaker,

had reduced our ability to access physicians from around the world

It's through record investments in health care that we have, thankfully, have been able to invest in over 900 physicians now, Mr. Speaker, and make pathways for them to access careers in our communities in this province, most notably, 70 specialists operating, Mr. Speaker, providing services to — services that we never previously had — to families out of a brand new Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in the city of Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

This is the record of this government. The record is new hospitals. The record is more physicians. The record is more nurses. The record, Mr. Speaker, is investment in health care infrastructure, and the people that are offering the services to our family in this province.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, the record of this Premier is hallway medicine. The record of this Premier is crumbling hospitals, hospitals where you can't drink the water, Mr. Speaker. It's no wonder this Premier doesn't want to talk about his own record when it comes to health care. He doesn't want to talk about the last few years, given how badly his government has failed Saskatchewan patients. It turns out he doesn't want front-line workers talking about health care either.

This session the NDP caucus obtained a memo from the Saskatchewan Health Authority that urged front-line workers and doctors to avoid what they called "discordant messaging." What this government means when they say discordant messaging is telling the truth about hallway medicine. Discordant messaging is telling the truth about water in the hospitals that can't be drunk. Discordant messaging, Mr. Speaker, is telling the truth about understaffing, about burnout, and the danger to patient care that results.

Mr. Speaker, that doesn't apply just to doctors and health care workers. This memo isn't an aberration. It's pulling back the veil on a culture of fear and secrecy that has existed for a long time in health, in education, in social services. My question for the Premier: why doesn't he want the people of Saskatchewan to know the truth about what's really going on in front-line services? Why won't he allow workers to speak up?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, these questions have been asked and answered in this House over the course of the last weeks, Mr. Speaker. And here is what I would tell the people of this province with respect to front-line care in our facilities across the province is, first and foremost, Mr. Speaker, there are more facilities. The facilities that we have, have expanded capacity, Mr. Speaker. They have expanded services.

Mr. Speaker, I would tell the people of this province that due to investments and policy decisions that have been made over the course of the last . . . just over a decade now, Mr. Speaker, there are more physicians working in our communities. I mentioned

the physicians at the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. I think of my own community, two physicians up to about six physicians today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we can tell the people of this province that due to policy decisions and following subsequent investment into our health care system — arriving with the largest investment in the history of the province, Mr. Speaker, in health care just this last year — that there are more nurses working in our facilities across this province, well over 3,000 nurses collectively in new facilities, and more people, Mr. Speaker, more medical professionals. We are offering a better service to the people of this province than we have in the years gone by under the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Despite what the minister said yesterday, Saskatchewan is nowhere near the top in the country when it comes to nurses per capita, and we're second lowest in the country when it comes to doctors per capita. The minister seems to think this is fine because there are more total docs than in 2007. Well, news flash, there's more people in the province since 2007. And those new people, as these members seem to forget every time, need health services. They need education. They need supports to be able to thrive here.

Health issues are more complex in this province. Health issues are more complex in this province. And due in many ways to choices by this government, we have the worst health outcomes in the entire country, Mr. Speaker. Now hallway medicine has become the norm. Wait times for specialists have grown. ER [emergency room] closures in rural Saskatchewan are happening every week, Mr. Speaker.

And these old lines, these tired old lines about what happened 12 years ago are of cold comfort to patients who can't get care today, and are sure as heck not going to help us recruit doctors and other providers who want to come and work as part of a team where those around them are burning out because of understaffing and overburdening.

When will this Premier admit there's a problem in health care? When will he get to work to find solutions?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, could you imagine a health care system with 900 fewer physicians in it than we have today? Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, we have 900 more physicians that are operating, working with families and our family members across this province today, than were in 2007, Mr. Speaker. A record that we are incredibly proud of, Mr. Speaker. A record that came about with effort to change the policies, Mr. Speaker, an effort to ensure that we are following that up with a subsequent investment that is necessary.

But there's more work to do, Mr. Speaker. Can you imagine a health care system in this province with 3,800 nurses working in the province, Mr. Speaker, 3,800 nurses working . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, is that today, relative . . . And this is indicative of the choice that we will be facing in the months ahead here, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the next year that Saskatchewan people will be choosing, Mr. Speaker, as we go to the election polls.

But, Mr. Speaker, here is the fact: there are more docs in this province today than there were under the NDP. There are more nurses in this province offering services to our families, Mr. Speaker, than there was under the NDP. There are more hospitals in this province — certainly more new hospitals — in this province than there were under the NDP, Mr. Speaker. And that is because of a commitment to investment into the health care infrastructure, the health care services that are being delivered by this government over the course of the last decade.

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

Development Processes in Wascana Park

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, today the Provincial Auditor released her report, including a chapter on the Sask Party government's failure to ensure that development processes in Wascana Park are both public and transparent. The government-majority board of the Provincial Capital Commission has a legal responsibility to ensure major developments in the park follow the master plan and the law, and the auditor's report shows that that did not happen. Instead, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party rewrote the rules, took over the board, and allowed friends and insiders to get ahead.

To the minister: will she permanently halt Brandt's sweetheart deal in Wascana Park?

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. First off, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Provincial Auditor for the work that she has completed. Mr. Speaker, we respect the work that the auditor has done.

When the auditor said she was going to be making the Provincial Capital Commission a part of her review, the Provincial Capital Commission put the project on pause to allow the auditor to do her work. We now have received the final report. Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Capital Commission will be reviewing these recommendations very carefully. I look forward to a clearly defined plan from them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, this government has absolutely no credibility when it comes to governing Wascana Park. On top of the lack of consultation noted in the report, the auditor has found there were no documents of this whole process. From thin board

meeting minutes, to a lack of formal agreements with developers and building owners, there's no evidence the Sask Party-dominated board had any interest in following either the master plan or the law.

The Sask Party controls the Provincial Capital Commission board, and this failure is on them. Mr. Speaker, how can we possibly trust the Sask Party to govern our province if they can't even be trusted to run the park?

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and once again I thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that I do respect the work that the Provincial Auditor has done. In that work the auditor does note that we did not have clearly enough defined processes in place.

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Capital Commission will rectify this by coming forward with a clearly defined plan. In this plan, they will take the recommendations that have been made into consideration. And, Mr. Speaker, once again with this plan in place, the Provincial Capital Commission will ensure that the processes will be followed in the future.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, this sweetheart deal for one of the Sask Party's biggest donors has never been a fit for Wascana Park. It was the wrong idea from the beginning. They twisted the process. They broke their own laws. They have control of that process now.

To the Premier, to the Premier: it's a very clear and simple statement, Mr. Premier. Will he stop the project in the park and get Wascana Park back to the people?

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I thank the other member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Capital Commission will be fully reviewing the recommendations put forward by the Provincial Auditor. The Provincial Capital Commission will be coming forward with a clearly defined plan. This plan will have written and clear processes, and the Provincial Capital Commission will ensure policies are followed in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister seems shockingly unconcerned with crumbling schools and overcrowded classrooms. But he should be, because it's a recipe for disaster and it's happening on his watch. There's only a single division in the province whose schools could be considered in good condition, while the majority are in poor or critical condition. At last count there were more than \$1.5 billion needed in repairs, 70 schools over capacity, and this government is missing their own targets for preventative maintenance funding.

In response to a question from a student who wrote to the Premier describing water pouring from the school's roof when it rains, the minister patted himself on the back and reached for old announcements dating back more than a decade. Mr. Speaker, it's arrogant and it's out of touch. The minister's talking points do nothing for kids struggling to learn in crumbling schools and overcrowded classrooms today. What is this minister going to finally do to get this under control?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite mentioned that we're falling behind on our goal with preventative maintenance. That's absolutely not true, Mr. Speaker. Our goal is to get to 1 per cent of replacement costs, Mr. Speaker. We're currently funding preventative maintenance to our school divisions at \$50.4 million, more to come to meet our goal, Mr. Speaker, but we are meeting our goal, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, here's the record with respect to capital. We have a 168 per cent increase in our preventative maintenance budget just over the last couple of years; a 390 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker, in capital funding over the last 12 years, Mr. Speaker; 48 new schools; 23 significant renovations, Mr. Speaker. We continue to get information from the school divisions as we start to build our capital budget for the next budget year, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to listen to that, Mr. Speaker.

But ensuring that our children are in good classrooms, Mr. Speaker, where they can learn, Mr. Speaker, as the future of this province, Mr. Speaker, is important to us. It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, 18 new schools built just in the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to work on our projects, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that kids have safe classrooms.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, all session that minister has claimed that he knows that there are issues in our classrooms and that he's concerned. But beyond having conversations and striking more committees, he's yet to do a single thing about it; \$400-per-student underfunding is unacceptable and he knows it. And yet he wasn't able to secure a single extra dollar for our kids at mid-year.

When will educators, parents, and kids being let down see the Sask Party actually address their concerns — in other words, actually do something about it, Mr. Speaker, and address the crisis in our classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, there's three former school board trustees sitting on that side of the House and they know how this works, Mr. Speaker. Funding that's established in a budget year is based on the projected enrolments for September, Mr. Speaker. It's happened over the course of a number of years, Mr. Speaker.

But the reality is, Mr. Speaker, is over the last 11 years, 34 per cent increase. We have the largest education budget in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker. \$2.48 billion, Mr. Speaker. The per-student funding, Mr. Speaker — she wants to talk about

per-student funding — it's up twenty-three and a half per cent over the last 12 years, Mr. Speaker, since we've had the privilege of forming government. More teachers in our classrooms, more new schools, and increased funding to the school divisions, Mr. Speaker.

We'll continue to listen to the issues in the classrooms, Mr. Speaker, and we're planning a path forward in terms of class size and composition. The member opposite knows that, Mr. Speaker. If you wait for the results of the work that's being done by that committee, Mr. Speaker, because we want to make sure that we're providing the best educational resources for the children in our classrooms.

[10:45]

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the minister is also a former school board trustee, and he knows very well how this works. The opportunity for a mid-year adjustment is fully in his control and he failed to deliver this year.

The minister claims that we aren't providing solutions, but if he was actually listening to teachers, support staff, parents, and students, he would know what the solutions are — provide school divisions with enough funding to keep pace with student growth so they don't have to cut programming, staffing, to the bone. Hold the Premier to his campaign promise to hire 400 additional EAs [educational assistant] and take a serious look at our proposal of capping class sizes so that teachers can get out of the business of putting out fires and actually get back to educating our kids.

And, Mr. Speaker, he should do it now. If not, Mr. Speaker, this government's legacy, his legacy, will be one of kids going years without the support that they need. Is the minister comfortable with this happening on his watch? And if not, Mr. Speaker, what is he going to do about it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to stand on my feet today, Mr. Speaker, to extol the record of this government when it comes to public education, Mr. Speaker, not just on the capital side but on the operating side. And as I've said before many times in this House, the largest education budget in the history of this province — \$2.48 million, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, the member has said on many occasions, she said, class size is not the issue, Mr. Speaker. We have talked about composition. The committee . . .

An Hon. Member: — I have never said that class size wasn't an issue.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — You have . . . Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the constant comments that come, and we've heard it from the Leader of the Opposition and the member from Lakeview, Mr. Speaker, is they've said, class size is not the whole issue, Mr. Speaker.

Composition in our classrooms is certainly the more important

issue, Mr. Speaker. We've heard that from school divisions, we've heard that from teachers, and we've heard that from parents, Mr. Speaker. And we're addressing that, Mr. Speaker, with a plan to address class size, class composition, Mr. Speaker. This will all be reviewed by our committee, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward to develop our plan moving forward.

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

Hospital Infrastructure and Water Quality

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, that minister needs to check his facts again.

Mr. Speaker, in May we raised concerns about significant issues at Sask Hospital North Battleford. And the Deputy Premier made assurances that internal promises would catch anything we needed to worry about. Since then there have been leaks, ward closures, and the water has been undrinkable for over a month. The persistent, ongoing issues at this hospital should have spurred government to act a long time ago.

In October the government finally called an infrastructure audit, but we still haven't heard anything on the findings. To the minister: what is the status of that facility audit? And will he commit today that those findings will be made fully public?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for the question. Most recently, test results indicate water in all areas of the facility is within the acceptable water quality standards. Further water testing is occurring to ensure that results are consistent over time. So we are making progress, but again through an abundance of caution, we're making sure that everything is looked into.

The local medical health officer has indicated that there is not an immediate health hazard at all. And again, out of an abundance of caution, we continue to ensure that patients and staff have potable water that is available for their use at this time, out of an abundance of caution, Mr. Speaker.

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

Regina Bypass

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, despite crowing from the other side of the House, we're starting to see that the traffic on the bypass isn't even a fraction of what was planned. But, Mr. Speaker, we'd like to go back, way back to 2014, because in 2014 the government skipped an environmental impact assessment for the bypass because, according to a 2014 reason for determination from the Environment ministry, there will be no substantial use of province resources. But, Mr. Speaker, documents shared by the bypass say that a lot of material was taken from provincially owned pits, gravel pits, near Indian Head.

So my question is this, Mr. Speaker: why was that environmental assessment skipped, and why was provincial gravel and construction material taken from the Indian Head gravel pits for the bypass when they promised back in 2014 there would be no

substantial use of provincial resources?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, a fair question. Fair questions with respect to the bypass, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. One thing the people of this province can rest assured of is under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, there would be no Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford replacement. There would be no Regina bypass, Mr. Speaker...

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — And I think this sets up, Mr. Speaker, with respect to this . . . the very clear difference between the Saskatchewan Party and the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

We have always and continue to have a plan for growth in this province, a plan to expand our economy, a plan to expand the jobs in our communities across the province. The NDP have no plan, Mr. Speaker. They have a plan of decline, a plan to close hospitals, a plan to never build infrastructure like we are seeing here today, Mr. Speaker.

We continue on this side of the House to stand up for the people of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We see the members opposite in full alignment, full alignment with the Trudeau government and their leader, Jagmeet Singh. Mr. Speaker, we have a made-in-Saskatchewan climate plan. The NDP have a made-in-Saskatchewan carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, that they support.

Mr. Speaker, the other day we delivered our mid-year balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite went out into the rotunda and quickly said that they would run a deficit budget. This is the difference, Mr. Speaker, that the people of the province will have the opportunity to make a decision on over the course of this next year, Mr. Speaker. And I'm confident that the people will . . . [inaudible] . . . stand up for Saskatchewan rather than giving in to Trudeau and the NDP. They will choose balanced budgets over deficit budgets, Mr. Speaker, and they are going to choose growth over decline, and they will choose the Saskatchewan Party over the NDP any day, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — If you hadn't interrupted everything ... [inaudible interjection] ... That's completely out of order, but thank you for that. Yes, we're moving on. We're moving on for grave disorder. So we're done.

Why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Sproule: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Ms. Sproule: — Under rule 20(3), there's a requirement for the answer to be relevant to the question. That was anything but relevant.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, responding to the point of order, I mean that is entirely inaccurate. The Premier entirely responded to the question that was asked with regard to the bypass, with regard to the hospital, and I think the record shows that

The Speaker: — Yes, the point of order is not well taken. We're moving on.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 88 to 97 please.

The Speaker: — Ordered, 88 to 97. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question no. 98.

The Speaker: — Tabled, 98. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask for leave to make a statement on the conclusion of the sitting.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has asked leave to make a statement. Leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Acknowledgements and Christmas Greetings

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to conclude the sitting that is coming to an end this morning with some traditional thank yous. And I would like to firstly thank all of our colleagues on both sides of the House for their dedication and their commitment to this province and to this Assembly. I want to thank their families as well. I think we had some very appropriate statements earlier today about the sacrifices families make, which in a lot of ways are more significant even than the sacrifices that are made by those who have the honour of sitting in this Chamber.

I want to thank the Clerk and the Table Officers and the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service] staff for the great work that they do day in and day out, in helping this place function as efficiently as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your wonderful work over the course of the last year and openness to discussion and the relationship that's been forged on both sides of the House. I want to thank your staff for their work that they do in your office as well.

I want to thank the media for reporting to the public what goes on in this place, as we know that not everyone has the opportunity to watch question periods like we just had here today. I'd like to thank the commissionaires and the security personnel here in the building that allow us to work in safety. I want to thank the Pages for the work that they have done as well. I would like to thank the Hansard staff who have the opportunity of transcribing all that's said here, and sometimes it can be a challenge; broadcast services for making sure that the proceedings are sent out to those who wish to see them.

I would like to thank as well my colleague opposite, the member for Nutana, and the member for Saskatoon Fairview, and I think that we have been working well together over the course of the session. I want to thank my friend as well, previous House leader, the member for Elphinstone, who will be retiring. And the House will be much poorer, I must say, for his absence.

I want to thank the building staff, those that work in the cafeteria, the maintenance personnel, the custodial staff, all of whom contribute to making sure that this place works as well as it possibly can.

I want to thank our staff in Executive Council, House leaders, the Chamber business: Michelle Lang, who does a great job; Kali Olynyk as well, who does a great job. I want to thank those who work in the building in our ministers' offices and the caucus office on both sides for their work.

And most of all, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say Merry Christmas to all of those who are watching and all those in the Chamber. Please enjoy the time back in our constituencies and away with family, friends, and loved ones. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Sproule: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to take an opportunity at this time to express some thanks on the part of this side of the House. I want to start off with a quote from a former American politician named Jacob Lew. And he said, and this is in relation to the public service, Mr. Speaker. He said, "I think there's no higher calling in terms of a career than public service, which is a chance to make a difference in people's lives and improve the world." Mr. Speaker, I would like to share that sentiment because I too have the highest regard for the members of our public service who not only work throughout Saskatchewan, but particularly in this building. And at this time of year I'd like to express some thanks towards them.

So of course first of all, Mr. Speaker, to yourself and to your staff \dots Sheila and \dots I'm sorry, I got the names wrong.

An Hon. Member: — Sheila and Hayley.

Ms. Sproule: — And Hayley. I'll always get it wrong. My apologies to her but you know who I'm talking about, Mr. Speaker. They've been more than helpful this season as I entered into a new role here as House Leader for the opposition.

I'd like to thank Mr. Clerk and all of his office as well, with

Monique and Sandra. I wrote their names down so I got that right, Mr. Speaker. And definitely a big thanks to the Pages, to all the security folks that make this building safe, and particularly to the Sergeant-At-Arms. Thank you for your work. Definitely to all the folks at Hansard and for all the hard work that you do to record what goes on in this place, be it what it is.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank all the committee staff as well, and the Journals staff. We have legislative advisory services. We have all the independent officers that are out working in their offices serving the public.

We have the prayer folks who look over us, and we are thankful for that.

We have the wonderful library that we're so proud of and the staff that work there. Obviously the press gallery, which is a very important part of democracy in this province. Member and corporate services, including financial services, information tech services, member services, and human resources, all of whom serve us all so well.

[11:00]

The broadcast services, making us look good on TV, Mr. Speaker. And of course, procedural services, including Kathy and Rob and Stacey and Anne, making sure committees run smoothly. And I too want to give a shout-out to the Government House Leader and the Deputy Government House Leader for a good working relationship and keeping this House running smoothly, and also to their staff, Michelle Lang and Kali Olynyk.

And the same goes for our side of the House, Mr. Speaker. I really want to express huge thanks to our caucus staff, who work day in and day out really hard to make sure that we continue to do the work of the Official Opposition, raising the questions that need to be raised in this House, Mr. Speaker. And particular thanks on my part to Mitchell Bonokoski, who's our director of research and who's just worked so hard and done such a remarkable job over the course of this session.

I also want to thank our constituency staffs back home, Mr. Speaker. They keep the fires burning in our home offices while we're here doing the work. And we know how hard they work.

And I think friends and family are always an important part of the work we do here and again, they keep those other home fires in our homes burning, Mr. Speaker, and definitely give us the support and keep us feeling good about what we do when sometimes it's not that easy, Mr. Speaker.

But finally I do want to thank the public and their interest in democracy. It's so critically important to what goes on here is how people perceive it out there.

And I think I'll just round out my statements by saying that without a strong public service we would not be able to serve the public. I'm very, very proud of the public servants across our government, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to give them a big shout-out at this Christmas season to thank them for the work they do. So thanks on behalf of the official opposition.

The Speaker: — Okay. Before we take off, I'd like to take the

opportunity also to thank a number of people for their hard work this session. Well I'll start with the members for your many hours of service and strong commitment to your positions of elected officials in the province of Saskatchewan. But I've always taken the time, given the opportunity, to make sure that people know, the public in general knows that you're all here for the right reason. And I say that every opportunity I can, knowing full well that when you get emotional, it means you care. And that's an important distinction here.

I have always said, and I think others would say it, that our Clerk's office is probably the best in the country, and they need to be acknowledged on an ongoing basis. But Greg Putz, Iris Lang, Ken Ring, Kathy Burianyk, Stacey Ursulescu, Rob Park, and Anne Drake, you've done amazing work this session. You've done amazing work all year and that needs to be absolutely established.

And the staff of the Legislative Assembly Service, all your efforts in keeping us on task but in doing so, enabling the democratic process to run smoothly. I'd also like to express my appreciation to Monique Lovatt for her efforts in managing the CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association].

I'd also at this time like to acknowledge our Pages. You did a great job this session, and thank you again for your work and your service. We certainly appreciate your efforts and your efficiency and your professionalism.

My office has already been mentioned but, you know, Sheila Sterling and Hayley Lucas, again thank you. Thank you for all your hard work and thank you for keeping me together as best that you possibly can. And I know that's a moving target, but I thank you for that.

Sergeant-At-Arms, you don't get thanked enough, you and your staff. Amazing job. You've got a lot of moving ... a lot of moving things going on here, but anyways thanks. I was going to say moving targets and I went, that's not right. Anyways, but you know what I'm saying. You know what I'm thinking. But thank you again.

I never had an opportunity the last time, but I also would like to thank the Deputy Speaker for all of your efforts, for all of your work that you've done in helping out on this Chair and for your counsel in general. I certainly appreciate it.

I'd like to thank my constituency assistant, Kristy Shaw. She does amazing work, and again I'm lucky to have her and I'm sure every other office would want her as well, but does amazing work.

My spouse, Lisa, thanks for your love and support. Again, I couldn't do it without you.

As usual, I like to end off with something in relation to here I am, stuck in the middle with you. And every year I am. But honestly you've done . . . You've made yourselves proud this session, and good work. Drive safe to your home as best you can. Get to your constituencies. And Merry Christmas. Happy New Year. All the best.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that this House do now adjourn. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt that lovely motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned until . . . Oh wait a minute. When do we stand adjourned till? March 2nd, 2020.

[The Assembly adjourned at 11:06.]

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