



SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 29th Legislature

Lieutenant Governor — His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, S.O.M., M.S.M.

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Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 47; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Independent (Ind.) — 1; Vacant — 1

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Speaker: — Resume debate on the proposed motion.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

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

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise and speak in support of the Throne Speech that was delivered to us last week, and I will not be supporting the amendment presented by members opposite. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to speak in favour of the important investments our government is making through these most challenging times to support families, businesses, and communities through a safe and stable recovery as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, I can attest that it has been a very difficult 20 months for the people of Saskatchewan. It has disrupted all aspects of our lives including the regular work that we do in this Chamber. We have gone through a pandemic that is unprecedented. We have seen the challenges faced not only here in Saskatchewan but around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that complaining and being negative all the time doesn't help anyone. Our government wants to build a safer, gentler, kinder society. We can only do that if we all work together and respect each other regardless of differences in our opinion. We want to be the change towards a more positive direction. As the great philosopher Confucius said, "if you are positive, you will see opportunities instead of obstacles." Our government is focusing on what is possible and believes that being productive is the only way to economic growth and prosperity for our province and its residents.

Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me if I did not say a great thank you at this time to all the health care workers and all of the front-line workers who have done an amazing job over the last 20 months. Unfortunately, we are not at the end of it yet. I know many front-line workers are still working long hours in our hospitals to provide care to those who are ill.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank our police; firefighters; teachers; child care workers; and front-line workers in our grocery stores, restaurants; truck drivers; cab drivers — everybody who has worked so hard to keep our economy going and to give us a sense of normalcy during these difficult times. Thank you to all the non-profit organizations who have worked tirelessly to support people going through COVID.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank those in our school system — to the teachers, to the teaching assistants, to the education assistants, to the caretakers, to the principals, vice-principals, and to the superintendents who have done an absolutely amazing job during a very challenging time. Not only did they have to get the schools ready, but they were dealing with students who were under incredible pressure.

Teachers are facing the usual challenges of their job in addition to supporting their students through mental health issues and numerous other challenges that inevitably occur when people are isolated and unable to socialize. Mr. Speaker, we as a government are committed to working with the teachers and with the other partner groups to make sure we address those challenges so that our public school system works the very best for our children.

At the beginning of 2020, this pandemic was unknown to all of us. It turned into a global health crisis that taught us that we must constantly adapt to its challenges. During this time, Dr. Shahab and our Premier have done an outstanding job under immense pressure to make decisions while supporting our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I was so happy to have my wife, Seema, attend the Throne Speech with me for the first time. She has been such a great support to me throughout my life. It cannot be expressed through words how grateful I am to my children, Simran, Indu, and Tejpaal, for their ongoing love and support.

When I came to Canada as a new immigrant in the 1980s, I had no idea of what challenges lied ahead. There was a lot of uncertainty. Sometimes I felt fear and had many sleepless nights thinking about my family's future. But at the same time, I comforted myself knowing that with a positive mind and determination I could move forward. I knew then as I know now that I cannot control the outcome, but what I can control is my actions and my attitude.

Unfortunately this pandemic is something that cannot be compared to normal everyday struggles or problems and uncertainties of life. No one is able and no one can predict how and when we can go back to normal. Nobody is trained to handle this crisis.

Mr. Speaker, we as a province have made great progress getting vaccinated, but we still have a lot of people not vaccinated yet. Therefore, we still have to be vigilant. We still must keep socially distanced. We still have to wear a mask when we go inside.

The Throne Speech spoke of how our government recently enhanced the provincial emergency operations centre to serve as a joint command centre. This will help to better coordinate the pandemic response, ensure the right resources are in the right place at the right time, and provide administrative and organizational support.

Mr. Speaker, this summer when we were not in session, I went door to door to talk to my constituents. I wanted to get their feedback and to know what their challenges were. At the time some restrictions had been lifted and people were enjoying the warm weather and time with their family and friends. Most of my constituents were happy with the way our government was

handling things during the pandemic. Unfortunately a lot has changed since then. With this fourth wave I know that people are frustrated and afraid again.

Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful to my CA [constituency assistant], Cheryl — and I think she is the best — and to all our constituency staff around the province for the difficult calls they have had to answer during this pandemic. So many people are afraid for their safety and for their families during this pandemic. I have had some very difficult conversations with constituents. My heartfelt thanks to the caucus office for all their support and guidance in this new chapter of my life.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech highlighted many improvements in Saskatchewan's health care. This summer, patients at Melfort Hospital were aided by the new 2.25 million CT [computerized tomography] scanner. This new resource will help people living in northeast Saskatchewan by reducing both wait and travel times.

Mr. Speaker, to reduce emergency room wait times in Saskatoon and Regina, engineering work is already under way on the new urgent care centres. These centres will help reduce wait times at emergency rooms by providing alternative care for many illnesses or injuries that require immediate action, including care for patients with mental health or addiction issues. This is in addition to a new website being developed by the Ministry of Health that will provide information for people at risk of an overdose.

Mr. Speaker, our government has also provided 15 million to support pandemic research at the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization based at the University of Saskatchewan. As a world leader in infectious disease research and vaccine development, VIDO [Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization] was the first Canadian organization to isolate the COVID-19 virus, the first to develop an animal model of infection, and the first university organization in Canada to have a vaccine in clinical trials.

Mr. Speaker, in the middle of this difficult time, investment is critical. As outlined in the Throne Speech, our growth plan objectives include the creation of 100,000 new jobs by 2030. Already employment in Saskatchewan has recovered to over 99 per cent of its pre-pandemic level. This was highlighted by September's job growth in our province being well above and the unemployment rate being below the national average. By the end of this year the Brandt Group of Companies will be hiring more than 1,000 workers, bringing its workforce to 4,400 employees. More than half of these new employees will be based here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, to meet demand, our canola crushing industry is undergoing a massive expansion. This year a total investment of more than a billion dollars has been announced to expand crushing capacity. This includes the addition of two new plants to be built in the Regina area by Cargill and Viterra. Cargill has announced plans to construct its 350 million facility at the Global Transportation Hub. And Viterra is currently looking at constructing in my riding of Regina Northeast. These investments will achieve our government's growth plan goal of having 75 per cent of our canola production processed at home.

Mr. Speaker, another remarkable investment in Regina is Canada's first wheat straw pulp facility. Red Leaf Pulp is set to build a 350 million project that will create 110 full-time, permanent jobs. This is more proof that our province has a competitive business environment with incentives to attract investment, encourage value-added processing, and drive innovation.

Mr. Speaker, as the Throne Speech affirmed, we must strengthen our international presence to diversify our markets and support the province's economic recovery. Many of my constituents were not aware that Saskatchewan is an international trader, exporting about 65 per cent of the products we produce. This is an increase of nearly 35 per cent this year alone.

We currently have four trade and investment offices in Japan, India, Singapore, and China, with four additional offices scheduled to be operational next year in London, Dubai, Mexico City, and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. These will expand our international network and provide opportunities to increase the value of our exports as well as the number of international markets to which we export. It is by this expansion and presence that Saskatchewan will be recognized for our many assets on the world stage.

Mr. Speaker, our investment of 31 million to build a new rare earth element processing facility will increase production and reduce dependency on Chinese imports which currently accounts for 70 per cent of the world's production. This facility is already under construction in Saskatoon.

Additionally, the province is now home to the largest helium purification plant in Canada which is expected to produce more than 50 million cubic feet of helium per year. Our goal is to produce 10 per cent of the world's helium by 2030 to be used in medical research, semiconductor manufacturing, fibre optics, and advancements in nuclear power generation. Our helium action plan to be released this fall will outline measures to help us meet that objective.

Mr. Speaker, the Enbridge Line 3 replacement pipeline which moves Saskatchewan and Alberta oil to the United States was completed last month. As the largest project in Enbridge's history, it will transport about 3.2 million barrels of oil per day. This and the other investment outlined in the Throne Speech will help Saskatchewan meet its growth plan goal of increasing oil production to 600,000 barrels per day. This is a great example of how Saskatchewan's energy sector will grow and create opportunity for decades to come.

Mr. Speaker, our province has sequestered more than 40 million tonnes of carbon dioxide already and accounts for half the CO₂ sequestered in Canada every year. We plan to build on that success by attracting more than 2 billion in new private investments for projects that will sequester more than 2 million tonnes of CO₂ annually.

Mr. Speaker, compared to our international competitors, Saskatchewan companies produce potash while releasing 50 per cent fewer emissions. These types of innovations prove that Saskatchewan can be both profitable and environmentally cautious.

Mr. Speaker, technology is another sector growing fast in our province with venture capital investments of a record-setting 171 million. Even *Globe and Mail's* list of Canada's top growing companies included four Saskatchewan technology companies: Vendasta, 7shifts, Coconut Software, and sMedia. Our government continues to support this sector through programs including the Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive and the Saskatchewan Advantage Innovation Fund.

We will also continue backing of technology incubators like Co.Labs and Cultivator located in Saskatoon and Regina. We have nurtured 175 start-ups. These new companies have created nearly 500 jobs and generated 27 million in revenues.

[19:15]

Recently I attended an event with one of my colleagues from the Chamber. He had brought his niece with him and I was very impressed with what a polite, courteous young woman she was. Meeting her that day reminded me how important it is that we make good choices for our children as they are our future. Peace and love inside the family home significantly impacts the development of young minds. Children learn from what they witness. Therefore it is so essential that we give families the supports they need so they can focus on creating a healthy home.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud that our government signed a 1.1 billion child care deal with the federal government this August. This plan will create thousands of new child care spaces, ensuring a wide variety of child care options that are available for parents. Child care fees will be reduced by 50 per cent by the end of next year. It will then further reduce child care costs to an average of \$10 a day by 2025. This will bring so much relief to many families that struggle with child care. Additionally we will be supporting child care workers by increasing their wages by up to \$3 per hour.

Mr. Speaker, not everyone is fortunate enough to have a good family environment. That's why it is so important for families experiencing violence to have access to immediate help and ongoing assistance. Earlier this year, our government's first family intervention rapid support team was established in the west central area of the province. It is with great relief that our government will be working this fall to establish two more FIRST [family intervention rapid support team] teams to support Saskatchewan families.

During the inaugural pipe ceremony held in the legislative rotunda last Tuesday, prayers were brought by Elder AJ, including that this legislature will work for everyone, not just for some. This was extremely meaningful to me because I feel that this is what our government is truly working towards.

Mr. Speaker, our Ministry of Social Services is working to ensure the services it provides is appropriate to the needs for all its clients. The ministry is expanding the Opikinawasowin program that offers culturally appropriate child welfare services to Indigenous families requiring support. Our government was privileged to take part in a historic ceremony celebrating Cowessess First Nation's official assumption of jurisdiction over child welfare for its members. We are engaging with other First Nations interested in assuming responsibility for child welfare services delivered to their members.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to making communities safer. We have achieved this through the introduction of police and crisis teams and crime reduction teams, expanding the Saskatchewan crime watch advisory network, and creating a protection and response team to help respond to crime in rural Saskatchewan.

In addition to this, our government will be adding 60 new police positions and 11 civilian positions to support new law enforcement initiatives as well as creating a new provincial protective services unit. This will bring together conservation officers, Highway Patrol officers, Provincial Capital Commission community safety officers, safer communities and neighbourhood officers, and deputy sheriffs, working in the provincial court system all under one command. This unit will work closely with police and serve as law enforcement to help protect our communities while continuing to fill their core responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, we will also be creating the Saskatchewan trafficking response team and a warrant enforcement and suppression team. The Saskatchewan trafficking response team will target criminals that transport illegal drugs and weapons into the province and will also work to combat human trafficking. This team will include 30 RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers, six municipal police officers, and two criminal analysts.

The warrant enforcement and suppression team will target dangerous offenders with outstanding warrants. This team will be staffed by eight officers from both RCMP and municipal police services. We will give courts the option to order GPS [global positioning system] electronic monitoring for repeat offenders who have committed serious crimes.

Mr. Speaker, to further protect our citizens we will be amending the privacy Act to expand the remedies available for those victimized by the non-consensual distribution of intimate images and will introduce legislation to protect every worker from sexual harassment and all other forms of harassment in the workplace. This includes students, volunteers, self-employed people, contractors, making Saskatchewan a leader in Canada for ensuring our workplaces are safe and free from all forms of harassment.

Mr. Speaker, our provincial parks are more popular than ever with record visits and camping nights. This year the number of visitors to our parks was up 16 per cent over the previous year. Our government has invested a record amount in facility and infrastructure improvements.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, our province has the resources to invest in health care and all the other important public services that I spoke of because our government has made the right investments and has kept our economy growing. To quote Ralph Marston, "Being positive in a negative situation is not naive. It is leadership."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like my colleagues before me, I want to begin by recognizing that it is always an honour and a privilege to address this Assembly. I also want to acknowledge that I do so on Treaty 4 territory and the traditional homeland of the Métis people. We are all treaty people, Mr. Speaker, and the Speech from the Throne delivered last week contained several pieces that addressed that fact.

I will touch on some of those in a few moments, but first I would like to express a few words of thanks. Thanks and appreciation, Mr. Speaker, that's where I would like to begin. Firstly, I thank my family — my wife, Tenielle, and our three children. The past year has brought about so many changes to our lives. First there was the pandemic restrictions that took away hockey seasons and musical theatre performances. They forced school classes online for a period of time and caused a number of self-isolations until the COVID vaccine became available.

There was also my new role as a member of this Assembly which changed the nature and hours of my work such that I could no longer coach any of their activities. This will be the first year that I haven't coached at least one of my kids while they do what they love, Mr. Speaker.

Then there was our sitting of the Assembly that kept us all in Regina for the duration of the spring session which meant I, like so many of my colleagues, wasn't home for Mother's Day. And it meant I wasn't there to celebrate with my youngest son on his birthday. That was also a first for our family, Mr. Speaker.

So when I say I owe thanks to my family, these are just some of the reasons why. Not only because they tolerated the inconveniences, but because they truly understood why I couldn't be there. They appreciated the circumstances and they supported me through it. They continue to love me and support me, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank them for that.

I also want to thank my parents, Mike and Shirley, who continue to be there for me at any hour on any given day. As elected officials we take our fair share of criticisms, so it's important that we all find a safe place filled with unconditional love and support to help us through whatever we might be facing. My parents have always offered me that place, and so I sincerely thank them for that.

And to my constituency assistant, Jacqui. Mr. Speaker, last week we heard from the member from Arm River and he boldly declared that he has the best constituency assistants, not only in this province but in all of Canada. Those are awfully brave words in this crowd, Mr. Speaker.

While I have no doubt his CAs are absolutely fantastic and that they manage his office better than most could, I question how challenging their jobs could really be given the simple fact that they work for one of the most kind-hearted and likeable people ever elected to public office. Their member is just a truly nice guy.

Now my CA on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, her job's a little tougher. Jacqui is much more than just a fantastic CA; she is also a loyal friend. Jacqui appreciates the struggles I have faced in my transition from a full-time law practice into the life of a politician. I couldn't have navigated that transition without her, and so I owe

her my sincere thanks as well.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I once again thank the people of Moose Jaw North who have entrusted me with the responsibility of representing them in this Chamber. I remain humbled and grateful for this opportunity, and I sincerely thank them for the privilege to be here on their behalf.

I appreciate that they are not all like-minded, particularly on recent issues; however I truly enjoy hearing from each of them as they share their thoughts and perspectives. If I am able to understand how they feel and why they feel that way, and in turn they can better appreciate the reasons behind the government's decisions, I think we are all the better for it. So again I thank the people of Moose Jaw North, and I appreciate the opportunity to represent their diverse thoughts and opinions in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech highlighted that the goal of this government through the session and in the years ahead is to make Saskatchewan stronger, safer, healthier, better educated, and more independent. One of the opening statements in the Throne Speech that has resonated with me since I first heard it was this: "we live in a big-hearted province where no problem is insurmountable, where no challenge can't be overcome, where optimism and hope prevail over fear and pessimism."

As I began writing this speech, Mr. Speaker, I struggled to find a place to begin because there is so much good content in the Throne Speech to draw from and to talk about. But I guess that's it. That quote inspires me with positivity, and it gives me an overwhelming sense of thanks and appreciation. When I say appreciation, I don't necessarily mean in the congratulatory sense of the word, but also in the way that we use that term to express understanding and empathy, to appreciate what someone else might be going through.

This past year has been incredibly difficult, Mr. Speaker. We all know that. There are many people in this province who are deserving of our thanks — everyone in this Chamber has said as much on several occasions — our health care workers, our first responders, and our partners in education just to name a few. We thank them all. And with the commitments made in this Speech from the Throne, our government is also showing appreciation for them as well. For example, the government is showing appreciation for our health care workers by taking steps to make Saskatchewan a healthier place to live, work, and raise our families.

The opening of the Throne Speech recognizes that our most important and immediate task is dealing with the pandemic. To that end, we have invested more than \$530 million already to support the battle against COVID. We have broadened our vaccination campaign and continue to see our vaccination rates climb. But, as the member from Regina Walsh Acres articulated so well yesterday afternoon, our investments in health care extend beyond the immediate threat of COVID. We are also looking further down the road, planning for what lies ahead of us by supporting operational and infrastructure needs across the health sector in our province.

An example of that that hits close to home for me is that we are replacing the roofs on Providence Place and the Dr. F.H. Wigmore Hospital in Moose Jaw. In Swift Current and Estevan,

we've added more in-patient addiction treatment beds. And through partnerships with charitable organization and third-party providers, we aim to add another 150 long-term treatment spaces over the next three years.

But our government's appreciation doesn't end with health care, Mr. Speaker. We also very much appreciate our dedicated first responders and the important work they do to keep our communities safe.

We understand and appreciate the concern of our communities over recent increases in violent crime and property crimes. In response to those concerns, our government is working to build a safer Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we will do this in a variety of ways.

We've already heard these points, but they're worth repeating: (1) we are adding 16 police officers and reallocating some internal positions to create new crime reduction teams in Meadow Lake, La Ronge, Lloydminster, and Moose Jaw; (2) we are creating the Saskatchewan trafficking response team or STRT to target criminals who bring drugs and weapons into our province and to further combat human trafficking; (3) our government will also create a warrant enforcement suppression team, or WEST, that will specifically target dangerous offenders who have outstanding warrants before they commit any further crimes; and finally (4) in addition to all the police positions our government already funds for our communities across the province, we are now adding 60 new police positions and 11 civilian positions to create the new provincial protective services unit.

[19:30]

And again, Mr. Speaker, this government appreciates the concerns of our citizens and the work that our first responders do, so we are taking steps to help make Saskatchewan a safer place.

A moment ago I also mentioned our partners in education. We owe those partners our thanks too, but this government is committed to building a better-educated Saskatchewan. The pandemic has challenged our educators, especially our students. Shifts to online learning and periods of self-isolation to keep their fellow classmates safe were circumstances far more difficult than anything I ever had to experience in my school years. But the children and families across this province adapted and have showed unbelievable resiliency.

Our government is showing appreciation to those teachers, students, and their families by creating a new funding pool to enhance class supports for teachers working with large class sizes and funding to hire more educational assistants.

We are also continuing construction of 16 schools, including new schools in Carrot River, Regina, Saskatoon, La Loche, Blaine Lake, Lanigan, and of course the new joint-use school on South Hill in Moose Jaw that my colleague from Moose Jaw Wakamow and I are very excited to see coming to fruition. This government is also introducing a new parent-teacher home visit pilot project that will help strengthen relationships between our educators and their students and families.

Speaking of strengthening, Mr. Speaker, our government is

building a stronger Saskatchewan. This might be the piece of the Throne Speech that gives me the greatest sense of optimism about the future of our province. Consider that over the past year, Saskatchewan has attracted \$10 billion in new investments and job opportunities despite the fact that we were facing a global pandemic. Mr. Speaker, if we can attract that level of investment and inspire that degree of confidence from the business community during one of the most difficult periods of time we have ever experienced, our potential is nearly limitless and our future looks very bright indeed.

And speaking of bright, Mr. Speaker, that 350 megawatt Great Plains power station in Moose Jaw is coming along nicely. So too are the millions of dollars of upgrades and improvements that our government has invested in the Saskatchewan Polytech campus in Moose Jaw.

Mr. Speaker, they say tough situations build strong people. Our province has faced tough situations before, and we are an incredibly strong people because of it. We will get through this tough situation too, and we will emerge on the other side. We will be even stronger when we do.

By following our government's plan as laid out in the Throne Speech, we will also be more independent. We will work towards meaningful reform to the equalization section of the Constitution. We believe Saskatchewan can further enhance our autonomy within Confederation and we have taken deliberate steps to achieve that goal. Those steps include the appointment of our province's first Chief Firearms Officer, the creation of the provincial protective services unit, and our willingness to explore the creation of a provincial police force that would complement our municipal police services and the RCMP.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, that this Throne Speech recognizes we are all treaty people. I'd like to touch on a few points that highlight that fact. Perhaps the most obvious way we are acknowledging the treaties is by working together with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner to identify the boundaries between treaty territories and clearly marking those boundaries with signage. Those markers will provide awareness and educational opportunities for current and future generations alike.

Our government is committed to working towards reconciliation with our Indigenous people. We believe that work is advanced by co-operating with economic development opportunities within those communities. An example of that can be seen in the recent amendment to the government's gaming agreement with FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] that will lead to the creation of an online gaming site to be developed and operated by the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, with the revenues generated by that gaming site being shared between the province and the First Nations. FSIN chief Bobby Cameron called this agreement reconciliation at its finest.

We are also working closely with our Lieutenant Governor on the construction of a memorial honouring those who have been impacted by the residential school system. This memorial will be built on the grounds of Government House in Regina to recognize the significance of that impact. We do not build such a monument to celebrate the event, but rather to acknowledge its importance to our history and to teach future generations of

harms done so that they do not repeat the mistakes of the past. Our children need to understand and appreciate why those events happened and what the people involved went through.

In much the same way, we as a society in general could all do better to appreciate each other's differing perspectives. It is important that we understand more clearly why someone's point of view might differ from our own.

This simple truth reminds me of a short but powerful quote from the movie *Hoffa* where Joe Pesci's character invites Jimmy Hoffa to consider that he "might be demonstrating a failure to show appreciation." Now his use of the word "appreciation" was meant in the sense of giving thanks.

But as I mentioned earlier, I think the term can be appropriately used in our current context by implying its empathetic meaning as well. It seems lately people are quick to judge others without first giving consideration to what they may be going through. In doing so, they are demonstrating a failure to show appreciation.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to fall into that trap. I want to demonstrate an understanding and an appreciation of the fact that others may be struggling in ways I don't see or that I may have trouble relating to. I don't want to find myself in a place where I am demonstrating a failure to show appreciation, which is why I am grateful for this Throne Speech and the numerous pieces within it that clearly demonstrate our government's appreciation for the people of this province, for the circumstances we face today, and also for the promise of what tomorrow can bring.

Mr. Speaker, we have travelled a difficult road over the last 20 months. Each of us can point to hardships we have endured or pain we have experienced, even losses we may have suffered. But let us not demonstrate a failure to show appreciation.

Mr. Speaker, as I look back on my own community over the past year and a half, I think of the Moose Jaw and District Chamber of Commerce and how CEO [chief executive officer] Rob Clark helped our business community band together and find innovative ways to support each other despite the troubling times they were facing. It would not be an exaggeration to say that there are businesses in my home community that were saved by those efforts. So we need to thank and appreciate people like Rob Clark.

Mr. Speaker we also need to acknowledge and to try to truly appreciate the incredibly difficult work that has been done and continues to be done by our Premier and our Health ministers and the Minister of Trade and Export Development. Working together with the guidance of Dr. Shahab and his team, who also deserve our utmost thanks and appreciation, these ministers and our Premier have guided our province through the most challenging event we have faced in our lifetimes.

I'm told that former president Barack Obama was once quoted as saying that he hoped he would never have to lead through a pandemic because it is an untenable position for a leader to face. No matter what you do as the leader under such circumstances, you'll be accused of doing too little and too much all at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine a situation where our Ministries of

Health and Economic Development would be more at odds than they have been over the last 20 months, yet our ministers of those portfolios have navigated us to a place where we are seeing case numbers and hospitalizations continue to fall while our economy continues to strengthen. That balance does not just happen on its own, Mr. Speaker. We need to be mindful that we are not taking that for granted or that we are not demonstrating a failure to show appreciation for that difficult work.

So I will take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to our leader, the Premier, to our cabinet ministers, who have worked collaboratively with Dr. Shahab to guide our province through these incredibly challenging times. We have better days ahead, Mr. Speaker. We know there is always more we can do, but our government is working hard to make Saskatchewan even better — stronger, healthier, safer, better educated, and more independent. That is what I take away from this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, which is why I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Prince Albert Northcote and seconded by the member from Arm River, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise here today on Treaty 4 territory and homeland of the Métis people to address you and all members of the legislature and the people of this fair province. Before I begin, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment and recognize the five people who passed away today.

It's been a strange year, Mr. Speaker. What a year. I remember last year asking my Whip for leave to go later in the order so that I could compose my wits and compose a suitable response to the Throne Speech. I had undergone a fair amount of change and was a little bit later to the game than many of the members of this House, and was going through a sleep regression at the time. There was some sort of mix-up, Mr. Speaker, with my Whip, and I believe I ended up seconding the amendment to the Throne Speech, which led to me frantically composing my maiden address the lunch hour prior.

And yet again here we find ourselves today, Mr. Speaker. And I misjudged my time, leaving my partner, Taylor, at home to finish a delicious home-cooked meal that I got 90 per cent of the way finished while I ate a delicious car McChicken. And now the members opposite may think that I'm made of half spite and half chirp, as I believe the member from Indian Head put it. But I can assure the members opposite that I am at all times at least three-quarters McChicken.

But seriously, Mr. Speaker, before I get into it, I do want to say I think about this a lot, Mr. Speaker, you know, how last year I was able to drive back and forth, you know, three or four times a day. I was able to bring my child into this House, and what a privilege that was.

And I think about how I would not have been able to do this were I the member from North Battleford or Arm River, and how I would have needed a family member or my partner to quit their job, or a parent or an in-law to support me in being able to do this

job and serve the people of this province. There's a lot more work to do, Mr. Speaker, to make this legislature accessible for women, for young parents, and for those who live rurally and remotely in this province.

And before I get into my response, I do want to say to the members opposite, I sincerely hope that some of you will work in good faith and join those of us who care about this in some of that good work in making this elected office more accessible to young parents across the province, not just those who happen to live a convenient 10-minute drive from this Assembly.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't thank the many people whose work contributes to the functioning of this legislature, our democracy, and the health of our communities: certainly it goes without saying, all of the staff in this great building; my constituency assistant, Marshall Burns; my casual CAs, Nova, Tanner, and Zoé, you are amazing and are incredible caucus staff; and my wonderful colleagues, friends, and family and the many, many people out there who have my back.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are so many things that I wish I could talk about here tonight: SaskPower, the mismanagement of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], the utter abandonment of the thousands of underemployed and undervalued new Canadians here in this province, those without access to prenatal care, those left behind by this government's shady procurement policies, the workers having to leave to pursue projects, the skilled tradespeople being left off job sites, and the thousands who have left this province to raise their families and to start businesses.

[19:45]

Mr. Speaker, I could talk about a government that prefers to pay lip service and pat itself for a job well done. Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, we have the bodies of children being uncovered across this province after decades of survivors telling us — white people, settlers — and we didn't listen. And, Mr. Speaker, the modern-day repercussions of that human toll continue. We have children who continue to be taken.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I could talk about a government that doesn't care about reconciliation, doesn't care how many Indigenous people are living on the streets of our province or in a tent city right here in Regina, how much land they have or how little, how many go missing. I could talk about those who try — and try being the operative word here — try and bully my colleague, the only traditional First Nations woman in this Assembly, or those who pay lip service to my friend the member from Cumberland's bills, and yet have not reached out once since that bill was passed. We see you. We will continue to hold you to account, and I am not afraid of you.

So, Mr. Speaker, last spring we debated a budget that was supposed to lay out a plan for the year, an economic vision for the province and a commitment to this province. And what we've seen in the last six months, Mr. Speaker, has been an utter abandonment of good economic planning, good planning overall. And now we have a Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, which proclaims that it is time for a stronger, safer, healthier, better-educated, and more independent Saskatchewan. Laudable words, Mr. Speaker, and laudable goals.

Mr. Speaker, let's start with independent. You know, to remind the members who act so outraged on individual rights and freedoms, it's not just about their ability to dog whistle and channel-change. It's about freedom from fear and freedom from want. And many of us sacrifice, compromise for the greater good. I know members in this House did. I've heard your Throne Speech responses.

But the infighting and the lack of clarity from this government has held us all hostage. It's not about this government's tired and greyed practice of grunting about separatism and independence. Independence, while people are being shipped to Ontario, the bodies of our neighbours being shipped to Ontario. Independence, while you bark about a better deal from Ottawa, and meanwhile people in Saskatchewan are being asked to do more with less.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what they mean by independence, and I'm not sure that they do either. Because there is one party in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, that has been clear on a better deal for Saskatchewan people, and it sure as heck isn't a government that takes 20 cents of every dollar from Ottawa, takes ICU [intensive care unit] nurses from a united Canada, and sends those bodies across the Dominion.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite sat and they dragged their feet on that child care deal. They dragged it to the last minute possible. I was sitting in Watrous this summer, Mr. Speaker, and I heard women around me saying they would riot if that deal didn't get signed. Strangers, Mr. Speaker, just the good citizens of Watrous passionate about this child care deal, a deal which will allow thousands and thousands of parents true independence and economic freedom, allow more families to work and prosper.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite sat meekly as their cabinet left \$18 million of committed support for small businesses on the table and hundreds of millions of infrastructure dollars for energy- and future-focused projects.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has failed people at the best of times. And now, Mr. Speaker, in the worst of times, the lack of vision is stark. And that's what we've seen from this government, Mr. Speaker: when times get bad, they get worse.

Not only do they get worse, Mr. Speaker, they get worst. Because Mr. Speaker, not satisfied with having the highest infant mortality rates, highest domestic violence rates, child poverty, lowest minimum wage, mortgage foreclosure rates, highest consumer debt ratio, this government decided to abandon the people of Saskatchewan, double down on their chaos energy, and landed us with the worst COVID-19 death rate in the nation. As was noted today, Mr. Speaker, our COVID-19 death rate has overtaken our population growth. Healthier Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, a safer, a stronger Saskatchewan? What a shame, and what weakness.

But, Mr. Speaker, those are just the headlines, and below that terrible, terrible measure of the highest COVID death rate in the country lie the stories of thousands of Saskatchewan people — people impacted by this government's messy and frenzied lack of leadership. And it's those stories, Mr. Speaker, shared with me that I intend to speak into the record today in the words of the

people who have shared them. Because while I can talk, and you know some of the members like to do their own chirping and roll their eyes, some of them genuinely seem to believe that this really is all politics.

And, Mr. Speaker, I love the ritual and spectacle of this place as much as anyone, but right now things in this province are real and this isn't a game. This isn't about scoring points. And so I ask the members opposite, if you're not going to listen to me, at least listen to some of your neighbours and some of the people in the province. These personal tragedies and individual catastrophes are what people will remember, and I believe it's what the members opposite need to hear.

Crystal is a front-line RN [registered nurse]. She works in mental health and addictions, and she calls the amount of loss that she experienced in this year devastating. Like many of us, she carries very, very heavy burdens — health care worker and a front-line worker — but she also has those same personal burdens. I'll share her words:

In 2020 when there was so much unknown, vaccines were not yet available, and the pandemic was worsening, I hadn't seen my dad for months. He had a chronic illness, and he fell on January 6th. On January 16th, he passed away, and I was so fortunate just to be able to see him in the Pasqua ICU prior to him leaving.

Another nurse, Mr. Speaker, who is afraid to share her name for fear of repercussion, says:

It's horrible knowing that my mom has cancer, and I pray every day that she can continue her chemo uninterrupted. We live with the fear that should she need a surgery or procedure, we don't know if or when she'd be able to get it. As a nurse we have to educate parents when we discharge them every day, when normally we would refer them to programs, but they're all shut down and I worry about my patients.

Mr. Speaker, Amy's a resident of Regina Pasqua. And she wrote to her MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], and she's eager for that response. And she says, "I spoke to a nurse the other day who secured a position in Australia . . ." — literally fleeing the country so that she does not have to face the winter here in a province who has so abandoned her and her colleagues.

Amy's incredibly disappointed and she says, "How are you okay with this? You have set the expectation that it is okay for people in this province to abandon each other."

A teacher in Swift Current, who also asked to stay anonymous for fear of repercussions, which is a common theme here, Mr. Speaker, and a real shame. She notes that the trauma teachers are feeling every day is real. What coincides with the Sask Party and their non-planned approach to COVID in schools is the unfortunate reality that sick and mistreated teachers are done — not burned out, not tired — simply done. Make no mistake: when a child dies of COVID, it will not be the Sask Party who feels responsible and sad for that child. It will be their family. It will be their teacher.

Mr. Speaker, another mother has written to me from Swift

Current, and she is furious. She says:

To say that I am angry with the Sask Party's pandemic response is an absolute understatement. The way that they have completely disregarded the safety of the people of our province, of children, is absolutely devastating — young children who aren't yet able to be vaccinated. I happen to have three of those, two of which I just had to tell, sorry guys, you're close contacts; no Halloween for you.

The Premier made self-test kits available to schools, but too bad there were only enough sent for about 10 per cent of families in my community to receive them. Even worse, they were sent to my local fire department who, when I went to pick them up, had not received them and still have not.

Another young woman training to be a nurse says:

I'm doing okay, but many other nurses are not doing well and are being redeployed to ICU if they've ever worked there at any point in their career because they need new nurses. It's terrifying graduating in a month knowing that we have so far to go in the pandemic.

I'm on the oncology ward for my final practicum, and people are so sick, so sick. It's hard to watch, especially when they can only have one or maybe two designated visitors. Even influenza is life threatening for patients on chemotherapy, and COVID is a terrifying thought for them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's easy to think of faceless people and faceless patients, but one of them is a friend of mine and a neighbour of mine. Mr. Speaker, her name is Danielle Tocker and she's a small-business owner. She's a partner, she's a friend, and she's a good, kind, smart, generous, and thoughtful member of our community here in Regina.

And here's what Danielle wants to say to the members opposite, and she hopes they listen. Now Danielle's not usually a fan of this government, and she says:

You know, I don't really like most things that they do or what they stand for. But recently I have been most upset, worried, and enraged because of my cancer diagnosis. I know it could be worse for me, but I'm 30 years old. This is a time in my life where I need the most support from my friends and family but I'm at home.

I'm not scared of having cancer; I'm scared of getting COVID. And every week I wait for better news of a better handling of the pandemic so that maybe I could hug the people that I love or have my nephew inside my home.

Every week I go to the Allan Blair Cancer Clinic for chemotherapy, and I'm surrounded by people living with cancer. I wonder if our treatments will be delayed like they have been in Alberta, and I wonder if we will have to live with cancer in our bodies longer if our surgeries are delayed too.

Danielle is 30 years old.

Families have lost respite care. Babies have had critical

interventions cancelled. Mr. Speaker, I don't know what a stronger Saskatchewan means to the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, but what is going on right now is not what we should do to our neighbours, and it's not how we should steward a province that we love.

You know, to the members opposite, I understand you're part of a team, and I get that. But you're part of this province too. And I know that you won't trust or listen to me. But to you I say, you make sure that you can trust your team and you are asking questions and you are holding yourselves to account.

Because, Mr. Speaker, we have occupational therapists who are redeployed doing custodial work in Moose Jaw instead of providing necessary services. We have sick kids, little kids; people waiting for organ transplants knowing they won't get them. And can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, watching your life and your time and your future trickle away? Is this what we mean by a healthier Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, it's terrible. People are stressed. They're worried, they're anxious, and they're angry. They're angry, Mr. Speaker, and I've heard from members on both sides about this anger. The member from Kindersley talked about the anger he's hearing in his own constituency. And despite what he may think, I don't like to hear that. I don't like to hear that his staff, his family, himself have been dealing with anger and poison and fury. It's not who we are, and it's not who this province should be, Mr. Speaker. But it's not surprising. We've got some problems, and we cannot pretend that things are okay. Right now, we are not okay. We're not strong; we're divided.

And, Mr. Speaker, too many live with no opportunity, with racism, with no land, with no chance and little hope. Mr. Speaker, a 12-year-old child sought refuge in a tent city in Regina last night when it's cold enough to freeze to death. Is this a stronger Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker?

We need vision, Mr. Speaker. We need care. And I'm not talking about paternalism, as the members opposite love to slap around to make themselves feel big and brave, but basic stewardship. If you serve this province, you are a steward of lives and of futures and of opportunities. It's the spirit of the thing, Mr. Speaker.

[20:00]

You know, regardless of where you sit in this legislature, where we are right now is not where we want to be. I think about Betty who was here yesterday visiting me, and I think about Betty's grandpas. And I think about what they did, not because they're New Democrats, Mr. Speaker, but the impact they've had on their communities and on their province. One of Betty's grandpa's paved almost every kilometre of highway in this province when he was minister. Her other grandpa introduced . . .

An Hon. Member: — Really?

Ms. A. Young: — By hand, by hand.

An Hon. Member: — Every kilometre in this province?

Ms. A. Young: — Almost every kilometre. *Hansard* will vindicate me. I said it the first time too.

Mr. Speaker, her other grandpa introduced occupational health and safety legislation that was modelled across Canada. The legislation introduced under his ministry went on to be implemented across Canada. What a legacy. Like, Mr. Speaker, what a legacy.

And to the members opposite: you talk about a strong Saskatchewan. You love to, you know, beat your chest and talk about your supermajority. I see how many of you there are. That's great. Have the vision to make this province better. You have the opportunity, and look at what you've done with it.

Mr. Speaker, I sat last week with friends, young parents, talking about how worried they were every single day. And these are normal people, Mr. Speaker. They're worried every single day driving to work. And they're saying, gee, hope I don't get in a car accident. Because you know what, Mr. Speaker, don't know if they'd be able to save my life. Don't know if they'd be able to harvest my organs. And I'm an organ donor. What a waste. It's macabre, Mr. Speaker, but this is a real conversation. These friends were talking about this seriously.

And, Mr. Speaker, these same friends were talking about leaving the province because they don't know if they can raise their children here. This is ethical. If it's right and if it's smart, it's the first thing that their kids will do is leave as soon as they can. Mr. Speaker, there is and there will be a real brain drain, a loss of potential and growth and opportunity.

This is what people in this province are feeling, Mr. Speaker. The spirit of the province right now is not in a good place. And I hope these members listen. And while I don't think they'll change their tune, I don't think they'll change their talking points, I hope they think about that, Mr. Speaker. And I hope they remember — even if it's just a little, just from time to time — I hope they think about the words of some of the people of this province. And to the members opposite, I hope it makes you doubt just a little. And I hope it makes you question just a little, and I hope you are not guilty of the sin of certainty, Mr. Speaker. Care about the province. Steward the province. Be brave and have a little vision, just a little.

So, Mr. Speaker, suffice it to say I will not be supporting the Throne Speech. I cannot. And, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment moved by my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

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

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to be here tonight to speak to the Speech from the Throne.

I'd first like to start off by thanking a few important people in my life. First of all I would like to start by thanking my wife, Noella. Thank you for continuing to stand by and supporting me through this past year, which has been difficult for everyone, and making it possible for me to be here today. Although I don't probably acknowledge it very often, if ever, without your support and you running the day-to-day operations back home, I would not be able to carry out my commitments and responsibility required to do this role.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my two sons, Logan and Lyndon. The support they have shown me throughout this journey, both during the election and for the past year, has been very genuine. They stepped up to the plate, if you will, when we were required to stay here in Regina for six long weeks during the spring session, and ensured that if their mother, my wife Noella, needed assistance or just some company, that they were there in my absence. I know that they are both proud of the route I have chosen.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank my constituency assistant, Jackie Gallon. The support and dedication she provides, not only to her role in the constituency office but to myself as well, shows her commitment to the constituents of the Cut Knife-Turtleford. I have first-hand seen her enthusiasm and commitment in assisting constituents, especially for those who may not be technologically savvy, in assisting them in setting up an account to access their eHealth information. This is just one example of how she goes above and beyond in her duties as a constituency assistant.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't thank the executive of my constituency association. They have been more than supportive since I have been successful in being able to represent the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency, and for that I am thankful. In fact most of the existing executive members have been willing to remain on the executive board in their current roles, which has been very much appreciated as I have recognized the volunteer hours each one of them contribute performing their various tasks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is my second Speech from the Throne I'm speaking to since I've been elected in 2020. And I would like to say thank you to the constituents of Cut Knife-Turtleford for giving me this opportunity to serve and represent them on this floor. It is an immense honour and privilege to be their representative in the Legislative Assembly in this great province. I also would like to say thank you to this great team that we have here that I get the pleasure to work with. It's an honour and a privilege to work with this team and serve the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne supports what our government has long maintained: support for growth in the province with 30 goals to be achieved by 2030. Our growth plan, which envisions a growth in population to 1.4 million people living in Saskatchewan, having 100,000 more people working by 2030, increasing our canola crushing capacity as well as our fertilizer production, are just some of the initiatives this provincial government's undertaking to ensure a better quality of life for its citizens with sustainable services to be provided for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, with the recent announcement of the BHP potash mine going forward near Jansen with an estimated additional investment of 7.5 billion, I believe we are well on our way to achieving our goals set out in our growth plan. This is the largest economic investment in our province's history and is expected to create approximately 3,500 jobs during construction and will provide for 600 permanent jobs after completed.

When you compile this announcement with the several other announcements over the past several months that include North

American Helium's plans to construct Canada's largest helium purification facility in the province with a \$32 million investment. Northern Nutrients' commitment to construct a new sulphur-enhanced urea fertilizer manufacturing facility near Saskatoon with a \$25 million investment. Ceres Global Ag's plans to build a new 350 million integrated canola crushing facility in Northgate with an expected capacity to process 1.1 million metric tons of canola annually. Viterro's announcement to construct a new two-and-a-half-million metric ton canola processing plant in Regina. Cargill's plans to construct a \$350 million canola crushing plant in Regina with an annual production capacity of 1 million metric tons. Richardson International Ltd. plans to double its existing processing capacity at its canola crushing plant in Yorkton, which will increase its capacity to 2.2 million metric tons. When you add all this up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are well on our way to reach Saskatchewan's growth plan goal to crush 75 per cent of the canola the province produces in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the almost 10 billion in investments that have been announced, which not only include what I've already mentioned, but also comprises announcements such as the Red Leaf Pulp in Regina, which will be Canada's first wheat straw pulp facility and which will create 110 full-time, permanent jobs. The Brandt Group of Companies plans to hire 1,000 more workers by the end of the year. Clean Seed Capital Group will begin assembling new Smart Seeder Max-S's in Saskatoon.

Paper Excellence is investing 550 million to upgrade its pulp mill in Prince Albert with an estimated 1,650 new jobs. One Sky Forest Products is planning to build a \$250 million oriented strand board mill in Prince Albert, which will create another 700 jobs, as well as several other upgrades by private companies to various facilities in Saskatchewan.

It is only with a forward-minded government such as ours that we can really see the potential for growth and investment in this province, considering all we have to offer the world.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from The Battlefords and I were able to take a tour this fall, which was hosted by Serafina, to a couple of their facilities. For those of you who don't know, Serafina is an oil production company that produces oil in my constituency and which is recovered through their SAGD [steam-assisted gravity drainage] plants. Presently they have four SAGD plants, which they plan on maximizing production to 10,000 barrels per day from their present-day capacity, with intentions of the expansion of additional plants to reach total production capacity of 100,000 barrels per day within the next several years.

A SAGD plant is a steam-assisted gravity drainage plant which recovers oil with an enhanced oil recovery process that involves water to create steam. The steam then liquefies the oil into a state that it can be extracted from below the surface and which would otherwise be unrecoverable through traditional recovery methods.

Now due to the fact that Serafina does not have its own processing facility — like an upgrader similar to Cenovus, formally Husky — all of the oil they extract must be hauled by truck to its end-sale location. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this in turn causes much traffic on both provincial highways and municipal

grid roads, which have a significant bearing on our road infrastructure. However, Mr. Speaker, Serafina has constructed a crude-by-rail collection facility which will substantially reduce the amount of traffic and impact of provincial highways by enabling the collection and transportation of oil through the rail system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my colleague, the member from The Battlefords and myself were very impressed with Serafina and their attention to details with respect to carbon capture, as well as a reduced environmental footprint in regards to oil extraction through their SAGD plants. Each plant presently extracts between 7,500 to 8,000 barrels of oil per day. Serafina has a goal of being able to transport 25,000 barrels per day through their crude-by-rail facility initially with plans to ramp it up to 35,000 barrels per day by mid-2022. This will save miles of heavily loaded trucks hauling on provincial highways.

They're also presently in the process, of which they have made application for, in obtaining approval to be able to construct a pipeline to transport the oil extracted from each SAGD facility directly to the crude-by-rail facility. If approved, this would eliminate all of the present heavy truck traffic which hauls oil from each one of their plants to this facility and would significantly reduce the impact, not only to our provincial highways infrastructure but municipal grid roads as well.

It is companies such as this that are using the latest technology and thinking outside the box to ensure that they are as environmentally friendly as they possibly can be in producing oil within our province and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, this year the drought that we have faced in the province has presented many challenges to our farming communities. Our government has tried to address this through not only existing safety nets which are presently in place, such as crop insurance and AgriStability, but through additional supports as well. Some of these include providing an additional 119 million in direct support to livestock producers through the AgriRecovery program which help producers maintain Saskatchewan breeding herds.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we increased the AgriStability interim benefit payment from 50 per cent to 75 per cent to more readily assist producers that require assistance. We've provided relief to producers through Sask Crop Insurance to use their cereal or pulse crops for feed by lowering the bushel per acre rate to able to have their crops written off so it could be salvaged for feed by livestock producers.

We tripled funding, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which was made available through the farm and ranch water infrastructure program to assist producers in constructing dugouts, wells, and pipelines to ensure livestock water supplies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, although this has been a very challenging year for agriculture, there are good news stories out there as well. I had the opportunity this fall to attend the North West Terminal's 25th anniversary celebration in the town of Unity located in the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency. This is a significant milestone showing the success of agriculture producers who recognized the need and had a vision for a terminal to be constructed in their area and who facilitated the original

construction by offering shares to shareholders.

A facility that started out with a storage collection capacity of 32 000 metric tonnes 25 years ago has grown into a facility that has an astounding 63 000 metric tonnes storage capacity — one of the largest grain facilities in western Canada.

From its humble beginnings to today's accomplishments with additions of grain clean handling as well as an addition of a bioproducts facility, North West Terminal is a success story, not only for Unity and the surrounding area, but the province of Saskatchewan and is a testament to the agriculture producers we have right here at home.

Turning to health, Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to thank all of our front-line health care workers and the administrative staff working in all our health facilities throughout the province for their dedication and perseverance during these difficult times.

[20:15]

Health care has been one of the most challenging matters that this government has had to deal with over the past 20 months. COVID-19 has proven to be an adversarial opponent that is hard to predict. That is why this government has invested over \$530 million to support the efforts to address COVID-19 with additional funding provided to ensure health care workers have proper protective equipment as well as supporting testing and contact tracing.

Mr. Speaker, the recently announced provincial command that is being activated through the provincial emergency operations centre will serve to better coordinate the pandemic response and will ensure health care workers can focus on providing the best possible care to patients.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the pandemic seems to overshadow everything that is happening on a day-to-day basis. Although we must deal with consequences of the pandemic, there are other good news stories that I believe get overlooked.

To begin, the announcement that the province will now cover the cost of the drug Trikafta, which is a good news story for all those that suffer from cystic fibrosis. From what I understand, this drug is the greatest advancement in the treatment of cystic fibrosis in what some patients would say has been a very long time.

This, Mr. Speaker, along with our additional funding which will be provided to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to support a new oncology drug program are just some of the positive health-related items that I believe have been overlooked by the general public and opposition in light of all the attention given to COVID.

Mr. Speaker, this government is in support of reducing emergency wait times and that is why this government is supporting eight projects located in Saskatoon and Regina intended to improve patient flow and reduce emergency wait times for those that are critically injured or have life-threatening symptoms at our emergent hospitals.

These projects will then allow for treatment of injuries that are not life threatening but which require immediate attention in

alternative urgent care centres. This will include support for the caring of patients with mental health or addiction issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and will be a move forward in the treatment of those individuals while still maintaining quicker service delivery at our hospitals for those that have a life-threatening illness or injury which needs to be treated immediately.

Mr. Speaker, the government recognizes aging health care infrastructure which requires to be replaced. And that is why this government is planning on new hospitals in Prince Albert and Weyburn as well as the new long-term care facilities in Grenfell and La Ronge and also the replacement of long-term care facilities in Watson and Estevan.

Mr. Speaker, mental health and addictions continues to be of concern for this government. That is why we are continuing to invest in mental health and addictions services across the province and have added more treatment beds. We've increased access to test strips for fentanyl and benzodiazepine as part of harm reduction efforts.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was fortunate enough to be invited and attend the grand opening in August of the new group home facility located in Wilkie which is in my constituency. Our government contributed \$200,000 in co-operation with Prairie Branches for the construction of this facility to support those living with intellectual disabilities by providing them with residential services and independent living.

After the grand opening, I was lucky enough to receive a tour of the facility and was amazed at the details and organization that goes into the construction of these type of facilities which try and accommodate not only those who currently call it home, but for those in the future, taking into consideration the various challenges they may have. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm proud to be part of a government that has invested in and assisted those living with disabilities and helping them to reach their full potential, just another reason I support this government and its commitment to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, education is the foundation of our future generations and community leaders. That is why this government has provided more than \$150 million to ensure students can safely learn during the pandemic. These past two school years have been very challenging, not only for the students but for educational staff as well. Their commitment and dedication to their students has been a testament to their ability to adapt to the ever-changing environment that they've faced with the various directions and policies they were handed to deal with as a result of COVID-19.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, more children took part in online learning than ever before, which is why this government will create a new learning policy to ensure students receive the best education possible if they study online.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, although education is the foundation for our future generations and community leaders, we must support our present-day workers that contribute to society while still raising a family. That is why since 2007, Mr. Speaker, this government has increased the amount of child care spaces by 77 per cent. That is why we have signed an agreement with the federal government which will support reducing child care costs to an average of \$10

per day by 2025-26 as well as create thousands of new child care spaces. Mr. Speaker, child care costs will be reduced by 50 per cent by the end of next year which will support parents by allowing them to make an informed, educated decision with respect to providing them more reasonably cost-effective child care so they can continue to work if they so choose.

Mr. Speaker, just like health facilities in the province, this government recognizes we also have aging infrastructure in the education system. That is why construction is presently happening for new schools located in several communities throughout the province, which include Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Carrot River, La Loche, Blaine Lake, and Lanigan. The government also recognizes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that some classes require more educational support. That is why we are planning to create a new funding pool to provide class supports for teachers working with a large number of students. This will include hiring additional educational assistants to provide that support.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, post-secondary education is important in today's society to ensure we have properly educated people, to ensure services can be delivered to the general public, such as doctors, accountants, businesses, etc. And that is why this government has increased the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship program by 50 per cent, to 750 per year, to support our Saskatchewan students in making their post-secondary education more affordable and accessible to ensure we can maintain those services.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there has been an increase in violent crime and property crime in rural areas. I am personally signed up on the RCMP Saskatchewan crime advisory. I watch for the various areas in close proximity to my hometown of Turtleford. It's sad to say, but there isn't often that a week that doesn't go by that I don't receive a notification, text, an email advising of a stolen truck, quad, side-by-side, or a break and enter.

To try to ensure our communities are safe, this government has provided additional funding and have introduced police and crisis teams and crime reduction teams. We've expanded the Saskatchewan crime watch advisory network and created the protection and response team to help respond to crimes in rural Saskatchewan. We've created the Saskatchewan trafficking response team, whose target will be criminals that transport drugs, weapons, and to combat human trafficking.

We will also be creating the warrant enforcement and suppression team, whose primary goal will be to apprehend dangerous offenders with outstanding warrants and to remove them from being a risk to the general public. This, along with the government's plan to provide for an additional staffing of 60 new police positions, will enhance public safety and make those criminals accountable for their offences.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government has heard from concerned property owners with respect to concerns regarding trespassing of properties. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals who trespass over privately owned farm land, and who believe it is their right to either open or cut fences without any thought of repercussions to the agriculture producer in terms of cattle being left at large or the possible transferring of clubroot, which is a

crop disease that has become more of a concern to grain producers over the past several years. These are acts that have financial consequences to the producer which is not of their making. That is why the government will be introducing further changes to *The Trespass to Property Act* which will include an increase in penalties for repeat offenders and make it easier for landowners to seek damages against trespassers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to drive economic growth in this province requires adequate infrastructure. That is why our growth plan goal is to invest an additional \$30 billion to improve highways, hospitals, schools, communications infrastructure, just to name a few. In rural Saskatchewan we need good internet and cell coverage to ensure continued economic growth, which will help provide the services to the citizens of this province.

This along with online learning, which has become more common in light of the pandemic, is why we are investing through SaskTel an additional \$100 million to expand and improve the fibre optic internet service network in rural areas. By the end of 2024, 45 rural communities and 60,000 rural residents and businesses will have access to fibre optics and broadband infrastructure.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also continue to evaluate where additional cell towers are needed on a regular basis, and we now have approximately 1,000 cell towers serving this province. This ultimately provides better services to Saskatchewan residents in terms of coverage for both cell phone and internet capacity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, going forward in today's environment and with the federal regulations to ensure that we reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we will become more reliant on power. Having said that, this government is already looking towards the future and will be investing through SaskPower a record 272 million to repair and replace power lines and poles, transformers, and other distribution infrastructure to ensure that we have reliable power services. We continue to explore alternative energy sources and have plans to add an additional 585 megawatts of wind power across the province to support renewable energy.

Mr. Speaker, this summer I was able to join several of my colleagues in taking a tour of Canada's first proposed geothermal power facility, which has been initiated by Deep Earth Energy Production, or DEEP for short. This facility is located in the southeast part of the province, and DEEP is committed to reducing Saskatchewan's carbon footprint with this technology.

I personally found this to be very interesting and exciting for Saskatchewan. The proposed facility is anticipated to provide 32 megawatts of power, which is equivalent to the removal of 34,000 cars off the road every year. Let me repeat that: it will be equivalent to removing 34,000 cars off the road every year. Wow. This is a demonstration of the ingenuity and talent that we have in the people within this province, which I know has a bright future in the coming days ahead once we've finally put COVID behind us.

Mr. Speaker, the reinstatement of the community rink affordability grant, which provides \$2,500 per ice surface, has been welcome support throughout my constituency. We've had a total of 21 ice surfaces across the constituency receive funding through this grant for a grand total of \$52,500. This grant has

been able to support them with their operating costs in an otherwise difficult year and has assisted them in ensuring they can continue to provide their recreational facilities to their communities.

As a father who has had two sons who are very involved in minor hockey and who are still actively involved in our hometown senior league team, I know first-hand how challenging it can be to raise funds and operate our rural ice surfaces, which in many cases are managed by community volunteer recreation associations. In our small-town communities the local rink's not only an important gathering place to meet and watch spectator sports, but also for the children and adults who enjoy participating in terms of keeping active and healthy, as well as in many cases supporting their mental health.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was fortunate enough to represent the province with the Turtleford community school and Piyesiw Awasis School at Thunderchild unveiling of an art project mural at the Turtleford Library. The project was designed to promote truth and reconciliation, which included art styles that showcased First Nations content as well as reflecting on the local history of the community, which included the changing dynamics of the present-day culture. After the unveiling of the art project, I was fortunate enough to participate in the planting of 215 orange marigolds in acknowledgement and remembrance of the students of residential schools, which highlighted the discovery of the unmarked graves found at the Kamloops Indian Residential School.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes that reconciliation with Indigenous nations is necessary for Indigenous people to continue the healing process. That is why we announced, shortly after the unmarked graves were found in Kamloops, that we would provide \$2 million to the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations to investigate undocumented deaths and burials at former residential schools in Saskatchewan. A monument honouring those impacted by residential schools will be built on the grounds of Government House.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few things of the items that this government will undertake over the next several years to meet our growth plan of 30 goals for 2030 and will protect the citizens of Saskatchewan and grow our provincial economy to maintain the services provided by government at an affordable cost.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say thank you for allowing me to take this opportunity to speak on the Throne Speech. I will be supporting the Throne Speech as it's presented, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will not be supporting the proposed amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to speak in approval of the motion made so eloquently by my fellow caucus member from Prince Albert Northcote and seconded by the member from Arm River. I will also be speaking against the amendment made by the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this corner is full of wisdom here. There is a lot of wisdom that's provided in this area, and I'm not sure if

this quote comes from the member from Regina Coronation Park or it was from Charles Dickens, but I believe it sums up the situation that we find ourselves in in dealing with COVID:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.

Now how could Dickens or the member from Regina Coronation Park have actually realized that that quote would actually be describing the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19 that we're facing?

[20:30]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank the residents of Melville-Saltcoats for really showing their patience in dealing with the ever-changing developments that have been realized with COVID. The greatest majority I believe have shown diligence and respect and have been following the science.

But I would also like to thank my constituency assistant, Rick McIntyre, who really has practised, I believe, a tireless unflappability in providing answers, listening to the concerns, heard the stories, interpreted policy for our constituents, and all of this after seriously breaking his collarbone in April, hosting the weddings of two of his kids on his farm in July and August, and then dealing with some personal health issues in September and October. Like everyone in this Assembly, and I think as everyone has so eloquently stated, CAs really are our rocks of support for all things happening in our constituency.

Of course our other rocks of support are our spouses, and mine, Carla, is no different as she patiently waited as I explained our latest COVID responses to the last person in the room at every meeting or social gathering or maybe it was at church or even at the Rider game. But she also keeps me supplied with granddaughter Brynn and Tessa pictures and videos that really remind me of the reason that I'm here and I believe our colleagues are here, and that's to continue to build that better life for our kids, our grandkids, our friends, and our neighbours to reside in this province. Now I have to give two thumbs up to Brynn and Tessa so they go to bed. Okay, now we've got them off to bed here. We can carry on with some of the other things that we've got to talk about tonight.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, words really cannot express the gratitude and respect that I have, and I think so many of us on this side have, for our Premier, our Health ministers, and Dr. Shahab as they've led and guided us through the most turbulent times that this province has seen in at least 100 years. They have experienced, like all of us only magnified tenfold, the overabundance of helpful guidance provided by our perpetually alarmed opposition and those that have gained their education through Dr. Google and Nurse YouTube.

But I'd like to retain that optimistic point of view that Dr. Shahab often expressed to me when I was the Rural Health minister in the role, and that was, Minister, he said, science will eventually win the day. You know, when we're done with this, science will have achieved great things.

You know, in addition to that big thank you, I think we also have to put a big thanks out to our first responders, to our health care workers, our educators who I don't believe ever anticipated that this would be the way that they would be going to work every day and the experiences that they've had to encounter.

Mr. Speaker, to round out my list of thank yous, I'd also like to express my gratitude for the leadership that has been shown me by my deputy minister, Sarah Harrison. She'll be leaving us at the end of the month, because I believe we've trained her well enough now for her to take on a DM [deputy minister] role in the Government of Ontario at the end of the month.

Sarah I believe has done an extraordinary job in really bringing the diverse portfolio, the diverse group that we have in Environment together and building consensus within the ministries that we do so much work with. I like to tell people that really Sarah has taken our ministry, the Environment ministry, from being perceived as that, you know, that tolerable ministry that we all reluctantly have to do business with to, you know, the almost cool kids now that you maybe don't mind asking to the party. And thanks, Sarah, for your contribution to the betterment of Saskatchewan. Wish you the best in Ontario.

I think as well, our ministry has also done a tremendous job training new people to be planted throughout ministryland upstairs. I'd like to thank Alicia Bay, Mila Krumer, Aaron Metcalf, and Drew Lumbard who have all done their time downstairs in our office and have now moved on to bigger and better things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech continues to build really on this government's theme of building a better Saskatchewan. As we continue to wind through the pandemic, I think we realize that we need to plan for significant economic development and job creation opportunities to support our communities, our families as they each build back better.

In the years that the government has been on this side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've been building a province that is attracting major investment. I never get tired of repeating some of these new developments — \$10 billion worth I believe — that were announced just in the last few months. A new potash mine, three new canola crush plants, further expansion on another, Canada's first wheat straw plant, a new OSB [oriented strand board] plant, revitalized pulp mill, upgrade and expanded sawmills, a new seeder assembly plant, and many others that are on the cusp of being announced.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our ministry, the Environment ministry, is going to be there to ensure that we have responsible resource development. The environmental assessment process identifies and characterizes the potential impacts of a project before it's carried out. We utilize a mix of technical reviews, public participation, duty to consult, to inform our decision-making process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my constituency of Melville-Saltcoats, we are also seeing significant investments being made. The Esterhazy Mosaic K3 just experienced its first ore being conveyed through their new shaft and conveyance system. Nutrien Rocanville is in the middle of a significant upgrade investing hundreds of millions of dollars and bringing in an extra

thousand contractors to work on the project which is expected to take over three years.

There's a building boom in Melville with just under \$20 million being spent on a new Co-op food store and a building supply centre. Kahkewistahaw First Nation bought and refurbished the Babcock-Wilcox steel fabrication centre, and there are a number of new businesses that are in the process of being built in and around the city of Melville. Melville-Saltcoats is poised to take advantage of a better Saskatchewan being built.

One of the many disappointing things however that I've observed in our Leader of the Opposition and honestly the entire opposition is their lack of acknowledgement for really the success of this province. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in moments of weakness I occasionally check out social media. There has been little to no acknowledgement by any opposition member to any of the successes or developments that have been announced in this province lately. Their member from Regina University, who is also their economy and jobs critic, has not provided one note of support for any of these significant projects coming to her city with benefits that will no doubt trickle down to her constituency and even her own business.

In order to have social programs you require an economy to support it. It is no wonder that even their members in my constituency are starting to describe them as a no-development party. Every opportunity I get I like to remind both myself and our residents of the incredible blessings of resources that we hold in this province. And I hope you can indulge me just as I repeat a few of them.

Over 1,000 oil and gas wells were drilled in the province last year and over 1,300 are expected to be drilled this year. Saskatchewan is the second largest oil producer in Canada and the sixth largest onshore producer in Canada and the United States.

Saskatchewan is a leader in petroleum research especially in the areas of enhanced oil recovery and horizontal well drilling. Two commercial EOR [enhanced oil recovery] projects are currently under way in southeast Saskatchewan using CCS [carbon capture and storage] technologies.

Saskatchewan is a world-leading supplier of uranium — 90 per cent is exported while the remaining 10 per cent is fuelling nuclear reactors in Canada. The province's uranium is responsible for powering approximately 1 in 20 homes in the United States.

Saskatchewan, now a leader in helium extraction, is now officially home to the largest helium purification facility in Canada. Saskatchewan has 25 operating mines. Our mines produce potash, uranium, coal, gold, salt, meta-kaolin, silica sand, sodium sulphate, clay, bentonite. Saskatchewan also has a wealth of developing mineral resources including diamonds, platinum, palladium, rare earth elements, copper, zinc, and nickel, and many more that are out there.

Saskatchewan's tech sector contributes nearly \$5 billion each year to the province's economy, with the Saskatchewan growth plan calling for the sector to triple by 2030. There are more than 5,000 technology companies in the province according to a study by analysis company Nordicity. About 52,000 people work tech

jobs in Saskatchewan. Over 31,000 are employed directly by tech companies while the remainder work in tech jobs at other industries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my background is agriculture. I proudly owned and operated a sizable pedigreed seed farm with my family for over 30 years in Churchbridge. During that time we faced a lot of adversity with frost, rain, cold weather, low prices, high interest rates, the Canadian Wheat Board, and drought.

2021 will go down as a historic year where I do have to admit I said a prayer many nights for my friends and colleagues who literally bet the farm this year and every year as they put a crop in or put the cows out to pasture. I'm continually amazed by the caring and compassion that they have for their industry and for each other, helping each other wherever and whenever they possibly could.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are a world leader in ag production, supplying what the world needs in canola, in oats, field peas, lentils, chickpeas, mustard, wheat, malt barley, livestock, fuel, and fertilizer. We're also a world leader in ag value-added, and I'm astounded that almost monthly we're able to announce another company that is establishing or expanding, whether involved in value-added production, machinery manufacturing, input manufacturing, or data in IT [information technology] management.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, forestry is another significant sector that this province is one of the best in class. Saskatchewan's forestry sector is booming, with over \$1.1 billion worth of forest products sold in 2020 and almost a 30 per cent increase over the previous year.

Forestry is northern Saskatchewan's largest sector. It supports families and northern communities with 8,000 jobs. An additional 2,500 jobs are on their way to new investments announced by the forestry industry this fall. Twenty-seven per cent of Saskatchewan's forestry sector workforce is Indigenous, and 30 per cent of the timber supply is held by Indigenous-owned business and organizations. Both are by far the highest proportions of any province, and the NDP don't like that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are just a few of the numerous success stories that we have going on in this province. And it's for all of these great examples that we're going to need to continue to build our international presence. The trade offices that we've established and are establishing are going to be responsible for introducing this province to the world and the world to this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a dilemma in this province, however. The dilemma is that we may not have enough people to work in all of these sectors to supply both the labour to build, to operate, and manage these facilities. So you young folks, you've got to start getting busy at building that labour force or we're going to have to continue to attract new residents to our great province. That's an enviable position to be in, not one that many jurisdictions in North America are able to brag about today.

Part of building a better Saskatchewan is building a safer Saskatchewan. The changes announced in the Throne Speech really show a government committed to increasing its efforts in

reducing crime. Creating a new protective services unit will provide a more cohesive, single-entity approach to deterring crime, especially in rural Saskatchewan. Conservation officers are going to continue to do the work that they've been commissioned for, such as environmental law enforcement, but they're also appointed to have an authority of police officers. This will provide a high degree of support to our rural residents, having an extra set of eyes and ears in our communities, making a safer environment for everyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do have to express one significant concern that I have, and that is with, unfortunately, our federal government. What we have concerns about: this Government of Canada and its ever-changing emissions targets. What we're asking for and what the Canadian energy industry, the mining industry, our power producers are looking for — they're looking for clarity and predictability when it comes to climate policy.

We actually need a game plan here. We need to have a real dialogue with the federal government because every month they seem to be coming up with a new target. Even now we're getting data reports out of COP26 [Conference of the Parties 26] of our federal leadership over-promising to everyone outside the country and failing to deliver within our Confederation.

This morning they've committed \$5.3 billion to help low- and middle-income nations with their emissions reduction mitigation efforts, with up to \$1 billion of that funding dedicated to helping countries transition away from coal. And they have offered what to our province? What, to transition away from coal?

At the 2015 Paris meeting, Canada agreed to reduce the country's greenhouse gas emissions by 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. In April the feds announced a new goal of cutting emissions by 40 to 45 per cent by 2030. Since then the Trudeau government has adopted an expanding national price on carbon and will introduce a clean fuel standard next year that could put many of our sectors dependent on hydrocarbons at a distinct economic disadvantage to their competitors.

You'll have to forgive him though, because he doesn't really think about monetary policy or he really doesn't worry about your finances or he doesn't worry about your employer's finances. During the federal election campaign this summer, the Liberals promised to implement new regulations requiring petroleum producers to lower methane emissions by 75 per cent below 2012 levels by the end of the decade from a recent, previously set target of 45 per cent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 2019 we introduced *The Oil and Gas Emissions Management Regulations*, which will reduce upstream oil and gas industry emissions from venting and flaring by over 40 per cent between 2020 and 2025. And provincial methane emissions are then capped at that level irrespective of any potential overall growth.

[20:45]

We have established a carbon-pricing system for large industrial facilities. We will significantly reduce our emissions by 50 per cent in our electrical generation by 2030, and subsequently implementing zero-emitting nuclear energy production by installing a fleet of small modular reactors in the early 2030s. Our

ministry will have a lot more to say about that in the coming months as our small modular reactor unit is working on a strategy to be released later this fall.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our climate change unit is supporting agriculture and forestry in their quest for finding nature-based solutions and exporting emissions reductions technologies through zero-till ag equipment. Just recently our government announced our carbon capture, storage, and utilization strategy to support our oil and gas sector in becoming even better in their world-leading ability to reduce their emissions intensity.

Again our ask of our federal government is, what are you doing to assist us in our transition to a lower carbon-intense economy. A good start would maybe be to respond to our ask for financial support of small modular reactors, which will provide long-term, sustainable, emissions-free baseload power. Even prominent Liberal insider, Mark Carney, was quoted at COP26 [Conference of Parties 26] saying, he has never observed "... a credible energy transition strategy that does not include nuclear." We need our federal government to start making financial commitments at home to support innovation and ingenuity in our backyard before supporting our global competitors.

Mr. Speaker, I think I'm winding down. Like so many others before me, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of our veterans. My grandfather was a cavalry member who fought in World War I. That certainly ages me. I have friends and associates who continue to serve in the reserves, and I hear of the hardships and the misery that conflict brings.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would encourage everyone that has the opportunity to have a conversation with a First Nations and Métis veteran. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am in awe of the loyalty and honour that they have in defending their country and the Queen. This is something that we could certainly build reconciliation on — lest we forget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my sincere hope is that we are just about through this pandemic. My hope is that we as a province will be able to focus soon on the positive developments that are evolving on an almost daily basis in this province. My hope is that we will all spend our future time in a positive way to improve life for all the residents of our great province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to conclude by repeating what our provincial motto speaks to: in many peoples, strength. God bless our people, God bless our province, and God bless our country. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a privilege to stand and provide my reply to the Speech from the Throne tonight.

I wish to begin my remarks by thanking the voters of Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood for their continued support and trust in me to represent them in this Legislative Assembly. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of my two half-time constituency assistants, Candace Forrester and Betty Weller. They represent me well when constituents phone, email,

or drop by to chat at my MLA office. It has been a challenging time for many of these constituent conversations, and I commend these two women for dealing with matters in a professional manner.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remain very grateful to my husband, Jim, of 39 years. He is a supportive and dependable partner who is also my best friend. We are parents to three adult daughters: Amy, Monique, and Janelle. Two sons-in-law have joined our family, and we have been blessed with three granddaughters and two grandsons. I would also like to acknowledge the support and hard work of those who serve on my constituency association. We have fun times while getting the work done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is much to talk about with this year's Throne Speech but I would like to focus my remarks on the areas of health, seniors, mental health and addictions, education, and reconciliation.

If there is a theme to weave through my words tonight, it would be resilience. There remains a pressing need in our province today and that is finding our way through the pandemic, specifically the very challenging fourth wave of this pandemic. The COVID Delta variant is more transmissible and has escalated pressure significantly on our health care system. We owe such gratitude to our health care workers and our first responders. It is hard to believe that we are still in the eye of the COVID-19 storm, so to speak, but I am relieved that our new case numbers and the current active cases are trending down.

When I look back, Saskatchewan reported its first presumptive case of COVID-19 on March 12th, 2020. Dr. Shahab, our chief medical health officer, signed the first of a long series of public health orders on March 17th of 2020. The following day, the province of Saskatchewan declared a state of emergency. Could we have imagined that 20 months later we would still be dealing with what is likely the largest public health challenge in recent history?

I would like to quote from Amy McNeil, the executive director of the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres, in her annual report for 2020/2021:

As we reflect on the past year, we take stock of the unprecedented challenges the organization and our people had to endure. We do not have to look too far to be reminded of the cultural, health, political, and economic uncertainty that blanketed our world. Humankind experienced unimaginable loss, trauma, pain, and stress.

I wish to extend my heartfelt and sincere sympathy to the families who have lost loved ones during the pandemic and the grief they have faced. As stated in the Throne Speech, the clear path out of this pandemic is through vaccination. I read an article written by Scott Livingstone, president and CEO of the Saskatchewan Health Authority. It was printed in the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism's fall edition of their *Gray Matters* publication. Here's what he wrote:

Saskatchewan residents rely on our services. For many, quality of life and life itself depend on the care we provide. There is another clear reality: vaccines work. They aren't a guarantee against COVID, but they exponentially reduce the

chance of getting COVID. And even where there is a breakthrough case in someone who is fully vaccinated, those people are exponentially less likely to land in hospital or ICU . . . vaccines are our primary tool available to us for reducing transmission and keeping COVID from exceeding our hospital capacity . . . the choice being made by those who choose to continue to go unvaccinated. Not only are they choosing to risk their own lives by going without the protection vaccines provide, they are risking the lives of those they love and those in their communities. They are risking that ICU capacity will not be there for them when they get in a car accident and need it most. They are risking the system being overwhelmed when they have a heart attack and need life-saving support from our health care teams. When someone chooses to go unvaccinated, they are putting themselves ahead of someone on our surgical waitlist, because in the days ahead the . . . spread of COVID among the unvaccinated will require us to slow down these types of services. [We're living that now.] . . . The unchecked spread of COVID among this population is escalating pressure on our hospitals and will result in Saskatchewan residents going without certain health services that they rely on to maintain their quality of life.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am aware of constituents in Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood who have chosen to remain unvaccinated despite the safe and effective vaccines that our government has made widely available and accessible throughout the province. And it is so distressing that more than one of these individuals have died or are currently in ICU in a Saskatoon hospital.

What we have witnessed in this global pandemic is mass information about COVID-19, conspiracy theories, one myth after another. Whether it is because of the isolation of public health measures or more time spent online, the conspiracy culture has grown by leaps and bounds. This culture has often taken advantage of the fearful and the vulnerable. This pandemic has resulted in misinterpretations, fabrications, and out-of-context research. Facebook reportedly removed over 12 million posts from their Facebook and Instagram platforms between March and October 2020 due to the COVID misinformation. That's staggering.

How do we as a society arrive at a place where we would take the advice of a social media individual we don't even personally know over the advice of our family doctor? I want to believe that Saskatchewan people trust their family physicians to guide their health care decisions. Work is under way to expand COVID-19 vaccines by allowing physicians in this province to be compensated for not only counselling unvaccinated patients during office visits but to have the vaccine available right there.

In my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am fortunate to represent many seniors who live in group settings. They live in six retirement residences, two long-term care homes, and six senior-preferred buildings. These older adults have been affected significantly during the pandemic as they are some of the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus. They have lived through months of lockdowns and have stayed home to protect themselves and others around them. As Holly Schick, SSM [Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism] executive director, writes:

They have suffered a loss of contact with family and friends

and have been unable to contribute to their communities as volunteers and mentors, but what they have taught me and others so very well is that they know a lot about the value of resilience.

As Holly states, and I quote:

There's nothing like a year of living with a pandemic to make us realize the importance of resilience. It hasn't been easy but the pandemic has shown just how resilient people can be. Individuals have learned more about patience, perseverance, coping with isolation and grief, and how to pivot to new ways of doing things. Governments have tried to balance the health of citizens with their economic needs and to recognize the interrelatedness of our world community. Older adults know a lot about the value of resilience. The life experience that comes with age builds resilience, and resilience has served us well during the past.

I am so proud of my seniors and I continue to be inspired by them.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen an increase in folks who are dealing with mental health or addictions. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives of all Canadians. According to the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, the ongoing economic hardships, changes to our daily routines, separation from loved ones among other stresses have been linked to the worsening of mental health and an increase in substance use. Business shutdowns, school closures, working from home, social distancing, financial uncertainty, loss of employment, so much anxiety and fear of the future. Overdose deaths in our province are on the rise.

I was driving to an event in my constituency when I heard an interview about mental health and addictions on a local radio program. I sat in my car and listened. The man being interviewed was Allan Kehler, a Saskatoon addictions counsellor, motivational speaker, and author. I have since read his books. I would like to share some of his insights from his book, *Stepping Out From the Shadows*:

I believe we all have an inner desire to be balanced and feel whole. I view addictions as an attempt by an individual to live outside of themselves so they don't have to go within. We all have a basic need to be loved and nurtured, to be seen and heard. If these basic needs are not met, there is a greater potential to stray down the path of addictions.

The face of addiction has changed significantly over the past 50 years, and today it can be difficult to recognize an addict. The addicts of today are nurses, lawyers, surgeons, teenagers, soccer moms, and grandmas. There has long been a correlation between addiction and those who struggle with mental illness. The CCSA in 2009 found that 50 per cent of addicts also struggle with mental illness. To escape internal struggles, many turn to addictions to experience relief from their painful realities.

Allan's book outlines the process of recovery, treatment options, detoxification, looking in the mirror, emotional healing, managing cravings, and more. One powerful part of his book is when he talks about the fight. What do you do when you have tried everything but nothing is working? You fight. I quote:

When someone feels there is nowhere to turn, they need to open their eyes as wide as they can to see the many resources available to them. I strongly encourage these individuals to take a leap of faith and act on these resources.

Many wonder what the alternative is. The alternative is to quit at life, and quitting is not an option. Nothing is forever, and the struggles will pass. Addicts need to trust that one day they will not have to fight so hard.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why am I sharing Allan's words? Haven't we all been touched by family and friends dealing with mental illness or addictions or both? Addicts and their loved ones need to hear the message of hope. As Allan writes at the end of his book:

Whether you are watching a loved one struggle through addictions or you are an addict yourself, there is always light at the end of the tunnel. Sometimes it's just a flicker but it's always there. The small flicker of light is hope, and when you act on that hope you can be anything. The darkest of nights is always followed by the light of sunrise.

I am pleased to know that engineering work is under way on two urgent care centres in Saskatoon and Regina, and that construction could begin in 2022. Not only will these centres help reduce wait times in emergency rooms, they will also care for patients with mental health or addictions issues. Our government plans to add 150 new addictions treatment spaces over the next three years. This government will increase accessibility to the take-home naloxone program and will launch new community wellness buses that will provide harm reduction supplies and professional support.

[21:00]

I spent 13 years as a school board trustee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Board of Education. Education remains a main focus of mine, and there is good news in this Throne Speech. Our government is moving forward with a plan to create a new funding pool to enhance class supports for teachers working with the larger classroom sizes. And this will include hiring additional education assistants.

There is also a new parent-teacher home visit pilot project that will be introduced in partnership with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association to strengthen relationships between educators, students, and their families. The pilot project will have students and parents meet in their homes with their teachers at least twice during the school year.

Then there is the Take a Break campaign that will encourage students to use social media in a healthy manner. We are aware that social media can be a powerful influence, particularly to our youth. And that influence, as we have seen with the pandemic and vaccine misinformation, can have a harmful effect.

I'd like to spend some time this evening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on reconciliation. Both guests invited to offer prayers to open our legislative session focused on this. Elder AJ Felix talked about how Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestors of this province, "We had a long hard history."

We are faced with the reality of residential schools and intergenerational trauma. During Women's History Month in October, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan paid tribute to strong women who helped shape the Métis Nation of today. One of those featured was Louis Riel's grandmother. I quote from the post:

Louis Riel may have inherited his resilient nature from his grandmother, Marie-Anne Lagemodière Gaboury. Born in Quebec in 1780, Marie-Anne married Jean-Baptiste in 1806 and was by his side for the 2200 kilometre trek west when he wanted to return to the fur trade. She became one of the first women of European descent to settle in Red River.

Marie-Anne died in St. Boniface in 1875, Mr. Deputy Speaker. She was 95 years old. She was my fourth great-grandmother.

I attended a reading of Jean Teillet, author of *The North-West Is Our Mother*, at Government House. Her book is the story of Louis Riel and his people, the Métis Nation, a nation that I am a member of. I read about the life of my fourth great-grandfather, Jean-Baptiste Lagemodière, and how he signed on to the North West Company in 1799. Fur trader, buffalo hunter, and pioneer settler.

In the spring of 1812, Jean-Baptiste and his wife, Marie-Anne, settled in the Red River colony in Manitoba. What followed were years of clashes at Red River due to the rivalry between Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company as both were seeking control of the fur trade. When the Red River colony was in danger of collapse, Jean-Baptiste was hired by the HBC [Hudson's Bay Company] agent to carry dispatches to Lord Selkirk in Montreal to warn him of the situation.

Jean-Baptiste left Red River on October 17, 1815, and travelled 1,800 miles to Montreal, most of it on snowshoes. On March 10th, 1816, he handed the dispatches over to Lord Selkirk. This arduous journey to Montreal made him a celebrity. It is the makings of fiction, but it is fact. His daughter Julie married Louis Riel Sr., and she gave birth to Louis Riel Jr. who is regarded as a leader of the Métis.

I brought greetings to the Saskatchewan Seniors Association annual convention a couple of weeks ago. The director of public education of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner did a fine job at the convention of taking the participants through treaty education. We learned how a treaty is a nation-to-nation agreement, based on mutual recognition and respect for both signing parties. The treaties were signed to ensure a continued and undisrupted existence of both parties in order to provide peace and good order for all people.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in the 4 Seasons of Reconciliation online education course offered to MLAs. This course highlighted that the *Indian Act* banned traditional religious and cultural practices of Indigenous people, denied them the right to vote, and restricted trade. I was reminded that the intergenerational trauma for Indigenous people resulted from the *Indian Act*, the loss of Indian status, residential schools, and the Sixties Scoop.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is much learning and healing that needs to take place. In response to the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission's Calls to Action, our government is introducing a number of measures. A memorial honouring those who have been impacted by the residential school system will be built on the grounds of Government House.

If this province is going to thrive, we need to ensure that Indigenous people are full participants in the economy. A growing forestry industry is one way that we can achieve this. And announcements by Paper Excellence and One Sky Forest Products in Prince Albert, Dunkley Lumber in Carrot River, and Carrier Products in Big River are all welcome news.

Our government plans to provide financing to Indigenous businesses of up to \$75 million through our new Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation. There has been a new online gaming agreement signed with the FSIN, and revenues generated by the gaming site will be shared by the province and First Nations.

There is also a commitment to install highway signs marking the boundary between Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 territories. And this treaty boundary signage will help further treaty awareness and education in our province and support our work towards reconciliation.

The announcement earlier this year by BHP Billiton of an additional 7.5 billion investment to complete the Jansen potash mine east of Saskatoon was very welcome news. BHP's total expenditure of 12 billion will be the province's largest single private economic investment that Saskatchewan has ever seen. Construction is expected to take place . . . to take six years and a further ramp-up of two years. The company is expected to create 3,500 jobs during the peak of construction, and 600 jobs once the mine is operational. BHP has also committed to not only a gender-based workforce, but also 20 per cent of its workers will be Indigenous.

More First Nations and Métis people are working in the province than ever before. It was highlighted in the Throne Speech that in September off-reserve Indigenous employment, Indigenous full-time employment, and Indigenous youth employment all reached an all-time high. Indigenous people in this province have shown that they are resilient.

I would like to highlight another book by Allan Kehler. It is titled *Born Resilient*, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is full of stories of people facing and overcoming very difficult challenges:

We can quickly lose our will to live when hope vanishes. How long do you fight through a challenge before giving up? There are those who simply curl up in a corner and admit defeat, and there are others who raise their chins, buckle up, and face the challenge head-on.

So what is it that enables some people to feel hopeful about the future in spite of adversity while others become depressed or self-destructive? The answer: a resilient nature. Resiliency is your ability to withstand, manage, and effectively cope with difficult situations. It allows you to deal with a constantly changing world and it is what helps you to bounce back after some form of struggle.

You are not created to roll over and give up in the face of

adversity. You were born to fight. Each challenge you are able to work through gives you strength because you have also established hope within yourself.

Hope says that one day there will be relief from all the agony, and peace will soon follow. Hope means that the future has the potential to be better than the present, and you can draw strength from looking beyond your current challenges toward this. Hope is what allows us to persevere despite some of the harshest conditions. Even when the cards of life seem to be stacked against you, it is a resilient nature that allows you to defy all odds and rise above.

Doesn't that definition of resilience fit the people who call this province home? I read an article in the *Better Farming* October 2021 issue, written by Terry Aberhart, a farmer near Langenburg who also runs an independent agronomy consulting company. He wrote about the challenges facing farmers over the last couple of years, and I'd like to quote the article:

Really in life and business your biggest opportunities will come from the biggest challenges. If you're the best team and nobody is challenging you, it's hard to keep your saw sharp. Adversity and challenge are where you can grow the most. You have to choose to learn, to grow. Believe it or not, the past struggle and maybe your current struggle has put you on the path to success and achievement. So get out there and learn from this. Go and grow forward.

This decade has not started the way anyone expected. Saskatchewan people have met the challenges of this global pandemic with perseverance, courage, faith, and compassion. By working together, we will build a better Saskatchewan.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would again like to quote Holly Schick:

Resilience isn't just about toughing it out and surviving. It is about finding ways to thrive in the midst of adversity. Resilience that has got us this far can see us through.

May God continue to bless our province. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the motion moved by the member from Prince Albert Northcote, and I will not be supporting the opposition's amendment. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Swift Current.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour to enter the debate this evening regarding the 2021 Throne Speech focused on building a better Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I get into my remarks about the Throne Speech itself, I need to thank a few people. And I want to start by thanking the people of Swift Current for their support, their advice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and sometimes their criticism. And more often than not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is constructive criticism which is helpful to us in the jobs that we all do in this Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these have not been easy times for any of us, and I want to thank the constituents of Swift Current for their patience, their understanding, and their determination through all

of this. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that includes the local health care workers in Swift Current that I'm honoured to represent as well for all they have done over the past number of months throughout the pandemic.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to thank several individuals as well. And at the risk of forgetting some names, that is a risky proposition, but here we go. To start with, my wife, Anita, and our family back in Swift Current. My kids, Raven and Adler, and our grandson Axel, who's now four years old, and we try to chase after him as best we can. They are a constant source of support for me in this job that I do, and they're always there for me no matter what happens, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my constituency assistant, Nola Smith. And we've heard lots about great CAs in the Chamber here over the last couple of days. And just like everyone else, I have a fantastic constituency assistant. Nola has worked for us for a number of years. I say that because I can't remember how long, and she's going to be disappointed when she hears this. And what else is new, that she's disappointed in me. But she does great work in our constituency office, handling all the inquiries from the people of Swift Current, and sometimes across the province as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the staff here at my Regina office, and I'm going to list some names: David Keogan, James Cherewyk, Aaron Hill, Cheyenne Quam, Jenn Pippus, and Angela Pasiechnyk, plus all the staff in the ministry that I get a chance to meet with on a regular basis. I can't thank them enough. And particularly those in the office that I work in. I know the Minister of Health and I share staff as well, and he has some outstanding staff in his office. And I just can't thank them enough for all of the phone calls they answer and the people they try to help on a daily basis. And they do outstanding work on behalf of this government, and that work is to be acknowledged and recognized.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to thank the Premier for his leadership throughout . . . not only throughout, since him becoming the Premier of this province, but particularly throughout this pandemic. And in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my thanks to my friend the Minister of Health, who has worked so very hard. And I've seen it first-hand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hours that these gentlemen put in to their jobs each and every day trying to make the best decisions they possibly can, in conjunction with the advice they receive and hearing from us as elected colleagues. And I want to thank and acknowledge the work that the Premier and the Minister of Health have done throughout the pandemic, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In addition to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to thank all of my elected colleagues who are mostly sitting on this side of the House. There's a few over on that side of the House as well. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are more than just elected colleagues; they are friends. And the people of this province should know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they have elected very outstanding and also upstanding citizens of this province to represent them in this Chamber here in Regina, and their constituents should be very, very proud of the people that they have sent to represent them here in Regina as part of the government side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot to go through in this Throne Speech. It's one of the lengthier, more substantive speeches in recent

memory, and they're all very, very good throne speeches. But there are a number of significant initiatives in this Throne Speech that will be undertaken in the months and the years ahead — very, very significant initiatives. This Throne Speech is about building a better Saskatchewan. It's about a healthier Saskatchewan, a better-educated Saskatchewan, a safer Saskatchewan, a more independent Saskatchewan, and overall, Mr. Speaker, a stronger Saskatchewan as we continue to fight our way through this pandemic.

[21:15]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it goes without saying that there has been a lot going on in the Ministry of Health over the past number of months, and I will touch on a few areas that apply to the ministry that I am fortunate to serve in as the Minister Responsible for Mental Health and Addictions, Seniors and Rural and Remote Health. In the area of mental health and addictions, this year's budget represents the largest budget in the history of the province, \$458 million dedicated towards mental health and addictions. Think about it: nearly half a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker, on mental health and addictions. That is an \$86 million increase just in the past three years alone.

As part of that budget we are expanding the take-home naloxone program into more communities and more pharmacies across this province in order to improve access for people across Saskatchewan, regardless of where they live. Earlier this summer we launched a new public awareness campaign in conjunction with Moms Stop the Harm, to help go towards the goal of ending stigma and create more public awareness about some of the challenges that people in this province face when it comes to mental health and addictions.

For the first time ever, we've launched drug-checking strips as part of a pilot project in Regina and also in Saskatoon, and with a goal and a plan to expand that program in some more communities, Mr. Speaker. It's part of our harm reduction initiatives. And expect more news about the expansion of that program into other areas of Saskatchewan a little bit later this fall.

We're in the process, Mr. Speaker, of procuring three community wellness buses that, once operational, will provide access to not only harm reduction supplies at several locations across a number of communities in Saskatchewan, but will also provide professional supports, with the ultimate goal of helping people who are struggling with their addictions' challenges to enter a long-term treatment program in order to help break the cycle.

Mr. Speaker, this year we have started to do that by adding a new in-patient addictions treatment beds for youth in the city of Swift Current that offers supports not just to residents of the city of Swift Current and southwest Saskatchewan, but to youth all across this province. And I had a chance to visit and tour that facility just prior to their opening a little bit earlier this fall.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we're in the process of adding more treatment beds at the crystal meth treatment centre in Estevan. And there is a waiting list there, Mr. Speaker, that we know we have to address, but that is part of our overall plan to help address some of those challenges.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, in this year's Throne Speech we have announced that we'll be aggressively pursuing additional opportunities to increase the number of addictions treatment and detox spaces in this province, with the goal of adding another 150 intensive treatment spaces over the next three years. And we will do that, Mr. Speaker, by partnering with charitable organizations and third-party organizations to achieve that target. We think that is an achievable goal, Mr. Speaker, and it's one that we need to get to to help address some of the challenges that we face when it comes to addictions in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we know in this province and across the nation and elsewhere the challenge of addictions is becoming more serious. And as the minister responsible on behalf of this government, I extend my condolences to the friends and families of all those who have lost that battle with addictions. We know we have more work to do to reduce the number of overdoses and related deaths that are happening, and we're going to continue to pursue some of these initiatives to help reduce those numbers, to provide the help and supports that people so desperately need.

Mr. Speaker, while we're on the topic of addictions, this is one of the areas that also has a crime aspect to this. And in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, there is a reference to some initiatives that'll be undertaken through the Ministry of Corrections and Public Safety. Trafficking of illegal drugs such as fentanyl continues to be a serious problem in Saskatchewan, and not just in Saskatchewan but across Canada as well and I would argue across the globe, Mr. Speaker. It's part of the reason that we've seen our addictions numbers and overdoses have been driven up, and hand in hand with that are the crimes that are associated with the drug trade. We hear about that as members of the legislature in the communities that we serve across this province, whether it's urban communities or rural Saskatchewan, communities in the far North as well. And so as mentioned in the Throne Speech there will be several new crime reduction initiatives, such as the creation of the Saskatchewan trafficking response team to target criminals who transport illegal drugs and weapons into this province.

Mr. Speaker, on the Education file we continue to make progress on 16 school projects, a number of new schools under construction across this province. There's new funding for educational assistants.

There's something called the Take a Break campaign, Mr. Speaker, which is aimed at encouraging young people to use social media in a positive and responsible way. It's something the Minister of Education has talked about, and I know I've had discussions with him about, and frankly it's something probably all of us could use in our daily lives. It doesn't matter if you're a young person or an adult. Frankly sometimes I think some of us politicians could take a lesson from that and utilize this Take a Break campaign, encouraging young people to use social media in a positive and responsible way, and to know that every once in a while it's okay to probably put the phone down and not check Twitter or Facebook and not respond to everything that you might see on there, just you know, regardless of what you might think that perhaps you should respond to it.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of Rural and Remote Health and Seniors, there have been a number of significant initiatives and goals that have been achieved, and there's more that we need to do, Mr.

Speaker. For example, the Melfort CT scanner, which we heard about earlier tonight, was launched and officially opened earlier this summer, something that's been advocated for a long, long time not just by the current member for Melfort, but previous MLAs for that constituency, dating all the way back to Rod Gantefer. And it was good to see Mr. Gantefer earlier this summer at the ribbon cutting for that CT scanner. It was a project that he advocated for, that Mr. Kevin Phillips, the late Kevin Phillips, also advocated for, and then of course the current member from Melfort also advocated for. And I was proud to be there in the city of Melfort to cut the ribbon on that particular piece of equipment.

Mr. Speaker, there's work continuing towards the planning of a new hospital in Weyburn. Many communities across this province have benefited from new, whether it's hospitals or long-term care homes, including my own in Swift Current. And now is the opportunity for cities such as Weyburn to be able to benefit from that. And planning continues towards that very important capital investment in the health care and needs of the people of southeast Saskatchewan.

There's a new Meadow Lake long-term care facility that will soon be opening. That is in the late stages of the completion of that particular project, something that the member for Meadow Lake, the Minister of Trade and Export Development, has spoken to me several times about, about the importance of that particular project in his constituency, serving the needs of seniors and older adults in and around the Meadow Lake area.

There are new care homes being planned for the communities of La Ronge, Mr. Speaker, which is an important area of the province that we also need to service. And I know there have been ongoing discussions with the community, with officials, as we work to continue to plan that particular project. There is work taking place for the replacement of long-term care facilities in the communities of Grenfell and Watson and I know, having spoken to some of the community leaders and the MLAs that represent those communities, that those are also significant projects that their communities are very much looking forward to in so many ways.

In addition to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have also heard this government's commitments to the addition of 600 new long-term care beds here in the city of Regina. That is a substantial, substantial project, Mr. Speaker, one that we announced earlier this summer that there's been a lot of preparatory work that's already taken place, but work continues on that. And that is a significant project for the capital city as we need to add new long-term care spaces here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, there's so many other items I could touch on. Urgent care centres that we've talked about this evening which will be located here in Regina and also in Saskatoon that will provide additional care here to its residents of these two cities. In addition to that, there will be a mental health and addictions component to the urgent care centres as well, and that's a significant component of those facilities to help provide yet another avenue for people to access the supports that they require.

There will be a new long-term care home inspection process that will launch a little bit later this fall as a pilot, Mr. Deputy

Speaker. And I've spoken about that a little bit but we'll hear more news about what that will look like later on this fall.

Three hundred more continuing care aides is part of the election promise from a year ago, Mr. Speaker. The first 108 of those care aides there is funding for in this year's budget and we are making significant progress on that hiring. We'll have additional details to say about that a little bit later this fall.

And I'd be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I did not mention some of the work that is being done with our senior citizens and older adults in this province, Mr. Speaker. I have had the opportunity as the minister responsible to have regular meetings and discussions with both the representative, the groups for seniors and older adults in this province, whether it's the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism or the Saskatoon Council on Aging and also individual seniors and older adults that I hear from personally, either back in Swift Current or across this province, who will write and send letters to me with their thoughts and concerns.

And very, very constructive feedback and advice from those organizations, Mr. Speaker, about what their priorities are in addition to the government providing long-term care beds, but constructive talk about aging-in-place models. And they have done a lot of work and research in something that I'm taking a closer look at. I know we as government are taking a closer look at some of these initiatives to see where the government may have a role to address some of the priorities for seniors and older adults across this province.

It's a changing demographic, Mr. Speaker, where seniors and older adults have different priorities than perhaps that we did, you know, 20, 30, 40 years ago. They're an active segment of our population and they want us to know that. And they want to be involved in the decision-making process and continue to contribute to our communities and to our economy. And we're going to do our best to try and support those seniors and older adults through some of these initiatives that are outlined either in the Throne Speech and previous budgets and we'll continue to advocate for in the years ahead.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more that I could add too. The Throne Speech is 25 pages long. We've had a number of speakers on this side of the House, on the government side, touch on a number of items. I've got a limited time slot and I want to leave time for some of the other MLAs that are looking forward to speaking here tonight and tomorrow as well. There are many talented speakers on this side of the House, some who have spoken so very eloquently already and more to come.

Mr. Speaker, this COVID-19 pandemic has been exceptionally challenging. We have all suffered loss in some way, shape, or form, and some more than others and we know that. But we as a government, Mr. Speaker, have tried our best to navigate this pandemic by making the best possible decisions we can with the information we have available to us, available at any given time and knowing that this is constantly changing, that there are people that have views and opinions and advice and suggestions on all sides of this issue. This has been exceptionally divisive at times. But we are hopeful that people will continue to pull together as they always do in this province.

And so if I could, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to end on a positive note.

This decade has not started out the way that any of us expected it to or frankly wanted to. But to say that there is room for hope and optimism would be an understatement. We have heard and seen some of the major, positive economic news announcements that have happened over the past several months, and there are more to come, Mr. Speaker.

A new potash mine, three new canola crushing plants plus an expansion of an existing one, a revitalized Prince Albert pulp mill, expanded and upgraded saw mills, the first of its kind wheat straw pulp facility, helium production, and lithium, Mr. Speaker, and an oil and gas sector that, despite all the roadblocks that certain politicians out East might like to throw up in front of it, an oil and gas sector that should be and is the envy of oil and gas production not only in Canada but in the world, Mr. Speaker. It remains a driver of our economy and something that this government is proud of.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, an agriculture sector, that despite getting absolutely hammered this past summer by a heat wave and a drought unlike the kind that we have seen anytime since I was a kid in the 1980s growing up on our family farm near Pathlow in northeast Saskatchewan, an agriculture sector that is resilient and that will bounce back again as it always has no matter what, no matter the odds. Those crushing plants that I listed above, Mr. Speaker; the continued growth of the manufacturing sector that provides the equipment and the machinery that farmers and ranchers require in order to continue to build their business and grow this province — those are the signs that the agriculture sector, despite this past summer, remains alive and well.

[21:30]

There is room for optimism, Mr. Speaker. We will get through this pandemic and we will build a better Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the opposition's amendment, but I will support the Throne Speech so moved by the member for Prince Albert Northcote and seconded by the member for Arm River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to join in some comments of the Throne Speech. But before I do that, I want to acknowledge of course we always have a team behind us and I've been fortunate to have a wife and 17 grandkids. And quite an executive team, a CA, Jude, who does an amazing job, who truly cares, passionate about people, whether it's our seniors, the most vulnerable, people who are in such situations that are, you know, they're at the end sometimes of hope and losing hope. And Jude just goes the extra mile, and I want to thank him for that, for caring so passionately. As a First Nation man, he truly shows passion and I want to thank him for all of that.

My team, I want to thank the team, the official opposition, Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. We're all asked to do a job as government is asked to do a job, and sometimes we may disagree. And you know, sometimes back and forth, I've learned and I've showed a little bit of more understanding to try to work with members opposite in truly saying it's time to do what's best for Saskatchewan citizens when times are hard.

We've had some of the hardest times. And when I think about the challenges that many of our families have faced, whether it's my own with COVID, everyone's done their part.

There's many people to thank, and as I respond I'll do some of that. But I think about individuals who are truly struggling out there and they don't know where they're going to pay their rent, utilities, food, children. And we talk about losing hope. And then you see the kids. We're faced with many challenges in our province and it's not just the North; it's not just First Nations. And I think about COVID, the challenges when it comes to COVID, and I think about our health care professionals. Those doctors, those front-line workers who have made recommendations, who are truly the heroes on the front line, saving our loved ones.

Government — and you are a big government, 47 members — you've been given quite an opportunity. You've been asked to represent the people of our province. Time will come to see, have you done what you said you would do for the people?

To the backbenchers, I hope when you're hearing the concerns from citizens who elected you, from citizens who are telling you they have issues and concerns, that you truly hear them and you talk to the cabinet, and you let them know the challenges you're facing, that your communities are facing. Because I know, at the end of the day, many of us will never be in cabinet. And that's life; I understand that. And many backbenchers, you've got a number of ministers. The Premier decides who his cabinet is going to be. I understand that. It's a process. But you do have, you have a loud voice, as opposition and as backbenchers, to sometimes say a message and to make sure the voice of the people that elected you here . . . And that's all I can ask of you.

And I can criticize and I have been. I've been probably one of the worst ones sometimes; get angry and emotional. It's because I truly care. I'll work with government. And like I said, we have passed some bills. And I think about a bill. And I'm going to watch a certain bill, and keep an eye on it, see how the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions has handled that file, how they handled that bill. Have they done what they said they would do? And I will watch that. I know that there's people going to watch that because, I have to tell you, there's many people suffering with addictions. We lose too many young people to suicide. I know many families back north who have just recently been burying loved ones from suicide. It is challenging. It's not easy but we have to do the right things.

And when I see a government being, I think as it is, divisive, trying to put one against the other, that's concerning. When I see our far North get treated in a certain way and pointed out that their vaccination rate is so low, it's the federal jurisdiction, and we see instead of working together with our First Nations, our northern leaders, we made it very uncomfortable, and a certain premier did that.

And I seen those leaders, tribal councils, health authorities put out press releases and are not happy and are saying, that's not the way to do it. They want to work with the provincial government. Why should we have to have a government trying to put one against the other, federally, provincially? Why aren't we working in true partnership? We keep talking about truth and reconciliation, yet we see hurdle after hurdle.

I've always said this and I said this many times, actions speak louder than words. There's a lot of challenges in our province. And I know back home many people ask me, what are we going to do about the suicides? What are we going to do about the addictions? What are we going to do about the cost of living?

Well the government has a role. Your policies, the direction — I know people will lobby ministers. We have a Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis Relations and Northern Affairs. And I think to myself well, hmm, I've watched how this gentleman has conducted himself in this Chamber with one of our members. And I'm telling you, sometimes I've warned some of the First Nations and the Métis leaders, be aware who you're dealing with. Like understand, I've said this before, actions speak louder than words.

You know, I think about all the challenges that are out there, and the people are looking at a government to put the dollars where they need to be. I get that. You get to decide the funding, what groups, what organized community-based organizations will receive funding. I realize the government gets to do that. You have the purse strings and you decide. And those groups sometimes are nervous to speak out, whether it's school divisions . . . There's many front-line workers. We've heard it. You have to hear it. I hear some of you saying you're getting calls, phone calls to your office, so you must be hearing it. And I just hope you share that with your colleagues to make sure they understand the challenges that people are struggling with.

And we keep saying we want to work together. And you know, I listen to some of the members talk about the long list that's in here, and none of you opposition say anything positive. You're always negative. It's always negative. Well you know, at the end of the day, you pat yourselves so much on the back, some of you, that you did it. It's all about you, what you've done — my government, my government, what we did.

Now go ahead with that, but there are families, there are people who are truly struggling, who are truly having trouble to make ends meet. They don't care about the politics. They really don't. They don't care how many is government, how many is not, because it doesn't matter if there's 47, 49, 48. All they care about is trying to survive in this province, to feed their family, to take care of their family, to have a place to call home. That's all they care about. They don't want to get into . . .

I realize that, and I've said this before, we get back and forth. But I hope at the end of the day . . . You know, there are the things that you've announced, that program that you're going to say is going to work for First Nations and Métis. I'll watch that. Everything else that you're announcing, I get it. We'll watch and see how it all works out. I truly hope it does work out the way you say, because people are relying on you. You're the government. You get to make those decisions. Unfortunately for me, I've got to watch just some of the challenges that back home people are facing, and I think to myself, I come in here and I'm going to share with you guys the challenges at home and hope you'll understand.

And you know, there's one thing I have to say. I have made a neighbour and a friend, the member from Melfort. And there's a few others actually, I have to be honest. You know, they've taught me some things — be a little kinder. And I have, I've tried.

And sometimes I come in here, of course, because I'm dealing with all the pressure of people back home who are saying, we're struggling, Doyle, we need help. The government policy is just hurting us. They don't listen. We can't seem to get through the system.

And I've reached out to a minister's office. And I have to be honest, sometimes that works. And I do appreciate that. But I have to tell you, a lot of times, you know, things don't get resolved, not to the individual who maybe had the concern, the complaint. But at the end of the day we all leave from here, go back home. And whether it's North, rural, urban, there's many challenges that our province is going to go through. The Premier, the Health minister, the cabinet makes a lot of the decisions. I understand that. People will watch, and I guess I'm hoping they will hold all of us accountable. Did we do the right things?

You know, I listen to the going back and forth sometimes in here, and I'm just as bad and I've said that before. But I'll say this, at the end of the day, I just hope our province does great for the people. We keep talking about "many peoples, strength." I've heard many of you say that. And I think and I hope you're passionate about that and you're meaning that because there is a lot of people in the province. And First Nations and Métis definitely need to have that support and feel like they're a part of this province. They have a lot to add and they want to be a partnership and they want to work with First Nations and Métis. They want to do that. They want to work with government and industry in partnering, but they want to be involved.

The last thing I'm going to say about government, and here you have an obligation to the people, First Nations and Métis, to make sure you consult them. They have inherent rights. So do my grandkids. They have inherent rights. And I encourage, and I encourage First Nations and Métis to make sure they hold the government accountable. Use the court if you have to. Work through the system. But when you no longer can get the government to listen, use the system, the court system. And that's the best advice I can give them to do that because so many of them have tried and feel like they get nowhere. And we'll see what goes on in the next while, how the government handle . . . You're a very big government, many members. I hope First Nations and Métis can work with you and be true partners. And we'll see where that goes.

Our northern leaders, I want to thank our northern leaders, whether it's First Nations, Métis, municipal leaders. They have done so much when the government left them behind. And that's how some of them feel with COVID and the challenge that they're faced with. They've had to fight. They've had to make sure they get heard. And they've done a great job of that, and I want to thank them. Front-line workers, the volunteers, so many hours put in, I want to thank them. Those are our true heroes in the hospitals. Doctors. And I want to make sure they understand how grateful we are for our kids, our grandkids.

And for those families that have suffered the loss of life from COVID, in my prayers I put you and your loss. As the Creator guides us and he guides me, I will try to work and bring the issues here because there are many challenges. I realize that. But as you say and as we say, "from many peoples, strength" this great province has come. Let's hope we can continue to work together. And I will work with my neighbours and my colleagues on the

other side and some of the backbenchers and even some of the ministers if they're willing, to try to make sure the issues of the people that I represent, the Cumberland constituents — and it is an honour to serve them — I'll do all I can.

[21:45]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I've taken up my time. And at this point, again, I won't be supporting the government's main motion, and I will be supporting the amendment. And I want to thank you for allowing me to join in on debate.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, actually the deputy deputy speaker. But again I'm always honoured to have the opportunity to respond to the Throne Speech. And I think this is number seven maybe because I was Speaker and they didn't let me. They didn't let me respond. But again I'm honoured to be here.

I first of all wanted to thank the Premier and I wanted to thank both of our Health ministers and Dr. Shahab just for their efforts. It has been amazing. It's tireless and I just want to acknowledge the efforts. And you can't please everybody but, by God, you're doing the best you can. So thank you for that.

There's a few speeches that have gone before me, and I want to acknowledge them as well. So the Minister of Government Relations, First Nations and Métis, I thank you. I wish I had the skill set that you had in order to just stand up and deliver a speech. But thank you for that. It was really awesome as per usual. Thank you, sir.

The member for Regina Pasqua, it was heartfelt and it's important that we acknowledge that, but thank you. It was heartfelt and a really, really good speech. And we thank you for that.

The Minister of Education, I happened to catch this last night. And it was again not only heartfelt but it was so personal that I just want to acknowledge the fact that it was a really, really great speech. And we're lucky to have you serving the people of this province, so I'd like to thank him for that.

It's been interesting. I've been listening to the members opposite, some of their responses to the Throne Speech, and I'm wondering why everything has to be, the sky is falling. Why is everything so negative? It is the sky is falling, but I'm not sure if you can figure out exactly who I'm speaking to, but you know, Henny-penny or Chicken Little or Eeyore or Turkey-lurkey, you could figure it out for yourselves. But sometimes it's important just to absolutely do the right thing. Everything we do as a government is not wrong. Just as a reminder, but thank you for that.

So as per everybody else here that had a number of people that they wanted to thank, and I've got friends and family who are steadfast in their support of me and without whom I can't imagine what my work or my life would be without them. First always, my partner, Lisa. They say time flies when you're having fun, and that must be true because we'll be celebrating almost our

10th anniversary next year.

[Applause]

Mr. Docherty: — There's more chances for you to pipe in here but, well I know, it isn't easy to find an issue that both sides of the aisle can agree on. I think that the members of the government and the opposition who know us both will find common ground in acknowledging that it's remarkable she's been able to put up with me for a decade. But kidding aside, thank you for being my partner in this crazy journey, Lisa.

Next of course is my mother, Margaret, Marg, or Maggie. Mom, if you're watching, thank you. As you can probably imagine, I was a wee bit of a challenge to raise, what with my lack of regard for authority and my need to always ask why and why not. Mom, your generation truly is the greatest generation. While others have complained and protested against doing the right thing for the good of everyone, your generation has quietly soldiered on, doing your duty to your community with a steadfast strength that the rest of us should do more to emulate. Your sacrifice, perseverance, and strength are a lesson to us all. I'm blessed to call you my mother.

It's interesting. The member for Last Mountain-Touchwood talked about the world's best CA. Okay, and everybody's had a shot at you, but I'm going to challenge you on this one. I'd like to thank Kristy Shaw. Kristy's been my constituency assistant for the last eight years. It's no exaggeration to say that she works just as hard, if not harder, than I do in the service to the people of Regina Coronation Park.

Kristy, if you're watching, I hope you know that you're so much more than a colleague. You are a true and fierce friend. I know that many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have met Kristy over the years and will understand when I say it is truly a privilege to work beside you every day to serve our community and our province. You are a remarkable public servant, community member, and mother, and you're also someone I know will be a leader in the community for years to come.

I want also to thank my friend and another leader in the community, Abdi Gure, who has recently joined my office part-time. Abdi is well known in our city for his leadership within the African community, including as the interim president of the African community resource network Saskatchewan, and the executive director of the Prairie Somali association. It is an honour and a pleasure to work with you, my friend.

It's actually interesting. Kristy and Abdi, they're both social work students. They're finishing their degrees at the end of this semester. I tried to dissuade them, but sadly, we're going to have three social workers in the Regina Coronation Park constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank a number of my friends who took time out of their busy lives to join me here at the Assembly for the reading of the Speech from the Throne. It was surprisingly powerful to see guests return to the galleries after being empty for so long, powerful because this Assembly is meant to be open to the people we serve and represent. No democracy can truly flourish unless its citizens can bear witness to its daily operations. So I want to acknowledge my friends who attended the Throne Speech and in doing so represented the citizens of this great

province just as much as any of us elected members that day.

My friend of 40 years, Keith Pratt. Keith and his family have always welcomed me and have even named me an honorary member of their family. Of course the true honour is mine, and I'm grateful beyond belief that Keith and his family are in my life.

Remi Mike who some of you may remember from one of the most unbelievable twists of fate ever when he was approached by someone in need offering an iPad that turned out to be the long-lost property of our former premier, Brad Wall. I got to be part of the effort to return the iPad to the former premier, which reminds me, I'm not sure he's paid me back yet. Probably not. That's Remi Mike and he was awesome. It happened. It was shocking.

Nenita Anonas, another very well-known face to Regina for her leadership within our city's proud Filipino community. Nenita is a fierce advocate for her community and her friends. She's also a teacher at LeBoldus High School, where she's currently teaching EAL [English as an additional language] for grades 9 to 12, including leading in important conversations with her students on Saskatchewan and Canadian government systems. So how fitting that she was able to come here to the laying out of the government's vision and legislative agenda.

Sarah Abbas and Mounir Rahwan, friends who have long supported me, originally from Syria. In fact I first met Sarah when she interned with my team way back when I was the director of immigration at the then ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration. Sarah went on to work at the Open Door Society for several years, where she relied on her own refugee experience to help others come to and make Canada their home. Sarah has returned to the civil service, where she continues to serve our province.

Mohammad Hasan, a successful businessman, a leader of Regina's Bangladeshi community. Hasan owns and operates multiple businesses, including Tandoori Kabab, the restaurant on Albert Street, where I heartily recommend all my colleagues eat if you get the opportunity. Hasan is also a proud resident of Regina Coronation Park, where he's spearheading a community-led project to revitalize a local park into a family-centred place for children of all abilities to play. Hasan, thank you so much for your strong voice for families and children, our community who need it most.

A good friend, Ercoph Bongomin, who many of you know as the past president of the African community resource network Saskatchewan. Originally from South Sudan, Ercoph continues to be a leading advocate for his community as an ACRN [African-Canadian Resource Network] board member. Ercoph, thanks so much for everything you do. He told me to remind everyone that Africa's newest country, South Sudan, from 2011, so thank you, Ercoph.

Last but definitely not least, another very familiar face to all of my Regina colleagues on both sides of the aisle, the one and only Nelson Eng. Nelson was one of the first intercultural community leaders to not only invite me to an event, but to somehow convince me and the former mayor to take the mike and do some karaoke. And I honestly hope there's no video evidence of that

performance, but it's possible. The member from Regina Rosemont, he might remember it as well because he also had to take the mike. I think we had to do it together. So if there's evidence, we're in it together.

But all kidding aside, I think we can agree that through his support of many worthy community causes, including the Regina hospitals foundation, Nelson and his family have not only built bridges between Regina's Chinese community and our city at large, they've made our community stronger and our province a better place to live.

The Deputy Speaker, I'm truly blessed to call so many leaders within our community my friends. They have made me a better person, a better representative of this strong and vibrant community of ours. As the member for Regina Coronation Park, I have the distinct honour of representing one of the most diverse communities in our proud city. People of all walks of life, all cultural backgrounds call Coronation Park home. Walk into any community recreation facility, school, or neighbourhood, you'll see the diversity that truly represents our province's motto, "from many peoples, strength." Coronation Park demonstrates that we're stronger, better together. And that is very much the theme of our government's Speech from the Throne. I know members who have spoken before me have highlighted many aspects of the Speech already, so I'll focus on a few that are particularly meaningful to the community I serve.

Coronation Park, like so many other communities, has not been immune to the impacts of COVID-19, the pandemic. To the health care workers, first responders, essential service providers, teachers, educational assistants who call Regina Coronation Park home, thank you. Your leadership and service during the extraordinary challenges of the pandemic have been remarkable and have been absolutely essential to keeping our community, our city, and our province strong.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this community, like this province, are resilient. They're already looking to the future. One of the brightest lights on the horizon of Regina Coronation Park's future is a new replacement school which will provide a new and modern learning environment for students currently served by Imperial, McDermid, St. Michael, and St. Peter schools. I've had the great privilege of working closely with the Minister of Education, the former minister of Education, Regina Public and Catholic school boards to advocate for and support this project. It's one that members of the community constantly highlight for me as a beacon of hope for a brighter future for generations to come. It's also part of our government's commitment to make progress on another 16 school projects as part of our ambitious capital plan in Education as outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

Mister deputy deputy speaker, the people of my community also see another bright light on our horizon — reconciliation. Coronation Park is home to many Indigenous people. Both First Nations and Métis, and is also home to newcomers who are just beginning to establish their roots in our country, our province, and community. And like communities across our province it is also home to families who have lived here and raised their children here for generations. This diversity is one of Coronation Park's greatest strengths because it's also our greatest opportunity.

Children in Coronation Park have been learning that we are all treaty people for years, ever since this government first mandated treaty education in the provincial curriculum as part of our first-ever Throne Speech in December 2007. That commitment to treaty education is one of the things that drew me to this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before joining this Assembly I worked at First Nations, tribal councils, including under the authority of the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, Touchwood Agency Tribal Council. I taught for six years on Kawacatoose First Nation helping members of our First Nation attain their nursing credentials while they lived, learned, and worked in their home community.

[22:00]

My interest in treaty understanding goes back many years to my time as a student at what was then the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, now proudly known as the First Nations University of Canada. As a non-Indigenous student I was humbled by the kindness and grace of the elders, staff, faculty, and students who so kindly welcomed me to learn alongside them. I don't know if anybody can remember the trailer that was connected to the university.

I did not begin with a treaty acknowledgement, Mr. Speaker, but I want to offer one now. I stand here in my place in this historic Assembly on Treaty 4 territory and the home of the Métis. It's important to say these words in honour of the relationship between our province's Indigenous people and the Crown, a Crown so ably represented here in Saskatchewan by the province's first Indigenous Lieutenant Governor, Russ Mirasty.

I had the honour of a lifetime when I served as Speaker during his induction as the Crown's representative in Saskatchewan. I want to thank His Honour for his service to all the peoples of this province and his leadership as we walk forward together on the path to truth and reconciliation.

As His Honour said in the Speech from the Throne, all of Saskatchewan was shocked and saddened by the discovery of unmarked graves on the grounds of former residential schools across Canada, including 751 unmarked graves at Cowessess First Nation here in our province. And our government is providing \$2 million to the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations to investigate undocumented deaths and burials at former residential schools in Saskatchewan. It was His Honour who was instrumental in picking a spot for the memorial at Government House to honour those children.

The path to reconciliation will not be easy for any of us to walk. It is built on loss, tragedy, and historic wrongs. We have seen too many of these already here in Saskatchewan through the identification of the graves at Cowessess and the ongoing search for graves at former residential school sites across our province. But while it is not easy, it is absolutely the most important journey we will take in our lifetimes, to acknowledge and understand what has happened in the past, what continues to happen now, to move together toward a place of reconciliation.

It is also the way forward to a stronger future. In July our government joined in celebration with Cowessess and Canada to celebrate Cowessess First Nation's official assumption of jurisdiction of child welfare for its members — the first

agreement of its kind in this country. I want to commend my friend, Chief Cadmus Delorme, and the Cowessess Council for their leadership and dedication to the children and families of their First Nation. You're not only leaders in this province, you're leading the way in our country in forging a path for others to follow.

His Honour is also leading the way through his work to bring a residential schools memorial to the grounds of Government House. I was honoured this past National Indigenous Peoples Day as the Premier joined His Honour to dedicate the site for Saskatchewan's residential school memorial at Government House. His Honour then unveiled the design for the memorial on the first-ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in September. This memorial will be a powerful step toward reconciliation. I look forward to seeing it completed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this year I was honoured to be part of the inaugural pipe ceremony to commence this fall session. We were blessed to have Elder AJ Felix and his wife, Patricia, lead us in a good way that morning. Thank you to the elders that came to raise their pipe that day: Larry Oakes, Nekaneet First Nation; Terry Flamont, Sakimay First Nation; Clyde O'Watch, Carry the Kettle First Nation. I'm grateful for the elders who come to sacrifice their time to offer their prayers to the work we do in this legislature.

This was not the first or second time the pipe was raised. Elder Larry Oakes led the pipe ceremony for the Treaty 4 flag-raising here at the legislature for National Indigenous Peoples Day 2019.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech is full of ideas, bold ideas, new ideas to make this province better for families, for all of us, for future generations. The opposition's negative response to the Throne Speech reminds me of an *SNL* [*Saturday Night Live*] sketch.

An Hon. Member: — Which one?

Mr. Docherty: — Well I'll tell you. I'm thinking in terms of *SNL* and Lothar of the Hill People, Lothar of the Hill People. So Lothar comes up to his father and he says, Daddy, Daddy, look what I made. I've got a rock and it's shaped like a disc and it rolls, and I put a stick right in the middle of it. And it rolls, and we can put our basket on top of that, and it'll make all of our work easier. And he says to his son, Lothar, that's a good idea. It might even be a great idea, but it's a new idea. And because it's a new idea, we must fear and reject it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as so many colleagues have already said, I'm proud to support the Speech from the Throne. It embodies a way forward together toward a stronger and better Saskatchewan. I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Arm River and seconded by the member for Prince Albert Northcote, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you very much, mister deputy deputy deputy speaker. So I knew we'd get around to it some time. I don't have any other jokes other than that that I can tell,

like the former Speaker. But, well, it's hard to top his anyway. But it is my pleasure today to rise and to add my comments in and reply to the Speech from the Throne. It speaks not only to this session but to the years ahead about continuing to build a stronger Saskatchewan, a safer Saskatchewan, a healthier Saskatchewan, a better-educated Saskatchewan, and a more independent Saskatchewan.

So as is traditional, I'll start by thanking a few people. First and foremost, as always, is my wife for always being there and being there for me. She's most definitely my rock, my best friend, and the love of my life. And you know, it's really been tested this last 20 months, I'm going to tell you, because we have spent so much time in isolation, just the two of us, that it's kind of . . . You know, if she can put up with me through that, she's a rock star, I'm going to tell you right now.

And it's amazing though how we could find different ends of the house to be at, or different ends of the condo. I could be in the garage. I did spend a lot of time, when we were in isolation for about five weeks, in the garage. And every screw was in the right place, every hammer hung properly. And about two weeks after we got out of isolation, that was over. I mean it's back to, I have to do it again. But anyway, she's there. She's still with me and I think she still kind of likes me, and so that's a wonderful thing.

I want to thank the rest of my family — my son Trent and his wife, Lisa, and their son Elias; and my daughter Angela, her husband, Joe, and their kids Noah and Layla. Now the two of them bought one of our dealerships from us, back a number of years ago, and have been running that. And I know some of the members opposite had people protesting in front of their dealership which they own. And they're not in politics, but you know, they had me hanging in a fake jail in the back of a pickup truck there. That was really professional of the members opposite, and you know, what a real classy organization . . . [inaudible] . . . I was always thrilled by that.

But anyway just to top that off, you know, in the last three years my son's dealership has won as one of the best 25 dealerships in Canada to work for, for his employees. You know, what's really amazing is there's over 3,200 car dealerships in Canada and he was in the top 25. He's been asked to speak at numerous events. And dealerships these days are big conglomerates — they own 5, 10 dealerships or whatever — and he owns one. And they own one and he's been honoured several times and flown to Toronto to accept awards. So I'm pretty proud of him and pretty proud of my son-in-law and my daughter and that team of people that they put together over there. He runs it way better than I ever did.

And anyway I have two more kids — my son Colby and his wife, Becky, and their kids Hannah and Myles. Now Colby's a parts manager at a different dealership that we used to own, and he is Mr. Parts, I tell you. If you need to know a part, he can quote you the number. He can quote all that stuff. I just don't know how people do that, but he does. He's wonderful. And at the same dealership, and actually at another, at the Ford dealership — she's in charge of both; she's the controller — his wife, Becky, is the controller over there. So the whole family's kind of stayed right in the business and that's kind of nice to see. And Hannah, she's like 11 going on 15, something like that. And so she's a sweetheart, but she's growing up so fast it's hard to believe. And Myles, well he's a going concern as always. I mean he's in grade

2 and he's just a wonderful, wonderful young man.

And then there's my daughter Jill. She's the youngest of the gang. And her and her husband, Greg, they got married this summer. I was very honoured to walk her down the aisle in August. And she was so happy she got to have the wedding. And you know, tried before, but I mean things happened with COVID, and so it did get somewhat delayed. But they were very happy to be able to pull it off. And me, as dad, was very honoured to be able to walk her down the aisle.

And they've got two kids. Madilyn, who's my sweetheart, she's like four years old. And I've introduced her in the House pre-COVID. She's still one of grandpa's favourites and she knows it. So that's one of the problems. And then their little guy is Lucas. And Lucas is 18 months old and he is a real handful. I mean, you turn your back and he's up on the table. He's everywhere. I mean, he loves food. He's your typical boy, right. And there's such a difference. And you know, it sounds sexist to say that, but it's true. I mean he's just like, he doesn't want anything. He wants a truck. He wants a tractor. You know, he wants things like that. So it's really entertaining.

You know, what I'm really happy about is they're all vaccinated except, well the young ones obviously. They can't, in that age group, they can't be. I only have one of the seven grandchildren that is vaccinated. The others are just waiting until they get the word to go. But all my kids are vaccinated and that's such a relief for me. You know, there's nothing scarier than somebody getting COVID and dying.

I have one sibling of mine who him and his wife and their family are not vaccinated. And I don't know why. And as much as I love them, you know, it's a strange one. I can't believe that they'd miss out on the science, but he does. He lives in BC [British Columbia]. And his wife did get COVID. She's recovered from that. And two of their daughters got COVID and they both recovered from it. So that's very, very fortunate that all three of them did. But you know, he's still not vaccinated. So we'll see how that goes.

But I also want to thank — back to my thank yous — thank my CA, probably, probably the best CA in this province. Well she's in the top 40, okay, in the top 40 for sure: Joy Schewaga. Joy is wonderful. Joy and I have been friends long, long, long before politics, when it was just about the car business. And Joy used to work for me and we're just good friends. And yet she just loves doing what she's doing, and she loves helping people, and that's what it's all about for her. She said, if it stops being like that, I'm out of here. So that's why I get along so well with her.

[22:15]

So I want to thank all my colleagues as well, and through these difficult times I know we have all been taking those calls. We've all seen people. We go to the grocery store or we go to the whatever, wherever we go we're talking to people. And it's been very difficult times, but you know, it's still good. We're meeting with those people and we're listening to them and we're getting information for them. We're trying to help them with the programs. It's been very rewarding in that regards.

I want to thank, you know, another gentleman here, and

specifically the Premier. I mean, you know, I know he takes a lot of hard shots from the folks opposite and some other people. But he's here all the time. He's here countless, countless hours over this last almost two years, and his heart is in this. His heart has been in it since the start. And so you know, his family has missed him too because he hasn't been home. Like so many of the other MLAs, they can go home and sort of get a break, he can't.

And so my hat's off to him, and my great thanks to him for doing what he's doing and standing up and doing things, doing things right. And I believe he has done things right. I mean, it's easy to go back and say — you know, and hindsight's always 20/20 — you can go back and say, maybe we should have done this a day sooner or done this or done that. He has listened to all the experts, and there's a gazillion experts out there, and you can probably find one for anything. But he's listened to all the experts, even the experts in our province who, you know, some of them have become rock stars. And you know, he's still listening, but then he's taken the best advice.

He's listened to Dr. Shahab, and you know, the team is all worked out together to make sure that they're making the best decisions for our province. So I'm pretty grateful to him. And Dr. Shahab, well you know, he's taken abuse and criticism. And again, he's got a thankless job but he's just done a wonderful, I think, a wonderful job. And you know, it's been so long since he's had sort of a break it's hard to believe. And I give him lots of credit and lots of thanks and praise for the work that he's done.

Of course I want to thank my many constituents in Prince Albert Carlton for their advice and their support to me. I mean we're getting lots of those calls. And I'll talk a little bit more about COVID, I guess, because the calls to my office, of course they're on one end or the other end of the scale.

I mean, you know, I think there's like maybe 5 per cent of the people that are, lock me in my basement and throw away the key. And there's the other 5 who's, don't tell me what to do; I'll do whatever I want to do. And they're about 5 per cent, 5 per cent there. And the other 85 per cent or 90 per cent are people who say, I'm just going to get my shot and I want to be done with COVID. I want to get back to my normal life. And they're the people . . .

But the loud ones are the fringe out there and the ones with the strange ideas. And you know, what bothers me is there's people that are doing that, and you know, they're going to Google university — the GU, right? — because the Google is the answer. I have done the research. And I was up for two hours last night doing all the research and I know. And it's like yeah, I know Dr. Shahab, he only went to school for what? A day, two days? So that's what makes him an expert? No. He's an expert because he is. So he's done the education. He's done the research. He really has been involved. So you know, it sort of gets to me.

You know, I'm 65 years old now. I know I don't look anywhere near that, but I am. You know, but I've never seen people, they're just bitter to each other, some of them. I mean during the lockdown, I mean neighbour was against neighbour. And you know, if a guy, if somebody pulled up in front of one house, they were ready to phone the police and report them. And you know, no pun intended with this, but those are fences that will never get mended. Because you just don't do that to your neighbour. You

can go talk to them. You can phone them and say like, don't have a party. Don't have this, don't have that. But you just don't do that.

And you know, I know families that are split. I mean hey, my brother, I told you he's not vaccinated. But you know, that doesn't mean we're split. I don't agree with him. He's fine; he says, I don't go round professing to people that it's the right thing to do. He says, I just choose not to get one.

So it's kind of one of those things where it's a pretty sad situation. And even once this is over, if anybody thinks that's just going back to normal and those relationships will automatically come back like that, it's not going to happen. So it's going to take a lot of work. Don't be divisive.

I mean and we see that in the House here. I mean, it's just divisive. It's like, you liars, you're doing this. And you're accusing, almost accusing people of killing people. And it's just not right. You know, it's not right. And some people will take that seriously, and it's not. But it's just creating more and more division in our province, amongst our people, and that has to stop. That really has to stop. Too many people are like that. It's crazy. So like I say, it's easy to look back, but let's look forward here. Let's try that.

So we've made those tough decisions. So I want to get on to some more positive stuff, so a little more economical stuff. And over the past short while we've seen some announcements on unprecedented investments in this province, \$10 billion in mining, agriculture, and forestry. Now that kind of investment will mean good, long-term and high-paying jobs. It will mean more people will make Saskatchewan home. It means businesses will all grow. And all growth means more revenue for the province, which will mean more money for health care, education, and social services programs. So we already had a large budget line there but when we get more tax revenue coming in, we'll be able to spend that much more on those programs. And you know, what we always say, there's always more work to do, and we know that.

Right now in my city, we're starting to see strong economic growth. The construction of the new aquatic centre and arena project which received provincial and federal government funding has started. This project now continues to grow with spinoff hotels and restaurants being planned for this new large development. And that's a great news story thanks to this government. I encourage everyone, if they're travelling through Prince Albert, to drive by and check out the area. It used to be rolling hills and whatever, and now it's . . . They worked, they cleared all the land. They put in the water, sewer, all that stuff. There's going to be a nice RV [recreational vehicle] park in there beside the aquatic centres. Like I say, and then the hotels, restaurants.

So I drive by, or I was driving by pretty much every day just to see the work that was being done on it. It's really exciting. It's creating construction jobs for Prince Albert. It's going to take a lot of those people, put them to work. And it will be long term. And we've got lots of construction happening. With the arena project, with the hospital project starting, there's lots. And it's great for the economic feasibility of Prince Albert.

The Rose Garden Hospice, which I've spoke to before, and it's started construction as well this fall. The construction will continue through the winter with hopefully an opening sometime next fall, thanks to the generosity of the people of Prince Albert and area for the funding of the capital portion of the project, and the operational funding of this government of \$2.1 million annual. So that's all allowed the project to move forward.

Having a stand-alone hospice is something that is very much needed. It is very near and dear to my heart. As I've mentioned before, both my parents passed away when they lived in Prince George, BC in a hospice there. And the staff that work at a hospice — and I don't care which hospice it is — those staff are incredible people. They work there because they care. They're not working there because it's a job. They work there because they care about those people in their last days, and the empathy that they show and the feelings . . . I know so many of them and I've been involved and made . . .

You know, we all took a raise here, what was it, a year and a half ago? Whatever, they give us all a raise. And I calculated out what I thought that was and I gave the hospice \$10,000 because I thought it was the right thing to do. You know, I didn't need the money, didn't need the raise but it was an automatic raise. So I donated the 10,000. My wife and I donated the \$10,000 to the hospice there. And you know what? Every little bit makes a difference. But to see that come to a conclusion will be — holy smokes, I guess I'm running short on time — it'll be an awesome thing.

I'm going to go through some other stuff quickly because I've been rambling. I attended the other day the open house to Paper Excellence, which outlined their plans to restart the mill there, and they're saying up to 1,600 jobs. And they would like to be able to, by the end of 2023, have the place going again. So that's an aggressive timeline but I'm hoping that it's in there.

Actually I'd just bought the property about a week before they closed the mill where we built our Hyundai dealership, which we used to own; we don't own anymore. And then I thought, boy, I'm going to have a huge, big bowling alley here or something. But you know, it all persevered and we survived through that. And the city survived through that. But it will be great to have the mill open.

There's another company in Prince Albert. They've built an 80,000-square-foot building there. It's called Pivot Manufacturing. Now it was by the former owners of SkipTheDishes — wonderful people. They're talking this could turn into thousands of jobs over the next while. I mean it's great because you see a tree come in one end of the building and there comes a piece of furniture out the other end. This is about value-added products and not just cutting the tree down and making it into lumber. But it's about value-added, and a wonderful success story in the past, and this will be another success story in Prince Albert and for this province. So I'm pretty pumped about that, seeing that happen.

The OSB plant, I work with the people from One Sky and good people there. Seven hundred jobs, that's coming; that'll be here. They'll start construction on that in the spring so we just can't wait. We can't wait for that to happen. That's going to be more jobs.

Construction will start right away on the new and renewed Victoria Hospital. That's going to be wonderful as well. We're going to have people coming in to Prince Albert, moving into Prince Albert, all these construction jobs, all that that's going on. It'll be quite incredible.

Some of the other positive things that we've done here . . . I, you know, want to try to just quickly touch on a few things. The passing lanes north on the highway. Too many people have died on that highway. Lots of accidents. A good friend of mine was hit by an impaired driver on that highway and killed. Ben Darchuk was his name. A wonderful man, you know, left this world too early. But maybe passing lanes might have helped. Impaired driving is the worst part.

So we've got those on Highway 2 North. Now we've just reopened the passing lanes on Highway 3 West toward Shellbrook. And next year they're out and they'll be twinning the highway from the edge of Prince Albert to 8 kilometres out. And that'll really help, especially with all the forestry industry that's coming. And so we're really looking forward to that.

So let's see here. So yeah, as I've said, I want to just quickly touch on impaired driving, impaired driving numbers. For the second in three years, SGI and the team at SGI, which I used to be a part of, was awarded by MADD Canada [Mothers Against Drunk Driving] the Citizen of Distinction Award. And that's for their work on impaired driving, on reducing deaths and injuries from impaired driving. And I am so happy to say that in 2019, when the last numbers were out, we were down 60 per cent in fatalities over the 10-year average. So I'm so proud that I could play a role in that. I'm so proud of the team that's doing that.

Distracted driving numbers, they were skyrocketing. We instituted some new fines. Guess what? They've come down. There's still way too many. People are still driving distracted, but that's not good. Mandatory truck driver training. We now have the best, the best truck driver training program in all of Canada and one of the best in all of North America, so I'm proud of that. That's another thing that we did at SGI. Tow truck driver safety. They've now got the blue lights and the amber lights. I mean, you know, unfortunately somebody had to die for that to sort of come up but, you know, that was such a sad thing. But we're the first jurisdiction in all of North America to allow tow truck drivers that safety of having the blue and the amber lights, so I'm happy about that.

We took the photo radar fines. We took the photo radar fines and we actually started the traffic safety fund. And that money now, a lot of that money goes towards the . . . You know, small communities can apply to have funds from that.

And I'm not going to get finished here. I'm not going to get finished because I've got another thing I got to read and it's going to take about five minutes. So do we want to go overtime? No, I'll read it because it's really important. It's, you know, about a gentleman that's about 95 years old who has become a good friend of mine, so that I have to talk to about.

So I will start again tomorrow, as long as . . . I have to wait for him? Yes.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — It now being 10:30, this

Assembly will stand adjourned until tomorrow, 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30 p.m.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Fred Bradshaw
Minister of Highways
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Social Services

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Education

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Minister of Energy and Resources

Hon. Donna Harpauer
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Minister of Finance

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
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Minister of Immigration and Career Training
Minister Responsible for Innovation
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