



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

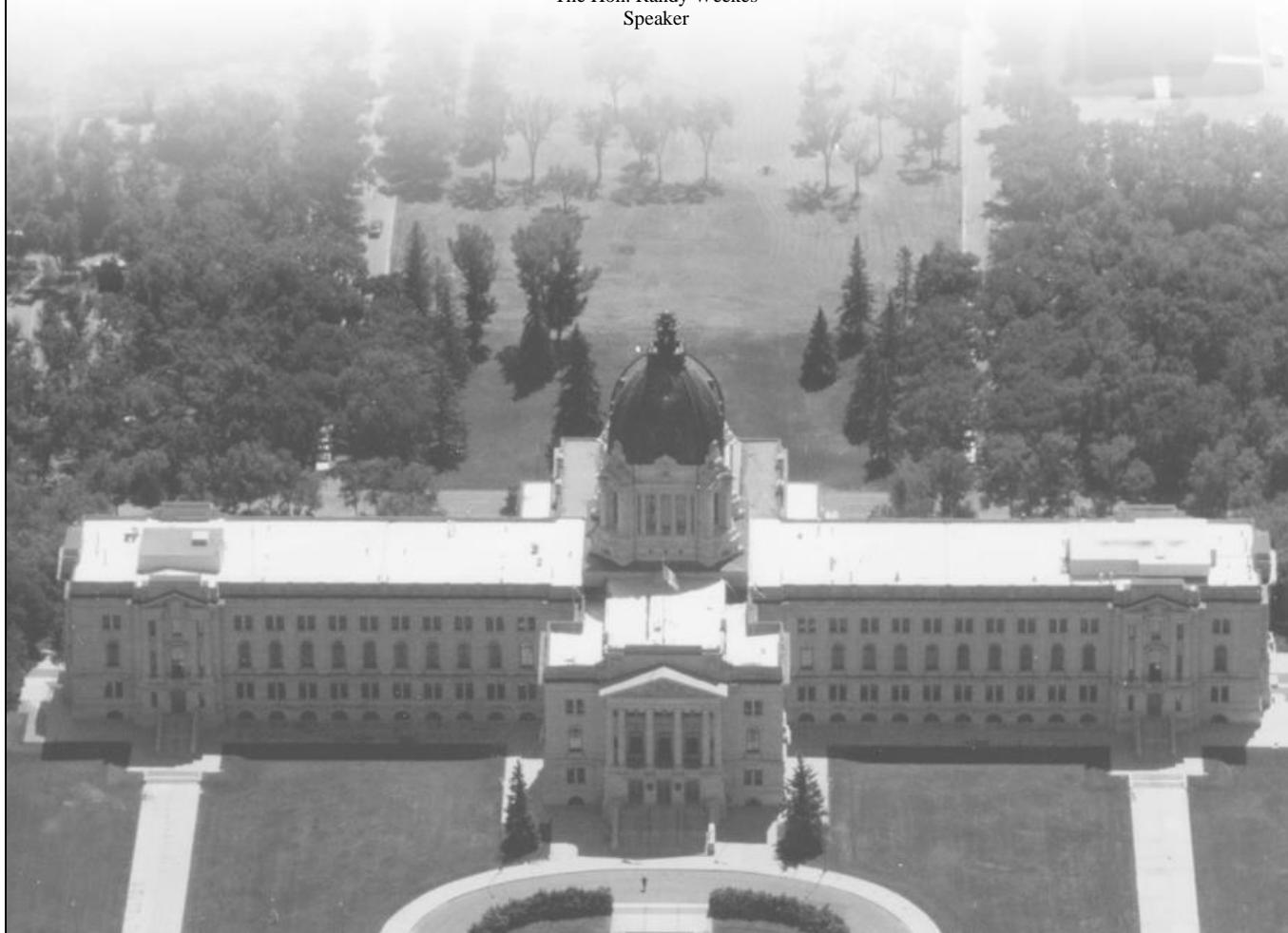
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th Session — 29th Legislature

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

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes

Premier — Hon. Scott Moe

Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

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Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)

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Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 14;
Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1

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Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — It being 7 o'clock, we resume debate now.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by the Hon. Mr. Morgan, seconded by Mr. B. McLeod, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Ms. Conway.]

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's not many better ways I could imagine spending my Monday evening than with a bunch of good friends together here in this Chamber talking about the province we love and the province that many of us have grown up and come to appreciate.

So tonight I wanted to start off by mentioning the changes in the Chamber and three new members. We lost three good members and we gained three more, and we're looking forward to working together with you three in the days ahead.

Just one personal mention for the member from Lumsden-Morse. Funny enough. I really loved the last member, and I'd heard of him with my ears. But this member I'd seen with my eyes.

And so when I was a boy, the member from Lumsden-Morse actually lived in the Goudy bunkhouse for a couple months when I was young. And I looked up to him then, and I still look up to him today. But back in the days when dad was developing Treflan, and the old 875 Versatile tractor pulling the diskers and Chem-Farm stainless steel tanks, there was the member from Lumsden-Morse, working night and day.

So he didn't spend much time in the bunkhouse, but we did see him from time to time when he was incorporating Treflan in a day when farmers said, we don't have enough subsoil moisture to incorporate. But when rapeseed hit the prices it did, all of a sudden every farmer knew that they could incorporate Treflan. And so those were my introductions to the new member from Lumsden-Morse, but I'm going to speak a little bit more about the bunkhouse later on.

But build and protect. And you know, my kids, my wife, they probably wish I didn't love to build quite so much, but I love to build. And over the last number of years as a pastor — the income's not the most lucrative — I absolutely loved the serving of the people, but some days I loved to go and work on building. And I built a number of houses and my wife got tired of moving, but my kids probably even more got tired of building.

And one of the things that I love to do is not just build but to

design. And so I'd be on AutoCAD and spend all sorts of time and show the kids their rooms, and they could make changes and make it their own, you know. And so the third house that we built, we currently live in today. And the kids were able to say yeah, this is what I'd like and that's what I'd like, and they got to pick their colours for their rooms. And just repainted my daughter's over again because she was a little younger and now the colour is no good, so go back to the plain colour we warned her that we should start off with.

But you know, the kids got to make that house their home. And so you know, I think when we look today at this document, there's a lot in here that we need to personalize and make this our document. Like these are our opportunities moving forward. And you know, in here are some discussions on how we can deal with the difficulties you face along the way.

If you've ever built a house, you know that it's enjoyable but there's a lot of difficulties and unforeseen hurdles that you need to get over along the way. And yes, the member from Weyburn, or sorry, from Estevan, from Estevan, I think she's gone through a little something like that over the last little bit.

But you know, one of the interesting things I never would have known if I wouldn't have got into housebuilding was when you dig that hole. How many people here, you're going through school and you think, oh my goodness, what am I learning this stuff for? I'm never going to use this. But I had my really-good-at-math son, Joel, and he was kind of my right-hand builder all the time, much to his chagrin. But he and I were staking out where we were going to dig, and you dig a little bit bigger than the hole of your basement.

And with a good friend of mine once, well he bought a house and I helped him. And we had to fix the basement because back in the day, you used to just dig the hole, build it, and then you dump the clay back in around the house and pack it down and everything was good, you went ahead. But that clay, as it freezes, thaws, freezes, thaws, busts the walls, then you got to replace the walls.

So anyways, you're staking this out, and I say, $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$. That's a big deal for my son. Because we needed to figure out how to make this thing square and how to dig it correctly because you want to surround your house with sand. And you know, sand is important, and I'm going to get to the reasons or how this ties in with some of the stuff in our Throne Speech in a minute.

But you put the sand around the house. And you know, water can be good and bad. If you're a farmer in western Saskatchewan, or maybe just about anywhere, there's a saying that I'd never heard until I was older either, is that "whisky's for drinking and water's for fighting."

And you know, water's a good and a bad thing. Like it's a great opportunity to have clean, clear water but too much of it is a problem. So in Saskatchewan, or in my part of the world we have clay soil and lots of topsoil on top. But clay is good. You can't dump it against your house so you fill it with sand, and strangely enough the water that can destroy your home, you bring it into your house. I never would've guessed.

So you dig this hole, oversize. You put your cement . . . And my favourite hero of life taught a parable, and he talked about building your house upon the rock. And we don't have much rock in Melfort. In St. Brieux they got lots of rock, but in Melfort not much rock and so what we have to do is lay down cement. So we dig the hole, get it to the base of the clay, you — $a^2 + b^2$ — build your square basement the way to follow your walls. And then you fill that inside of your house with crushed rock and the outside with sand.

And so you then punch holes through the foundation of your house so that you can bring the water from outside of your house into your house. Like that just makes no sense to me. And then you take that to the sump pit, and you pump that out away from your house.

And so the thing that we pump out from the house, it goes into the back alley. It runs past Dr. Yemi's house down into the Melfort Creek, goes all the way down to the Carrot River over by Fred's . . . over by the member from Carrot River's place, and off into the Saskatchewan River. Then we pipe that water back to Melfort. Then we treat that water. We pipe it in in pipes into our homes, and we drink it and bathe in it and all the rest.

But water can be good and bad. And when I'm looking at some of the things we have in this Throne Speech, some of it is the positive opportunities that we have. But some of it is also things, difficulties that we have to figure out how to deal with because it's just part of life.

Water is a part of life on the prairies. Like I don't know if you see the siding of different homes, but below that siding there's a little sheet of paper that I wouldn't have known either is so important to the house. That little sheet of paper, it's like a Gore-Tex, Tyvek, whatever you might call it. Ours has Co-op all over it. We bought all of our stuff from Co-op. And that little membrane is what keeps the water out of your home. If you've got stucco you think, well I got a . . . No, it soaks through there. Siding, it's even better. It kind of drains it away, but that keeps the water out as well.

But in this is one of the highlights that I want to talk about. It's something that's very difficult in this province, but we have to embrace it for what it is. And it's mental health and addictions.

Mental health and addictions is something that we're always going to have a difficulty with it. There's always going to be things in life that are challenges in our own homes, in our own communities. And when I see some of the opportunities that we have in this, it's great. But dealing with some of the challenges that we have is the plan moving forward. How are we going to deal with some of the unforeseen difficulties that we're going to face along the way?

And so this recovery-oriented system of care that I see in this document is one of the things that excites me most because I've been a part of many lives with mental health and addictions. And it is a very difficult thing that you have to realize is there. It's a part of life, and sometimes it's best to embrace it. You know, bring it right into your home and we can deal with it and we can recycle it and we can turn it into something good. And that's what I'm seeing here is a team approach to something that is destroying lives and families and communities. And I'm just

awfully excited to see that even the difficulties we've turned into opportunities here as a province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I was out the other day with our member from Humboldt, and we had a problem that we needed to deal with again. And so what did we do? We approached the Philippines and said, we need some labour. We have a labour shortage. And so the member from Humboldt and I actually spent some time with the consul general of the Philippines, and we were looking at the labour shortages we have in our province.

And I'm sitting at the table with our consul general and with our member from Humboldt, and we're talking about some of the things that health care has been trying to do — recruit, train, incentivize, and retain — and the recruiting process of trying to bring people from overseas and upgrade our capacity within the province to provide people for the workforce.

But as we were sitting there talking about different things I said, you know, it's amazing how it is so wonderful to be sitting here tonight with the consul general and talking about all the people who have moved from the Philippines to Saskatchewan, but now we're having a bit of a housing issue.

And so the Finance minister says, well did you see in our document one of the points there that can deal with some of the housing issues? And you never want to hesitate with the minister from Humboldt because she is always quick. And I hesitated for a moment. And she said, you didn't even read it, did you? I'd read it twice.

But interestingly enough, the bunkhouse that my fellow member grew up in — or sorry, spent some time in, spent some summers in; I grew up in and he spent some time in — we turned that into what one of these points is that the member from Humboldt had said we should probably do.

Great idea she had. I didn't even realize that we think the same, member from Humboldt, which may cause you some concern. But to help those facing rising rates, my government will introduce a secondary suite program. This program will help homeowners with the cost of building a rental suite within their primary residence. So that bunkhouse that my father had built when I was a boy, we just renovated that suite and turned that into a place where my mom lives today, second generation.

So I just want to give kudos to the people who are putting together the financial plans for the future of our province and say that yes, some of these issues that seems to be a problem, like housing . . . I think that in the area of LeRoy, St. Brieux, Englefeld, one of the biggest requests that I have from the mayors and the different leaders of those communities is housing. What are we going to do with housing?

So one of the other things that's in there — that I had read twice before I was accused of not having read it — is in order to promote new home construction and protecting new homeowners from rising costs, the provincial sales tax, PST rebate for the new home construction, which ended on April 1st of this year, will be reinstated and extended retroactive to April 1st. So another great opportunity to deal with a problem. We're embracing it. We're not ignoring it. We're saying this is the issue that we're facing, and how can we deal with it and turn it into a positive?

So currently my sister and brother-in-law have my mom — talk about building and protecting — living in their yard with them in the place that my dad, who passed away a few years ago, had built initially for them. And they renovated it into a place, beautiful place for my mom to live and all the grandchildren to show up. So I just want to say turning difficulties into opportunities is part of what this document talks about, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

One of the things I love to see here, smoking and vaping. We're going to try and deal with that. That's just a scourge. And I'm glad to see that we as a government are going to take that serious. The number of children in Saskatchewan that are vaping, that really can't get off of it, it is becoming a very difficult thing for some of these young kids who started vaping, to get off it. And our government is going to try and reduce the incidence of smoking and vaping, particularly among young people.

I love to see that the SDLC [Saskatchewan Distance Learning Corporation], a great opportunity that we all have no matter where you live in the province, K [kindergarten] to career, trying to provide kids to get them into the workforce, to be able to take some of the courses, working together with industry to build some of those courses that weren't there before.

And no matter where you live in this province, through the new Saskatchewan Distance Learning Corporation, you're going to be able to engage in ways that we never could before in this province. It's a vast province. It's a very diverse province. It's spread out. And yet turning that difficulty, embracing it, bringing it in and saying, how are we going to deal with this? We turned it into an opportunity, and really a great one at that. So a number of things that we see here in this document, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are great opportunities for the future of our province.

One of the nuts and bolts of building a home is the financing of it. And to see the number of dollars, the billions of dollars that have been paid down. You know, when I went to build this last house, Mr. Speaker, I was not planning on being an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and building at the same time. So one of the friends in my community came to me and said hey, Goudy, you can build houses. Why don't you sell me the one you got and just build another?

And it didn't take much to convince me of that. I was like, oh wow, I've got some plans already in the mix here. So I went to my wife and said hey, Tanny, do you think we could sell the house? So reluctantly she gave in, so we moved down the street. But then you had to find a place to rent, and it's quite a rigmarole actually.

[19:15]

But I thought for sure I was going to be able to build it all. And then my good friend Kevin Phillips passed away, after I had sold my house and bought a lot. And so that house was over budget. Wow, it was over budget, and it was not healthy over budget. I was in Regina back and forth, and I was supposed to be the general contractor, and I was going to be the guy building this place.

So yeah, a mortgage. It is a tough thing to deal with when it's a little bit bigger than you planned on. And our government, the

Minister of Finance has wisely said, we want to build in this province. We need to have healthy debt ratio. And as a province we were able to pay down over \$2 billion, \$2.5 billion — she's sitting right here — and that is exciting to be able to say. Financially, fiscally responsible, in a good place as far as the province moving forwards. We aren't leaving excessive debt to the future of our province. Unlike sometimes what we see from the federal government, we see a provincial government here who are very responsible and paying down that debt.

How many schools were we able to build over the last number of years? How many are going on this . . . We haven't had the . . . Oh my goodness, 17 on the go now. Okay, so building and protecting. What does PMR [preventative maintenance and renewal] stand for, anybody know?

An Hon. Member: — Preventative maintenance.

Mr. Goudy: — And renewal. So preventative maintenance and renewal. We're not only building schools. You need to, if you're going to protect . . . If we ever lived long enough, we'd have to re-shingle a house. As the Goudy family, we keep on putting . . . But you know, you have to every once in a while re-shingle things, or you know, repave, or do whatever you need to do along the way, re-side.

But PMR is turning schools that may have had a 50-year lifespan into 70 and 80 years. And you know, my kids are going to the same school that I went to when I was a boy. And you know, it's pretty exciting to see the kind of shape that those buildings are in because of the government's PMR funding. That was \$50 million, I believe, this year. So the amount of money that we're spending, the amount of schools that we're building, there's all sorts of good things, you know, moving forwards into the future.

Mr. Speaker, before my time runs out I just want to read a little bit from the very beginning of this document. And it says, "During this session, my government will continue to build and protect Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has enjoyed unprecedented growth in recent years. Saskatchewan has grown by more than 200,000 people since 2007."

And you know, funny enough — I didn't plan it that way; it wasn't that I had anything against the NDP [New Democratic Party] — but we moved to Saskatchewan in 2008. So you know, I grew up here. I moved away for a little bit, married my wife from Winnipeg, and then brought her back. And so she came back with me, and I'm so thankful.

We had seven of us at the time, then we had one more baby. She was born in Prince Albert, same place I was born. And now there's eight. But there's 200,000 other Saskatchewan citizens, besides just us, who moved to Saskatchewan since then.

And I want to say that I'm excited with all of those other newcomers to this province that we have unbelievable opportunities.

And I'm going to actually share a poem that I think I've shared once before. But I can't not do it now that it's "Build and Protect." So there was a guy. He used to speak in the US [United States]. Arnold Paulson was his name. He worked with ag. And

in that speech, just about every speech he ever gave, he gave the same poem.

And he said:

I watched them tearing a building down.
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a yo heave ho and a lusty yell,
They swung a beam, and the side wall fell.

So I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled,
Skilled as the men that you'd hire to build?"
And he laughed and he said, "Oh, no indeed!
Common labour is all I need.
My men can tear down in a day or two
What's taken builders years to do."

So I asked myself as I went my way,
Which of these two roles have I tried to play?
Am I a builder who takes great care,
Who measures life with a rule and a square?
Am I shaping my deeds to a well-made plan,
Patiently doing the best that I can?
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town
Content with the job of tearing down?

And so I would say as I look through this document, this isn't just a land of opportunity for the people who sit on this side of the House and the people that are in our constituencies. This is a document that talks about opportunities for all people of Saskatchewan, for those who grew up in Saskatchewan and those who are new to Saskatchewan.

So in the words of the document, the last four lines, I just want to close: "May divine providence continue to bless our province and guide this Assembly in all its deliberations. God bless Saskatchewan. God bless Canada. And God save the King."

And so I will be supporting the motion and not the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to have a little bit of a different tenor than the last member. Where is the vision in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker? Where is the passion or the drive or the inspiration to make Saskatchewan better for all Saskatchewan people? When I read through this government's recent Throne Speech, I am left uninspired.

What happened to the days when this government committed to making this the best place for someone with a disability to live? That's certainly not the case today, especially if you are someone who lives on the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Pardon me? I'm not sure why I'm offended, but I will continue, Mr. Speaker.

What about the vision to have the shortest wait times in health care in this province, Mr. Speaker? What about the vision to give our kids the best possible education, so Saskatchewan's future economy can thrive? Nope. Not in this speech, Mr. Speaker.

What about seniors, the folks who helped build this province and deserve our utmost respect? What's in this Throne Speech for improving their lives? There definitely isn't a vision to make this the safest place for the LGBTQ+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, plus] community, especially kids in this province after the emergency sitting this month.

There isn't any vision to protect our air, water, wetlands, native prairie, or wildlife. Mr. Speaker, to me this Throne Speech is a testament to the fact that this is a tired and out-of-touch government. It's just the status quo. Sure, they make mention of some of the crises affecting this province and the people in it, but most of the measures just aren't enough to solve the problems.

But here's the thing, Mr. Speaker. As you know, I'm brand new to this job. I was elected in a by-election back in August. I spent four months knocking on doors in Regina Walsh Acres talking to regular Saskatchewan people. And you know what people told us, Mr. Speaker? They're struggling. They are struggling to pay their bills, groceries, power, insurance, new school fees. They're struggling to get the health care they need for themselves or their loved ones.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one constituent told me that they had gotten abdominal surgery recently when I knocked on their door. They told me that they had some internal bleeding a few days following surgery and returned to the ER [emergency room] to get things checked out. They spent hours waiting and finally returned home without being seen. It's unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Another person told me, I'm old enough to remember when people used to complain about sitting in the ER waiting room for an hour. He went on to tell me that their grandchild had recently broken their wrist, and they had waited 10 hours in the ER room in Regina. Mr. Speaker, my colleague slipped on the ice in front of this building last week and waited an hour and 20 minutes for an ambulance and then was driven to the ER by someone else.

I've also heard about the crisis in our education system: students not getting the supports they need; parents struggling to fill the gaps for supports but not sure where to turn or unable to fork out the money to do so. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my maiden speech two weeks ago I spoke at length about the deterioration to the education system that I saw in my own classroom as a grade 6/7 teacher over the last eight years. I spoke about the fact that supports for new immigrant students have been cut. Programs for kids with disabilities have been cut. Fun, experiential learning programs have been cut, and so on, and so on.

There are so many crises facing Saskatchewan, and this government seems unwilling to find solutions that actually help. So let's dive into this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and take a closer look.

I'm going to start with affordability, the number one issue I heard on the doorstep. And the people that I talked to, as I've mentioned already, are struggling financially to make ends meet. From one constituent recently, they're asking the question, do I buy food for my kids, or do I buy the medical drugs my child needs for their health condition? That's the question that they're struggling with. This is a real issue for so many in this province, and what

does this Throne Speech provide?

A new Saskatchewan employment incentive program. This program will bolster the income of low-income working families with dependent children by providing financial incentives for individuals to obtain and maintain employment.

Mr. Speaker, what does that even mean? What will this program actually do? I don't know, and I guess Saskatchewan families will have to wait and see. But they're struggling today, now, and they need help today.

We know that if you have enough money to buy a house, you can save some money. And that's cool for those people. What about if you're just struggling to pay your existing mortgage? It would appear the government thinks you can spend some more money to make a secondary suite if you're struggling financially. Sure again if you have the money that's great; it will help with the housing shortage.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'm really struggling to see here, and I know many others in my constituency are struggling to see how their life is going to be easier because of this Throne Speech. This is not enough help for people, not when we're experiencing dramatic increasing food bank use, not when we're experiencing worsening homelessness, not when more and more people's houses are in arrears.

The government has announced a Saskatchewan job action plan, and I want to give them credit for that. They have finally addressed the fact that we need one. Saskatchewan New Democrats have been calling for a jobs plan for two years. This is a government who has the worst job growth in the country during this Premier's time in power. This is the government who shouts the no-NDP plan.

Well I'm just thankful that the government has realized that they haven't had a job plan for years, but they're going to start thinking about one now. But I'm not holding my breath, Mr. Speaker.

Now while we're talking jobs, I want to touch on the economy and specifically one of the numbers the government used to talk about economic growth. From their Throne Speech, and I quote, "Saskatchewan's economy expanded by 5.7 per cent last year, leading all other provinces in Canada." That sounds like a pretty good number, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I went looking to see, you know, verify, because it doesn't seem to quite match what we're seeing in this province.

And I stumbled across a website called Statistics Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker. From the Statistics Canada website, I found this quote on their website: "Following three straight years of economic contraction, Saskatchewan's economy grew at the fastest pace nationally, rising 5.7 per cent from one year earlier."

Okay. It goes on to say, "Despite the year-over-year increase, Saskatchewan was one of two provinces where economic activity remained below pre-pandemic levels." Those extra lines sure change the tenor of that 5.7 growth statement, but maybe they got edited out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for time. I don't know.

I was pleased to hear, Mr. Speaker, from the Throne Speech that:

Over the past five years, First Nations and Métis employment in Saskatchewan is up 28 per cent and 92 per cent of Indigenous graduates of Saskatchewan Polytechnic have employment upon graduation.

And that is great news, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm happy to hear that, but there is a caveat. I'm wondering about high school graduation rates for Indigenous students.

And I want to read a clip from a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] article from June 7th of 2023, so just a few months ago.

[19:30]

This is the title of the article: "Saskatchewan government should do more to support Indigenous students as grad rates remain stagnant: the auditor."

So here's a quote from the article:

Graduation rates [and we're talking high school] were stagnant from 2018 to 2021, with 44.7 per cent of Indigenous students graduating within three years of beginning grade 10, compared to 88.7 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

The rate is less than a 5 per cent increase from the 40.1 per cent reported in 2015. At that time, former premier and Sask Party leader Brad Wall said the government would prioritize improving graduation rates of Indigenous students.

So again I ask, what happened? Where is the vision or the drive to solve this problem? Indigenous kids in Saskatchewan need more support. They deserve better. Why is there nothing here to address that?

How about the crisis in our education system? What in this Throne Speech is there to help students, teachers, parents, school staff? I see the government patting themselves on the back for building some schools. And that's great to see. That's great to see. That's great to see, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But no high school in White City or Emerald Park yet. The government has seen the petition with 700 signatures asking for a high school in that community, but they're still waiting, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But teachers, parents, students continue to call on this government to address ballooning class size, underfunded classrooms, violence in classrooms, and a number of other issues. There is nothing in this Throne Speech to fix that. You can have beautiful buildings, but you need teachers and supports in schools so students thrive.

And I think these numbers just speak for themselves when it comes to the state of education in our province. Comparing the 2021-2022 to 2022-2023 year, there are 3,840 new students in the provincial system and literally 66.1 fewer teachers in the provincial system in Saskatchewan schools. We talked about this at length in the emergency sitting. There's one counsellor to 3,000 students. There are not ample mental health supports for students in this province.

And teachers just passed a sanctions vote with 95 per cent support because they are done with this government's plan to keep underfunding students' education. If everything was working so great in Saskatchewan schools, I don't think teachers would be in 95 per cent support of job action.

Now I will give the government a thumbs-up, because they want us to like some things in their Throne Speech. And I will give them a thumbs-up for expanding the list of cancers in the presumptive coverage for firefighters. They deserve it for the work that they do to keep this province safe. And I do want to say thank you to the firefighters across this province for everything that they do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as Environment critic, I want to touch on a few pieces that are relevant to my portfolio. The first one is of course the government's plan to attend the COP28 [Conference of Parties 28] meetings in Saudi Arabia in November this year.

I'm curious which line the Premier will start his speech with. Will it be, when it comes to the fact that Saskatchewan has the highest greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, I don't care? Or will it be, the Saskatchewan government is proud of its record on fighting climate change by killing the solar industry in one pen stroke and increasing renewable energy production in this province by a whopping 6 per cent in 16 years?

Or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will he start his speech at COP with this line: this government knows that wetlands are amazing absorbers of carbon dioxide. That's why the Saskatchewan Party government is bringing in a wetland drainage policy that will allow 70 per cent of all wetlands to be drained in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we know that climate change is real, and it is serious. And it is important for Saskatchewan to do what it can in a thoughtful and deliberate way to reduce emissions but also build a resilience across our province in a warming climate. But we need a real plan and a real vision of where we are going.

There is so much opportunity to be found in Saskatchewan around this topic. Saskatchewan has the best solar capacity in Canada. We have some of the best wind capacity. We have opportunities to be leaders on energy efficiency in the prairies. And I would urge the government to actually put forward a plan that addresses climate change, reducing emissions, and helps industry and people in Saskatchewan.

Now you know what is absolutely not in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker? Any protection for our natural environment here in Saskatchewan. Nor is there any mention of a wetland policy.

And this one's interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On September 25th, 2023, just over a month ago, a group of concerned citizens held a press conference on the steps of this legislature to call on the Premier of the province to acknowledge the fact that we are the only province in Canada who doesn't have a wetland policy. Even Alberta has one, and it's a good one at that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this group included ranchers, cabin owners, farmers, conservationists, and regular folks. They brought 2,200 letters that they had collected this summer calling on the government to develop a wetland policy, not an agricultural drainage policy. They haven't received a response back yet from

anyone in the government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

2,200 letters. Gosh, we had an emergency sitting for two weeks to plow through a pronoun bill that would affect less than 1 per cent of the students across this province because of 18 letters, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm curious, I'm curious how much worse our water quality has to get across this province before this government wakes up and takes notice. This isn't just a concern about the health of these ecosystems. Businesses will be forced to spend more money to filter and clean water before they can use it. Our cities, towns, and villages will need to spend more money on filtering water before people can drink it.

We will see more extreme weather events, including significant rainfall. And the loss of wetlands will mean more flooding damage. As we know, wetlands help to hold water on the landscape. This will mean municipalities will have to spend more on repairs, more money on insurance. This neglect of our wetlands and active destruction of these places will negatively impact our economy, not improve it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

How much more degraded do the Qu'Appelle lakes need to get? How frequent do the toxic blue-green algae blooms need to happen before this government wakes up?

Now while we're talking . . . I've only got a couple minutes here, but I want to talk about Cumberland House and the state of emergency that that community has declared. And it ties into the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, because the government's growth plan has a target of 8,500 new acres of land being irrigated each year going forward. And the community of Cumberland House has declared a state of emergency because they don't have enough water for the winter.

The amount of water coming down the Saskatchewan River into the Cumberland delta is not enough because of the water being held in the Tobin Lake reservoir above the E.B. Campbell dam. Now the Water Security Agency says they are retaining all the water because of the drought and the reservoir levels are of concern.

But on the other side of the dam, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the delta is dying. The largest inland delta in the world is drying up. This is a prime hunting location for many people including those visiting Saskatchewan. It's an important migratory stopover for birds, millions of birds, and it's a vital ecosystem for the people that live there who rely on that for their culture, their food, and their water. Will the government not help this community to address the very acute crisis they are facing?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm running out of time here. I know the members opposite are upset that I can't keep talking, but I'd like to end . . . Don't flatter myself, they say. I'm not flattering.

I'm hopeful. I'm hopeful in this province still, Mr. Deputy Speaker, likely not because of the ways that the members opposite think. But I'm hopeful because the members on this side of the Assembly are listening to the people of Saskatchewan. And we are hearing the real issues that they feel we need to be tackling in this legislature, not some made-up problem like what a minority of a minority of kids call each other on the playground.

I'm hopeful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we are ready to work with the people of this province to find Saskatchewan solutions for the very real challenges that they are facing. And I am hopeful that tomorrow can be better. But if this Throne Speech is any indication, it won't be better under this tired and out-of-touch government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for all of the reasons I have talked about today, I will be supporting the amendment my colleague the member for Regina Elphinstone has put forward, and I will not be supporting the government's Throne Speech. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. It's indeed an honour for me to join in the debate this evening on this, I believe it's my 17th Throne Speech since I began my political career back in 2007 and about my 17th reply. So it truly is an honour. And it'll be my last one, the last time I'll respond to the Throne Speech. I'm not running again in the next provincial election. It has been a total honour serving with this great group of people that are currently in the House and those that have gone before and are no longer here. Of course . . .

An Hon. Member: — You have 19 minutes left.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Except the member from Kindersley is in question.

I'm not going to go into too much detail on a lot of the thank yous, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, but of course we've heard over and over again we can't serve here without our families. A great supportive family — my wife, Leone; my daughters, Katelin, Rayanne; and their husbands, Mark and Austin. The grandkids, Raya, Malaya, Wynnslet, Otto, and Crew are just a blessing, and I'm looking forward to spending maybe a little bit more time with them once my role here is completed when the next election comes.

You know, the members, I mentioned some that have gone before. A lot have referred to our friend, our member, Derek Meyers, that we lost, former member for Walsh Acres. In my time here, in 17 years I think I've lost, I think, half a dozen different members. And you know, all of them just real blessings, really good mentors and influences on my life. I've drawn something from each and every one of them. They're all truly missed, but I'm sure appreciative of the chance to serve with them and become their friend.

Two great premiers I've had the opportunity to serve with, of course Premier Brad Wall previously, who remains to be a heck of a good friend and somebody I call on from time to time for input and just to talk with. I think later on in this session I'm going to get a chance to recognize something that him and a group of his friends did through Leone and I, through Close Cuts, and in conjunction with another partnership in the province, but I'll leave that for another day to talk about that.

I anticipate I will be giving another speech here, maybe the budget reply or a closing speech before my time here is over, God willing. So I'm not going to go into too many of those details

other than, you know, this is a decision I made back in 2004. When I first sought the nomination for the constituency of Yorkton, Clay Serby, deputy premier, former NDP deputy premier had the seat. It was almost, you know, unheard of that the NDP would be unseated out of Yorkton.

[19:45]

But you know, we had a really good run. We had a lot of good support. People were ready for change, and you know, even a few of Clay's strong supporters confided in me that after four terms they were kind of ready for Clay to move on. And that's why I decided at that point to set myself a limit. Should I be lucky enough to win more than one election in Yorkton, which seemed kind of insurmountable at the time, four was my limit.

Back in '16-17, many of my friends and others would know that I went through a bout of colorectal cancer. At that time my wife really questioned my sanity running again in 2020, but I really wanted to focus on a few key things around our constituency: some road improvements, infrastructure, some other things, including our Yorkton hospital that wasn't quite yet in the planning stages.

Now with it in the planning stages and assurances that it's going ahead after Weyburn, at some point — Prince Albert, Weyburn, and then Yorkton — I'm confident that I may not be there for the ribbon cutting, but maybe I'll get a sod-turning before I leave my seat. So we'll see how that goes, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees.

The theme of the Throne Speech, "Build and Protect," is something that really speaks to me and the time I've spent serving in this province. A couple of years previously, as a nominated candidate, I spent a lot of time — running up to that 2007 election and then since — and I looked at the history that this government has had, this Sask Party government, the colleagues that I serve with and again, those that went before, what we were able to build, you know, with the support, with the backing of the people of this province with their confidence. And you know, hopefully within the course of my time here, I'll be able to talk about some of those in detail.

But not only infrastructure but programs, supports. I know one of our colleagues previously mentioned the seniors' income plan. That's just one example, Mr. Chair, of something that had been untouched under the NDP for many, many years, I think 90 bucks a month. Now we've quadrupled that over the last number of years, and it gets the attention every year.

A bunch of other different programs. We heard about SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] and some of the other social assistance programs that have been increased and implemented over the years to support the most vulnerable in our province.

We know that in the past, some of the members opposite when they were in government, and even when we formed government and had a goal of growing our province by 10 per cent, they said it was farcical. We've far surpassed that now. We've grown the province by over 200,000 people, partly due to our own people staying here but also with the great immigrant population that has been coming.

Our economy continues to grow. We've seen more and more investment in our province year over year. We see from just over a year ago, 13,700 more jobs, more people that are working here than a year ago.

Our economy growth has been something that's record. Of course, we've heard many members talk about, you know, the fastest growth not only in population but economically, than over the last 100 years.

You know, it's something Premier Wall used to talk about. Growth in itself isn't the goal, but growth for the benefit of the people of the province is what we focus on.

And again, when we look at the infrastructure improvements, the growth there. We heard other members talk about the 60 schools that have been built, 17 in the works. A number of hospitals that I was personally involved with. You know, it was really an honour for myself, Mr. Chair, in my time I spent in Rural and Remote Health from 2014 to '19, I had the opportunity to open the majority of the 14 or 15 long-term care and integrated facilities that we built. I was able to be there for the sod-turning to the opening of the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, our mental health facility.

One of the things I count as probably one of my proudest or most heartwarming moments was being able to be there . . . The first duty I did as the Rural Health minister was do the sod-turning or sand turning with a lot of young children at the children's hospital in Saskatoon. And one of the final things I did, just after I transitioned out of Health into Highways, was attend for the ribbon cutting.

And you know, I still think of that day when we did the sod-turning on that facility. I looked up at peds 3000 which is where we spent the better part of three years with our youngest son, Brayden, going through his cancer treatment. And you know, it really choked me up that, who would have thought 13, 14, 15 years later I'd be there as a minister of the government starting a hospital and ultimately opening a hospital that's going to serve the kids of this province very much like the ones that are going through the challenges like Brayden did. You know, one of my proudest moments.

But you know, there's so many of those events over the last 17 years I can point to. And again, I'll save some of those for one of my final speeches in this House, but just an amazing amount of, again, integrated facilities, mental health facilities. I was able to open the F.H. Wigmore Hospital in Moose Jaw, you know, primary health clinics and different facilities around the province.

I was able to be part of, you know, training and recruiting more nurses for the province. You know, I think we went up by 4,000 nurses over the last number of years; doctors, well over 1,000. We increased training opportunities for nurses and physicians in this province. And now we're expanding that even further. In fact in Yorkton, we just opened up the program with the Suncrest College, not only as it's itemized in this Throne Speech with the medical lab technologists and some of those other professionals that we are now training and expanding and hiring in this province. But medical lab assistants, we have never trained them in the province. Now we're training them in Yorkton, Suncrest

College to employ them in our areas.

So, Mr. Chair, just an amazing amount of things again. Not just because of the government. It's because of the support of the people in this province implementing what they wanted to see done and carrying through with those wishes, listening to them and implementing what we could do.

You know, we look at the health projects, all the rest. But my time in Highways was just an amazing time. I served just over a year, a year and half. I think there was five different provincial parks we were able to pave, roads leading to provincial parks. One of the things I did with my COVID initiatives was approve the passing lanes on Highway 16, so now we have twinning and then passing lanes all the way from Saskatoon through Yorkton to the Manitoba border. Always hearing great reports on a lot of those different initiatives as well.

You know, the one challenge, I think some of us were talking about it earlier, we were talking about 76 more schools that will have been built once this next tranche is over with. And you know, 20 000 kilometres of roadways and multiple hospitals and long-term care facilities and clinics and urban urgent care centres and so many different initiatives, Mr. Chair, it's become normalized.

I think a lot of people don't realize . . . You know, why I decided to get into government, why I wanted to run was because of what I experienced up in the '90s and up to 2007 was a steady rate of decline, the wee province mentality. And we needed a change of attitude, but we also needed a change in leadership. And although, I mean, the members opposite are open to criticize and that's their job, Mr. Speaker, I don't think anybody can deny how far this province has actually come.

And as my friend the member for Melfort pointed out, absolutely there's challenges. But I often said, even back in '07 when I was running, I'd way rather deal with the challenges of growth than the hardship of decline which we experienced for many, many years when I was running my business and starting my family.

You know, numerous things that have been touched on in this Throne Speech. The graduate retention program is something that I know this government is very proud of putting into place and implementing. And you look at the dividends it's played in this province over the last, you know, number of years. How many young people have stayed here, taken advantage of that program, and continued to work here and contribute to our province but also grow their families.

You know, in my time in Health we worked on, I touched on, nurses, doctors, and other medical professionals that we decided we were training and trying to train them in more rural areas. In my time we started, I think, the first course of nurses being trained up in Ile-a-la-Crosse was a dozen. We were training nurses in Yorkton, so spreading those courses around. Those people experiencing those different career choices in rural areas, now a lot of them deciding to stay there, including physicians.

I remember back in my time in there we started training physicians. You could go through your whole course in Prince Albert, exposing them to the northern way of life, northern medicine, and continue to work there.

It pointed out in this Throne Speech, the health human resources action plan: train, retain, recruit, and incentivize health care workers. And although we're still challenged and we're still, you know, short in some areas, I'm really encouraged by how many people are taking advantage of that program, how many are looking at Saskatchewan as a career choice and over the next number of years will be working here to support health care in our province.

You know, Mr. Chair, looking through the Throne Speech it talks about — I won't go into too many details; I know my colleagues will — but setting an environment for investment. We see record investment, billions and billions of dollars of record investment coming to our province, including in the agri-food business.

You know, a lot of our 2030 growth plan initiatives and targets have already been met or ahead of schedule, and it's just exciting to see that Saskatchewan be an export-based province. We're a small province. We always punch way above our weight, exporting around the world.

And you know, the need for those trade offices that we do get criticized for from time to time, but we have to, as has been pointed out, we have to as a sub-national government go directly to the national governments for export-based business support to sell our wares around the world because our federal government just does not, is not really helpful in a lot of different areas when it comes to Saskatchewan's economy.

And those trade offices in Vietnam, United Kingdom, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Germany, India, Japan, China, some of our biggest trading partners, we're going to continue to work with them to make sure that our businesses and our export businesses are viable in the province. You know, continue to sustain those national relationships around the world and make sure that our province does well, and we can benefit the people of our province because of those relationships.

You know, so many don't really realize. We talk about potash and gold and uranium and things like that from time to time, but so many around the world recognize not Canada but Saskatchewan for what is in our future, what's just over the horizon, whether it's other resources like rare earths, helium, hydrogen, lithium, and others, Mr. Chair, that are really going to benefit this province not only for the year, couple of years, or 10 years in the future. But it's going to be for decades, decades in the future, Mr. Chair.

So I'm going to kind of go through a lot of this stuff fairly quickly. There's a few local things I want to talk about when it comes to Yorkton and my constituency, when it comes to some of the growth, some of the building, some of the benefits to our area. You know, we've talked about a stronger province, stronger communities, a stronger economy, and when we look at some of the things that have been spoken about in detail already, whether it's the housing programs or, you know, supports for addictions and mental health.

SIGN, Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours is a great organization in Yorkton, a partner with our health agency as well that delivers a lot of these programs on the local level. And we couldn't do a lot of what we can do without the support of our community-based organizations.

Different initiatives in Yorkton when it comes to homelessness. So we just opened Bruno's Place not too long ago. It actually has mental health and addictions supports along with the homeless part of their business, Mr. Chair. And they're doing just great work. I talked about the Pattison Children's Hospital and some of the things that I've been involved with. And you know, when it comes to the local level — that's on the provincial level — on the local level I talked about like our Yorkton hospital. It's in the planning stages. So I'm looking forward to that project moving ahead, and I'll be as involved in that as I can even once I'm out of office. Happy to take part in that.

As well as when we look at education infrastructure, our own Yorkton Regional High School, they didn't want a new high school. They wanted a renovation on the existing. It's a trade school. It's got a lot of the nice shops and stuff, and they knew if it was replaced they may lose some of what they had. Twenty-million-dollar renovation that's pretty much complete now, and it's just becoming a great facility that's going to serve our community for many, many decades to come.

Our own Parkland College, now Suncrest College — in partnership with Cumberland; now the two of them known as Suncrest — are just creating some really good programs. I talked about the medical lab assistant course.

We just did a graduation in Melville here on Friday for the first new platoon, platoon 19 firefighters. You know, the Throne Speech touches on some of the other supports that we're putting in place, cancer recognition for firefighters and things like that to make sure that we have a strong firefighter force in the province. But to be able to be training these men and women in the province — not only in the province but in Melville, right adjacent to Yorkton — is something that we're very proud of.

So, Mr. Chair, you know, there's not a whole lot more I'm going to touch on here. I'm going to allow the floor to be taken up by some of my colleagues. I just wanted to make sure I had the opportunity to weigh in one last time on one last Throne Speech and just acknowledge again how much of an honour it's been for me to serve the people of my community and my province, to serve with this group of men and women — and of course the premiers, the two best premiers that I can remember in history — has really been a benefit and a pleasure.

You know, one last thing I just want to touch on really quickly, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, that I haven't heard talked about, and I know we talked about, one of our other members talked about, the member for Melfort talked about the two-and-a-half-billion-dollar debt paydown. The general debt is down from when we took over. And you know, many will point out about, oh this increase in debt and how much more debt. Well, Mr. Chair, if you look at that chart, when did that happen? That happened when . . . and was encouraged by the NDP at the time, to go to summary financial statements.

The general financial statements, like a chequebook, the summaries include all of the third-party debt, the Crown corporation debt. And what have the Crown corporations been doing? SaskTel's been investing in fibre and they've been investing in cell service and technology.

SaskPower's been expanding by a billion dollars a year, I believe. All business debt, funded debt, through the business course of their operations. So, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, we have to remember that, that we're not comparing apples to apples. The general debt is down. The business debt of the province is up, but it's because of the investment back into the province, Mr. Speaker.

So I will support the Throne Speech. Obviously I won't be supporting the opposition's amendment. Thank you again for the time. God bless this province. And I'm looking forward to hearing from the rest of my colleagues.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. It's wonderful to be on my feet this evening. You know, such good presentations, so good remarks from my friend from Yorkton explaining everything, and also from my colleague from Melfort.

I just want to start tonight by giving a quick shout-out to my family who I know aren't watching tonight because there is things like hockey and cheerleading on. So I know that they're not tuning in. But I do want to say thank you to my family like we all do. We can't be here without their support and their love. And so to my wife, Angela; my son, Asher, who is going to be graduating in June by the way; and my daughter, Kolbie, you know, thank you for being there for me and thanks for the ear when I need it.

Somebody else I just want to recognize really quick before I kind of dive into my remarks is my constituency assistant, Whitney Friesen. Whitney is going to be celebrating 30 years as a constituency assistant in the province of Saskatchewan next month. And I think that is an incredible achievement, and it speaks volumes to the commitment that that gentleman has for the people of Saskatchewan. So to Whitney, thank you so much for all that you do.

And of course, I can't not say thank you to my constituents, the people that put their trust in me and all of my other colleagues that are here tonight to be here to represent them. So we've had great conversations. We have phone calls, emails. We stop in the grocery store, the hockey rink, anywhere in the community. And I really do appreciate the support from the constituents.

So earlier this summer I spent quite a bit of time door knocking. Three months or so I knocked on hundreds of doors — 3, 4, 500 doors. Had some great conversations. And when I was out, a few of those door knocks do relate directly to this Throne Speech, the theme "Build and Protect."

One of those door knocks I had was with a gentleman by the name of Milt Lepp. Milt has a seed cleaning company, just off of Highway 12, just north of Martensville. Milt is . . . I can't remember the exact age, but I believe he's 85 now or 84. He took me on a tour of his entire operation, and it's grain bin after grain bin after grain bin. This guy started from scratch, back probably 50 years ago or more.

He has his own drinking water system on the farm, aerated ponds,

filtering systems, and everything. I have never seen somebody so proud of what they have built. And it really hit home that he has built all this, and he reinvests into that operation regularly to protect it. He wants it to be there for the next generation. So that one really stuck with me, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees.

So when we look at things in the Throne Speech like the PST rebate of 42 per cent on all new home construction, and the secondary suite plan that we've rolled out, I look at how important those things are in the communities of Warman, Martensville, Osler, and the surrounding area. And I'm just going to read a quick letter, email that I received into the record because it's important, and I think it really describes how important this is. It's from Angela Steiert, and Angela is one of my guests on Throne Speech day. She's the executive director of the Prairie Sky Chamber of Commerce. She was here with Melissa Stevenson, who is the Chair. So I'm just going to read this email really quick into the record:

The Prairie Sky Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to assisting its members in the dynamic communities of Warman, Martensville, and the surrounding areas — all of which are among the fastest growing cities in Canada. As our province, and our region in particular, experiences remarkable growth, we are committed to witnessing the development of the central infrastructure that will catalyze our regional economies.

The continuation of the provincial sales tax rebate for new home construction remains a pivotal tool in fostering the expansion these flourishing cities require. With the economic growth also comes employment opportunities and the need for housing to accommodate those workers. We are happy to also see that both are a priority for this government through the Sask jobs plan and the secondary suite program.

So when we talk about growth, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, we're not talking growth just for the sake of growth so we can roll out new numbers every month and everything is fine. We're doing it for our kids. We're doing it for our grandkids. We're doing it for our nieces and nephews. We're doing it for our neighbours. We're doing it for the people of Saskatchewan and the newcomers to our province.

We have better schools. We have better healthcare facilities. We have better infrastructure. And it's important to remember that none of that happened when the NDP were in power. We have the Jim Pattison's Children's Hospital. We have the Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford, new hospital in Moose Jaw, new ones coming online in the coming years in Prince Albert, Weyburn, and Yorkton. And in my constituency we've got two new schools in Martensville, the École Holy Mary and Lake Vista Public School; one newly renovated and expanded high school in Martensville; three new schools in Warman, middle-years school Traditions and Holy Trinity.

This summer we added three nurse practitioners in the city of Warman. There's three more nurse practitioners going to be starting work in Martensville in the very near future. We've had calls and emails that have recognized this very worthwhile initiative, and the people are thankful to our previous Health minister because he listened and he responded. And that's something we will continue to do for the people of Saskatchewan

tomorrow, next week, and all the days forward.

In Martensville, if you're driving up Highway 12 you'll see this big monster of a building on the west side of the highway. It's a \$46 million recreational facility, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. That was funded partially through ICIP [Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program], so a federal-provincial-municipal fund cost-sharing agreement. In Warman, I was lucky enough last week to be able to cut the ribbon. And it's not the most glamorous project, but it was a lagoon expansion. This lagoon expansion, okay, through the ICIP program, will allow the city of Warman to grow to 40,000 people. It's a terrific investment, and it shows the confidence that the city of Warman has in this government to continue to grow the economy and grow the population.

We have not one, but two new interchanges on highway 11 and 12 as well as the realigned Highway 305 that runs between Martensville and Warman — much safer road, I might add. And there's just so much going on, whether it's through ICIP; municipal economic enhancement program or MEEP; or through municipal revenue sharing, which we all know is tied to the PST. And the stronger the economy is, the better the revenue sharing is for our municipalities.

There's so much positivity everywhere, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, except over there. There isn't, according to the member from Nutana, anything, anything to be proud of. The economy is apparently a dumpster fire, according to a member over there. Well tell that to the roofing contractors, the farmers, the salon owners, the dentists, the restaurant owners. Business people are telling me that things are good. Things are very good. In fact, you know, the Conference Board of Canada is predicting Saskatchewan's economy is going to lead the country again in 2024. We're leading it in 2023, and we're going to continue that in 2024.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, a member opposite said, Mr. Speaker, we've heard over and over from a lot of residents, we can't find a job in Saskatchewan. To that, I'm going to remind the members opposite that SaskJobs, as of today, has over 16,000 jobs posted — 7,200 in the sales sector, 3,400 in trades, construction, and transport. There's over 4,100 jobs available here in Regina and over 4,300 in Saskatoon.

The population is growing at the fastest rate in over a century: 1.22 million people and growing. Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, when my wife and I moved to Warman in 2006 the population was 4,700 people. Today the population of Warman is estimated at 13,700. That's a growth of nearly 200 per cent. That's an average of 11 per cent per year, one of the fastest growing communities in all of Canada. Martensville, which is 3 kilometres away, has recorded similar growth numbers: 4,900 people in 2006, today 11,300. That's 130 per cent growth or seven and a half per cent per year.

So, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, with that growth that we've been experiencing since we formed government in 2007, it's important to protect the investments made by the people that are here. And it's even more important to protect our residents, especially from the harmful policies that are emanating from Justin and Jagmeet in Ottawa.

Our government has been very clear. We will work with the federal government where it's a benefit to the residents of Saskatchewan — \$10-a-day daycare, ag programs, things like that. But when it comes to things like carbon tax, clean fuel standard, net zero power generation by 2030, that's not on the table.

We're also committed to protecting our residents with additional funding and tools for law enforcement. We're building a stronger and more resilient economy. We're building stronger communities, regardless of where those towns, villages, and RMs [rural municipality] are in the province.

So back in the spring I was chairing a Human Services Committee meeting. The member from Saskatoon University decided to bring the graduate retention program to the floor and asked questions. The member from Saskatoon University was advocating that this government get rid of the graduate retention program. True story. Even though 81,000 post-secondary graduates who have stayed in Saskatchewan, those post-secondary graduates have received \$739 million through that graduate retention program. It's a terrible idea. Our government, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, is committed to doing more. We're committed to protect what has been built, not only protecting what has been built in the past, but we're going to protect what is going to be built tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, and for generations to come.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, I will not be supporting the amendment put forward by the opposition, but I will be supporting the motion made by my friend from Saskatoon Southeast and seconded by the member from Lumsden-Morse. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. It's a great honour to be standing here tonight to talk about the Throne Speech and tell the story about growth and all the great things that are happening in Saskatchewan — our population, our economy, infrastructure. We'll continue to grow and protect Saskatchewan.

I'd like to thank our Premier for his persistence and his leadership through this year. It's a great honour to have a Premier that truly cares about our people of the province and looks out for the best in Saskatchewan.

Thank you to my 46 MLAs, colleagues, for not only their hard work and commitment to themselves, but truly have become some of my best friends. And I'm just so happy to be with them today. And I would say that our caucus is one of the strongest caucuses in Canada.

Three to one. Three to one, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, that is positive speeches towards negative speeches. Wow, the speech from the MLA from Indian Head-Milestone. Unbelievable. He talks about how we're renewing and the negative, no-plan NDP. It was awesome. The MLA from Melfort, he gave me a lesson on house building I guess. I guess. And I'm trying to figure out how his water flows in our province, and he gave me a real-life lesson.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my CA [constituency assistant], Jessica Kwas, for all her hard work and commitment that she continues to work and take care of me and the Canora-Pelly constituency.

[20:15]

Also I'd like to welcome Lizemari Menton to our office as well. She's just starting. She's going to do some casual work for us. And she's got a little family of three moving in from South Africa, and I think she'll fit in really well in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also go through the family thing. I'd like to thank my wife, Lorri, who is a retired nurse practitioner and has been enjoying life — well-deserved retirement, travelling, spending time with our children and grandchildren. And also, I guess, in the fall time I'll be looking at spending more time with her, and I'm not sure if she's too happy about that.

I'd also like to thank my children, Jasmine, Jade, and Carson, and my two sons-in-law, Jason and Shane. I'd like to thank them for always being there for me and supporting me, except for when there's work to do around the lake, hauling the boat in and hauling the deck dock out and everything else. But most importantly, I'd like to thank three grandsons, Lewis, Oliver, and Hendrick. Life has been so much fuller with them, and I'm so grateful and I love them.

I got to watch my grandson play hockey at the Pats game yesterday at intermission. By the time old grandpa got there and finally put the seat down, the buzzer went and that was it. I took a couple pictures of him, but at four years old, it was the popcorn and pop. And he dropped an ice cream thing, and it was just a great, great feeling to be around.

I'm also very excited. Within about five days, but I think my daughter is going to be late — she's late for everything — but my middle daughter, Jade, is due any day now. And I'm very much looking forward to her because she's always critiqued me about the way I parent and I look forward to seeing her parent. So it'll be great. I know my wife is looking so forward to seeing a, hopefully seeing a granddaughter, but all I look for is a healthy, happy baby.

I'd also like to, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, I'd also like to thank my executive and the people from Canora-Pelly who continue to support me over all these years.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 16 years this government has worked to build a province that I'm quite proud of, and we must protect all that we have built. Since 2007 Saskatchewan has grown by over 200,000 people, and the last year alone over 30,000 people, which is the largest population growth in about a century. Saskatchewan is no longer the place to be from, it's the place to be.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is a growing province and population is what grows our economy. September alone showed 13,700 more people working in Saskatchewan, and our economy has expanded by 5.7 per cent in the last year, leading all the provinces in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we have invested over \$66 billion in our province

over the last 15 years which includes 60 new schools, 30 major renovations. Seventeen new schools are under construction, under way today. Thirty-five major health projects completed, under construction, and/or planning — new hospitals, long-term care facilities, and urgent care centres. And I'm looking forward to moving forward on our new regional hospital, as my colleague in Yorkton said.

We've done nearly 20 000 kilometres of highway repairs and improvements. And in my area in Highway 229, we redid that whole highway. Good Spirit park has been repaved. Madge Lake has been paved. Highway 9 passing lanes from Canora to Melville plus a new highway, repairs on Highway 8, 47, and 49. And yes, we are going to do more.

We've got \$193 million in capital investments and preventative maintenance in Saskatchewan provincial parks, \$780 million invested in post-secondary infrastructure, and over \$22 million in Crown Corporation, including the expansion of wireless services which 99 per cent of the province is hooked up to.

Mr. Speaker, that's growth that works for everyone. And now since 2007 our families are paying less in provincial tax than they did. Mr. Speaker, 81,000 post-secondary grads have stayed in Saskatchewan and received \$739 million through the graduate retention program. We have more doctors, nurses, and other health care professions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this year alone we announced a \$60 million rural health care incentive program, and in Kamsack it's paid off. We've hired seven nurses. We've got five doctors, two X-ray lab techs. And we've helped reopen eight beds, and we've extended the emergency services in Kamsack.

In Canora, we have signed four new university grad nurses and we are getting our third doctor in November and our fourth doctor in January. And we've also developed a second full-time nurse practitioner that is fitting in really well in Canora.

In Preeceville, we got three new nurses that started. We have three full-time doctors and a nurse practitioner working in Preeceville. So they're at full complement.

Norquay, there is one nurse practitioner, and the long-term care facility is full.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in general our long-term facilities in Norquay, Preeceville, Kamsack, Canora, Theodore, and Invermay are full of seniors receiving some of the best care. And I've been to almost all of them.

I'd like to thank all the health care workers for their continued hard work and their service for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, private capital investment of \$16 billion, private investment has been invested this year alone. In 2023 investment reached 13.2 billion and agri-food exports of 20 billion annually. And just recently in Norquay, I was part of a group, helping out a group of private investors that invested \$17 million in a peat moss plant. And now in the little town of Norquay of about 600 people, there's over 50 people working in there.

And we've also seen an expansion of two canola crushing plants

just outside of Yorkton. And we're going to be rebuilding a road there too as well.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has increased in exports by 50 per cent, and we've doubled the meat processing and animal feed. And by the way, I might be getting into making shishlik again.

We have what the world needs — food, fuel, and fertilizer. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is a secure, reliable choice for over 150 countries to deal with around the world. Saskatchewan has opened trade offices in nine countries: Vietnam, United Kingdom, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Germany, India, Japan, and China. Saskatchewan has not been able to rely on the federal government to promote Saskatchewan products, so we have done it ourselves.

And I would just say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was fortunate enough to be part of some of the trade meetings in Berlin when I was out there on a trip to connect with the Ukrainian refugees and let them find out about stuff that was going on in Saskatchewan and stuff that we offer. And I would be proud to say that this summer, we opened up a new trade office in Berlin.

Also while I was down there in Berlin, as Legislative Secretary of Ukraine Relations in Saskatchewan, I went down there to find out a little bit about the refugees that have came over from Ukraine to Berlin and just kind of some of the things that we needed to do to get prepared when we were bringing the Ukrainians over here from Poland — Warsaw, Poland.

And I was happy enough to be part of the five flights that were organized, and over 4,500 Ukrainians that have come over to Saskatchewan from Ukraine and welcome them. We have one of the best welcoming packages in the world. And along with that, while we did that, we had Enrique. He was from Argentina, and he's a billionaire that took all these flights and he paid for all the flights. He paid for all the Ukrainians and he organized the staff and that. And when we got together with him and had lunch with him and that, he signed a memorandum of understanding with the Premier to bring these five flights because he was so happy and intrigued with how well organized our province was to welcome these Ukrainians.

And I think it was just a great honour to be part of that in helping the Ukrainians come over and helping them with a package of, you know, social insurance number, health cards, banking, housing, finding jobs, and just integrating their kids into the schools in our province. And right in my hometown in Canora, we have about 15 Ukrainian families. And I will tell you that all the families are working. The kids are happy. They've gone to Ukrainian camp out at Crystal Lake and it's great to have them there.

Mr. Speaker, if other countries would use the same environmental regulations that we do, their emissions would be cut by almost 25 per cent, which is a good reason to buy Canadian oil. And that, Mr. Speaker, is something that our federal government should be telling the world.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan will have a significant presence at the COP28 conference in the United Arab Emirates. They'll be promoting our province that has sustainable products and to represent . . . virtually every country in the world. As an export-

reliant province, Saskatchewan companies must be able to quickly and effectively transport goods to market. Our government recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Alberta and Manitoba to strengthen the economy of supply chains.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's agriculture industry remains the backbone of our economy. Our farmers and ranchers have had mixed results in 2023, where some of the areas have experienced extreme drought conditions and other parts of the province have produced record crops.

I will say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Canora and area has had some of the best crops. I talked to some of the farmers that have been farming for 51 years in our area. They've never seen crops like that — 95 to 100 bushels of wheat per acre and over 70 bushels of canola per acre — and it's just great to see that. It's great to see the cattle prices the way they are. And it's just great for our farmers and my constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, agriculture has now posted the third consecutive record of agri-food exports in 2023 too, and it's something to be quite proud of. Mr. Deputy Speaker, January to June 23rd, agricultural exports of over \$10 billion is up 35 per cent from 2022, and Saskatchewan crop insurance coverage has increased to a record level of \$446 per acre this year alone. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is supplying an additional \$70 million to help offset extraordinary costs of feeding livestock to maintain the breeding herd in Saskatchewan.

And one of our biggest threats to this economy and to agriculture is our federal government and the federal carbon tax increases that are causing harm to all of the industries right across our province.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Eastview says that we don't listen to them. Why would they? They have no plan and they are so negative.

Mr. Speaker, we plan to use the Sask first Act for federal clean electricity regulations, the clean fuel standard regulations, and the oil and gas emissions cap . . . to the Economic Impact Assessment Tribunal.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to promote new home construction and protect new homeowners from rising costs, the provincial sales tax rebate for new home construction, which ended on April 1st of this year, will be reinstated and extended retroactive to April 1st. This rebate returns 42 per cent of the PST paid, which is about 2.5 per cent of a total house price, to help those facing rising mortgage rates.

[20:30]

Our government, we will introduce a secondary suite program. This program will help homeowners with the cost of building rental suites. In addition to help the homeowners with their mortgage costs, the secondary suite program will increase the availability of rentals in Saskatchewan.

I'm getting the wave here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — You've got two minutes.

Mr. Dennis: — Yeah, give or take.

In the first two years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the Canada-Saskatchewan early learning and child care agreement, nearly 5,000 spaces were created, and 2,500 new child care spaces will be added in the upcoming months. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, since 2007 over 10,000 child care spaces were provided in our province, which is up 114 per cent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier this year our government delivered an additional \$40 million to school divisions to help support the increasing enrolment and classroom complexity. Funding has grown to over 2.08 billion for the '23-24 year, an increase of 89.4 million. Today we have more than 705 more teachers, 570 more educational assistants, 221 more student . . . staff positions since 2007.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is investing \$147 million this year to build a francophone school in Regina, St. Frances Cree Bilingual School in Saskatoon, a kindergarten to grade 12 school in Lanigan, a joint-use school in Moose Jaw, an elementary school in La Loche, a Regina north joint-use school, a Saskatoon city centre school, and the Harbour Landing west joint-use school.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this summer the parks recreation welcomed over 900,000 park visitors to Saskatchewan. And you know, I've been around quite a bit this summer. Good Spirit, we did paving and renovations of cabins. Madge Lake, we did new park equipment and expansion of over 100 sites. I attended many events in Burgis, Canora Beach, Tiechko Beach, Northshore, Bella Sands. Tried to get out there as much as I can because I live lakefront on paradise island at Crystal Lake. And it's just nice to see the people of Saskatchewan enjoying the beautiful sights and the lakes and everything else within our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing I'd like to thank the MLA from Saskatoon Southeast for his hard work and dedication over the years. We're going to miss him and I wish him all the best in retirement. I'd give him a hug but I can't hug anybody anymore, right? No. And I will be supporting his motion, seconded by the MLA from Lumsden-Morse, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We were saying on the other side, we'd really like some context for what the member just concluded his statement on. But actually maybe we don't want to know what the background story was on that.

Anyways before I get started on my comments around the Throne Speech, I do want to take this opportunity to give a shout-out to a couple of friends who really saved my bacon this evening. As we talk about often in this House, we are supported in the work that we do here by both family and friends that help to, I'd say, stoke the home fires when we're away.

And as you well know, we have Halloween tomorrow. We have been prepping for that. My kids are super excited for Halloween. They're two and four, so it's like peak Halloween excitement in my house right now. We've had costumes picked out for them

for a few days now. It's actually my husband's job this year to get the costumes for my children because he was making some promises to my kids that I wasn't really willing or interested in keeping. So I told him, costumes are your responsibility this year.

Luckily for him, he was able to convince them to both use hand-me-down costumes that we already had in our house. So Olivia is going to go as a witch for daycare, and then she's got a wolf costume she's going to wear for trick-or-treating in the evening. And then my son has this great — this very great, very fancy — dragon costume that's actually his sister's hand-me-down. But he was super excited to wear it until the drive home from daycare this afternoon, when he informed me he doesn't want to be a dragon anymore. He wants to be a vampire, which is not what you want to hear when you are driving your kids home from daycare knowing you have to go back to work 20 minutes later until 10:30 at night, mister deputy deputy speaker, and your husband's at home with the two kids so can't go shopping last minute for a costume for 7 a.m. daycare the next day.

So I put out a call request to a couple of friends, a bit of a panic text to see if they had any backup costumes, backup vampire costumes. I was willing to take a Spider-Man. I think I could convince him into a Spider-Man costume. My two friends who have children around the same age as my kids, they quickly . . . One of them sent me about eight different choices of costumes that she had in her house that she was willing to lend to me. And then the other friend actually took her baby and went to Spirit Halloween tonight and got a vampire costume for my boy. And she just dropped it off at my house. She just sent me a note. I was frantically e-transferring her some money. So shout-out to Leslie Genoway and Steph MacKnight for being grade A friends. Very lucky to have them in my life.

But I won't be surprised if I wake up tomorrow and my son tells me he wants to be something completely different for daycare. But you can only do so much, frankly, with two-year-olds, mister deputy speaker.

Before I get into the Throne Speech, actually there was one more thing I wanted to do, and that is to give some love and some thanks to my constituency assistant, Aiden McMartin, who has done phenomenal work in my office since he started working there several months ago. He actually started off as a practicum student with my friend, my colleague, the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre. And he enjoyed that work so much he was willing to take a job opening at my office.

Since he's been there he's been absolutely great, so consistent, so smart, so wonderful with my constituents, mister deputy deputy speaker, and every single day he sends me — when we're in the House and I'm not able to be at the office — he sends me a bit of a debrief as to what has come through our office that particular day in terms of the issues that have been presented, the concerns that have been raised by constituents and then the casework that we have.

And my goodness, mister deputy deputy speaker, we have a lot of people who are struggling out there right now. The amount of people who come to my office in Regina Douglas Park who have issues with social services in particular, getting access to their SIS [Saskatchewan income support] benefits, has grown substantially since I started this work in 2016.

So we know that at Throne Speech debate time there's a bit of a play in that we're being too negative on the opposite side and government is much more positive and all that sort of thing. And there's this dance that happens between the two sides in their speeches, mister deputy deputy speaker.

But I urge them to listen to what we're hearing from our constituents, and what I like to think that they're hearing from their constituents as well. Because these struggles aren't unique to Regina Douglas Park. I know that is a fact, mister deputy deputy speaker. It's not just the opposition making it up, mister deputy speaker.

In fact they don't have to take our word for it. They just have to listen to the former minister for Parks, Culture and Sport, the former member for Coronation Park, Mark Docherty, who said himself as to the slogan of the Sask Party government, "growth that works for everyone," he said, "certainly not for my constituents. Certainly not in Regina Coronation Park."

So you know, you can say that we are the ones that are being a downer, but I know that there are members opposite over there who are hearing the same thing as us, who are hearing about the struggles, hearing about the worst economic record in the last five years, hearing about the worst out-migration, hearing about the poor graduation rates, hearing about the challenges in terms of paying their bills. It's not just coming from us.

When you get the Throne Speech, it's a real opportunity for a government to provide their vision for the future and their goals for the future. It's really just a path that the government is laying out. That also happens with budget. It's not just words then, it's actual dollar figures where you're prioritizing certain things and laying out what your government sees are priorities moving forward for making this province a better place.

And I will agree. Every member in this Chamber wants to see this province be the best place it possibly can be. But really when you look at this Throne Speech, you know, you can see how truly tired and out-of-touch this government has become. Someone said to me the other day, they're not just tired and out-of-touch anymore, they're out of steam and they're out of ideas. And that's really clear in this Throne Speech.

And again you don't have to just take it from us in the opposition. I read several news articles that called this Throne Speech hollow, sparse, lacking in substance, really visionless, especially leading into an election, Mr. Speaker.

There was so much opportunity that this government had that they could talk about, so many things that they could do to work toward truly making this province the best place it possibly could be. In health care, in particular, Mr. Speaker, they talk about working toward improving the surgical wait times. We've got some of the worst surgical wait times in the country right now. We've got folks out there who've been waiting for surgeries over a year, Mr. Speaker.

The critic for Health, my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview, has done a fantastic job in conjunction with the critic for Rural and Remote Health, my colleague from Saskatoon Eastview, reaching out and talking to local leaders, talking to those folks on the ground who truly have some visionary ideas for how we

could improve health care in this province. One of those things that they proposed is a local Grow Your Own strategy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is a great proposal and one we would strongly encourage government to take if they want to next time put forward a Throne Speech that has some actual vision, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The other one is on cost of living. Like I said, this is a province right now that sadly has some of the worst mortgage arrears in the country, and that's actually not a new phenomenon for Saskatchewan. It's been like that for several years now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we've seen very little in terms of this government putting forward any sort of substantive relief measures for individuals.

This relief measure they provide us in the Throne Speech this time around is a secondary suite program, which is essentially the government saying, we acknowledge that, you know, times are hard for families right now. Things are tough. It's hard to pay your bills. It's hard to pay your mortgage.

But instead of doing something substantive like, I don't know, reducing taxes or fee hikes, any of the number of 31 that they instituted over the last few years in particular, you know, insurance, used cars, two examples — Rider games, there's another one that was recent — they're saying, we are going to incentivize you to renovate a portion of your home to rent it out to somebody else. That's the solution to the cost-of-living crisis from this government. Talk about visionless, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Another one is on the economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we've presented the case time and time again in question period that under this Premier we have seen some of the worst economic foundational indicators over the past five years. I will say some things . . . And this government loves to talk about 2007, 2007 to 2009, you know. The last five years though they kind of gloss over a little bit because, you know, if you talk about it from 2007 till 2023 it's a bit of a different conversation than if you talk about it over the last five years, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[20:45]

Some suggestions to government opposite if they want to put forward a Throne Speech that has some vision is to focus — as my colleague had been talking about, the member from Regina Walsh Acres — on Indigenous high school graduation rates, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is a sleeping giant of a labour force in this province that is just ready and willing and wants to participate fully in our economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They need this government to step up and support that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We don't see any of that in this Throne Speech in terms of focusing on graduation rates, high school graduation rates and the supports that are needed to increase that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

A few positive notes in the Throne Speech that I do want to acknowledge, as colleagues before me have also acknowledged: the changes to *The Workers' Compensation Act* to include additional presumptive cancers for firefighters is very welcome. It's very good to see us be leaders in the country on this file. It's something that has been advocated for by firefighters for, in this province, for a while. A very positive step. We're very excited to see this. Very welcomed.

The other one I will say is the proposed legislation on human trafficking, to allow for those who have experienced human trafficking, if they've incurred negative consequences to their credit rating, debts, that sort of thing, to seek to have those relieved. Obviously I don't know the details of the legislation yet. I haven't seen the legislation, but I will say that any measures to address these issues are welcomed and positive. I will say that legislation on this is easier for government to do than substantive investments into, for example, ensuring that shelters like Hope Restored have sustainable funding over a long period of time with the ability to provide the wraparound supports that are so needed for those who are leaving what is truly horrendous situations.

Another one that's very important is — and is for all issues when it comes to gender-based violence, including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, something that I know we talk about a lot — is preventative education, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you don't see anything about that in this Throne Speech. In fact the Minister of Education has prevented that work from happening in this province right now. We are now rolling into month three of the school year with this government deciding that all third-party educators that were providing that education are now banned from schools, so can no longer go into the schools and provide that education. And again I remind members opposite, what was that education they were providing? Consent education, healthy relationships education, Mr. Speaker. It is a pillar for the national action plan to end gender-based violence, the federal one that the Minister for Status of Women signed onto — and we applaud her for doing that — but one of the pillars of that action plan is prevention.

And it says in that action plan that an opportunity for action is to:

Develop age-appropriate school- and community-based approaches to educate children and young people to prevent gender-based violence. These approaches could include content on topics such as human rights; child- and youth-appropriate sex education, including gender norms; healthy relationships; consent; gender identity and expression and sexual orientation; conflict resolution strategies; bystander intervention; bullying prevention strategies; and root causes of violence such as colonialism, racism, and discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I've asked this before and I ask this again: why is the Ministry of Justice funding organizations to do this work while the Ministry of Education is preventing them from doing this work? How can this government put forward legislation to help survivors of human trafficking when they're refusing to allow organizations to go into schools to prevent situations that could result in human trafficking? It does not make any sense to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Another one I want to talk about, knowing that I don't have a lot of time, is policing. And I welcome the government's announcement in the Throne Speech that they're going to continue to work with PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council] in particular, as well as I hope other communities to expand work around Aboriginal policing, Mr. Speaker. Truly Indigenous-led policing is the future of policing in particular in this province, and there's a lot of communities doing really great community-based work on this, working really hard to make their communities safer. I very much applaud them in that work, and I

urge the province to work closely with these communities to ask them what their needs are and then ask them how they can help, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

When you talk to officers who are doing front-line work right now, and you ask them what their number one pressure points are, they'll say the same wherever you are, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Yes, it's guns and gangs, but it's mental health and addictions in particular, Mr. Speaker. The amount of mental health calls they have to go to are growing. The amount of times they have to sit in an ER room because they can't discharge a patient is growing. And it's frankly eating up time for these officers that could be doing front-line policing and are stuck in our ERs, Mr. Speaker.

I know my time was limited today. I wanted to present some challenges and opportunities to members opposite on ways that we feel that the Throne Speech could have been more robust than it was, could have had more of a vision than it was, and could really bring some hope to the people in this province.

I do believe that this is truly one of the best places in the world to live, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do wish we didn't have a government who got in the way of that. I do wish we didn't have a government who continues to make international headlines for all the wrong reasons, preventing us from being able to tell the great story about this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And because of that, I will not be supporting the motion on the Throne Speech. But I will be supporting my colleague's amendment. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Always a pleasure to get to my feet. At Last Mountain-Touchwood, we were very fortunate. We had not as good of crops as my colleague from Canora-Pelly, but it was quite good. And we're very excited about the increase in cattle prices. Cattle farmers have really struggled the last few years, and the prices this fall are looking strong. So it's always good news to talk about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now I just want to tell a little story. Everyone that serves in this Chamber has a lot of opportunities that are presented to them, and Saskatchewan's kind of one big small town. So through different connections or whatnot I had a phone call one day, and a teacher from E.D. Feehan school in Saskatoon reached out to me and asked me if I wanted to join a school group on a tour of the Legislative Building. So I went out and met this group of students, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And these were all English-as-a-second-language students. So they were all immigrants, new immigrants to Saskatchewan, and it was a great experience. Very nice to meet the students. They asked some very tough questions. But they were so excited to be in the province and excited for all the opportunities that are out there for them. You know, and it was very important to educate the students on how things are funded in the province and how governments operate. They were very critical about the high cost of attending university, because many of them were in grade 12.

And I really encouraged a lot of these students to take a look at a career in the trades. We need more tradespeople. And I gave them

some great example, like the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, a mechanic. And I also mentioned the member from Saskatoon Westview. He's a truck driver. We need more skilled trades in this province and I really wanted to advocate for them to these students.

You know, it was really exciting to see the \$200 million announcement for Saskatchewan Polytechnic, the new campus at Innovation Place in Saskatoon. And it was really nice to attend their meet-and-greet this evening and talk to the board and all of the members there. This school is truly critical for the growing enrolment and the skills that are needed across this province. You know, the member from Saskatoon Southeast is an absolutely fearless advocate for the legal profession. And I want to be a strong advocate for the trades, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You know, I always look forward to Farm Progress Show. It's always a big, exciting event, lots of things . . . Whoops, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's Canada's Farm Show. I got in a lot of heck from different management on using the wrong name there. But I met an individual there from Netherlands. And we seen a lot of news this spring about what was going on in the Netherlands and you always take a lot of the stuff you see on TV and the interweb with a grain of salt.

So I really posed the question . . . and her name was Judith. She was from Holland. I said, how accurate have the agricultural protests and the challenges that they're facing have been? And she said, it's 100 per cent true, everything that was being reported. They were cutting nitrogen fertilizer emissions. They were using different environmental policies to really restrict these family farms in the Netherlands. And the Netherlands is truly the breadbasket of Europe. And it was very, very challenging for their family farm to keep functioning under this government overreach.

And I really want to assure the constituents of Last Mountain-Touchwood and the people of Saskatchewan that this government supports our agricultural producers, and we are ready to stand up for them any time we have to.

I want to talk about the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport. We're doing some great work in the film industry. And there's many programs that are being published with our film tax credit, and there's many more in the pipeline, but I really want to talk about the series *Alone*. It was on the History Channel. It's their number one program. It was filmed in northern Saskatchewan.

And I had the opportunity, along with the member from Regina Northeast and the minister, to attend the premiere of the event. So we're visiting with the producers of the show, we're visiting with the directors and everything else. And that show has been running for 10 years on the History Channel. It's the number one show. And the largest freshwater fish ever caught in that show's history was caught in northern Saskatchewan . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, it was not the member from Carrot River.

Anyway, like people do not understand how big a deal this is. The amount of American tourists that this show is going to attract and bring into our province, how much dollars are going to be generated in our tourism industry. We have many people that enjoy their fishing and they watch that show, and when they see this massive fish caught, it really attracts a lot of tourism interest.

And you know, I honestly want to talk to the members opposite and encourage them that they should watch this program, you know, as well. And really not so much for entertainment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but more kind of a how-to guide of how to survive if they ever had the opportunity to enact their policies of banning fossil fuel production like they had in their meetings in Hamilton a couple weeks ago. So I think that would be critical for them to watch this show and educate themselves on how to survive in the wilderness.

Peak oil is literally nowhere in sight, no matter how badly the members opposite want that. But on this side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will continue building our world-class energy industry and protect that resource from outside forces. It's essential that we, as a province and a country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, become the preferred global supplier. You know, Russia has weaponized energy exports, and with the conflict going on in Israel, we cannot let Iran and other energy-exporting nations follow suit.

You know, I honestly do not believe the members opposite understand when they make their horrible statements like ending fossil fuel production, what that does to investor and corporate confidence in our world-class energy industry. We have to ensure that the members opposite are never in a position to enact their policies, and the importance of the Supreme Court ruling on Bill C-69 cannot be overstated.

[21:00]

There's something else I want to talk about, Mr. Deputy Speaker: the federal clean electricity standards. In May our Premier clearly stated that these are unattainable and unaffordable, and he is 100 per cent right. Our diversified electrical portfolio is something the Saskatchewan people have built over generations, and it's something that this government will protect, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The federal government is trying to cripple our ability to generate electricity, which is clearly in provincial purview, and provide this energy to all Saskatchewan people, communities, and businesses.

The members criticize the government incessantly about the cost of people's power bills, but they never put forward any policies or any ideas on how they would lower them. You know, the member from Walsh Acres was talking about solar panels and renewable energy. It's important to note, Germany has spent over a trillion dollars on renewables. A trillion. Like, it's hard to get your head wrapped around that number. That's over 50 years of our provincial budget with that many zeros, you know, and they're currently paying anywhere between 25 and 70 cents a kilowatt hour. That is not affordable. That is not sustainable. California, they're big on renewables. They're paying over 33 cents — that's what Google said just this morning — and they aim to be 100 per cent renewable by 2045. What will the prices do then?

This government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will always focus on balanced, affordable, and reliable electrical generation. And I want to use an analogy here and just explain things. And the Leader of the Opposition would understand this. I don't think anyone else would. But you know, I'm a farmer, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very proud of that. And a lot of times as a farmer you get a new-to-you truck. And that truck, a new-to-you truck

— not brand new, but it's new to you — that becomes your town truck. So you take good care of it. You keep it clean. You change the oil. You park it inside. You're very fussy. You would never even think of sitting in that seat with your farm coveralls.

But the years go by. You get a few miles, a little bit of salt, everything else. It gets demoted down to the farm truck. So farm trucks you use for pulling trailers and different things and work around the farm. And you know, eventually after a couple more dings and bang-ups and some more rust and different things, it becomes a field truck. So then that field truck gets loaded with a lot of extra tools, and you drive it out to the field and park it there and it stays there. And you use it around and it gets very little maintenance, and it becomes very much a tool for you to use.

And then after it's done being a field truck, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it becomes a chore truck. Well that chore truck is hauling chop. It's hauling salt blocks. It's getting used to work with livestock and everything else. And just a word of caution, Mr. Deputy Speaker — do not ever buy a used chore truck from the member from Cannington.

But the point I'm trying to make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that our coal-fired power plants are not brand new. But they're definitely not chore trucks yet. There is still life in them, and to get full advantage out of them you will get the full return on investment that every Saskatchewan person has put into them. And we will run them until they are like a chore truck and ready for the bush.

So Sunday mornings, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I always have a kind of a routine. I get up, make a leisurely breakfast, and then I watch the political programs on television. *Question Period* I watch first, then I watch *The West Block* later. But I was watching *Question Period* and the federal Minister of Rural Economic Development, the Hon. Gudie Hutchings, you know, she was on there trying to justify the government's choice to remove the carbon tax on home-heating fuel, which is diesel fuel, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which primarily affects Eastern Canadians. The majority of Saskatchewan people use the far cleaner option of natural gas to heat their homes, but we will still be paying a carbon tax on that. And I was so excited with the announcement that came out of this government this morning and so excited to support our Premier in all of his work that he's trying to do.

I was in Kelliher on Saturday, and that was the number one issue that people wanted to talk about was how hypocritical the federal policy was that you would give a certain segment of the population a tax break and then charge us the full price. Like, that is not appropriate behaviour for a federal confederation of a government that's supposed to govern all of Canada.

The carbon tax is the main inflationary driver in our economy and it disproportionately affects lower-income and fixed-income people more . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You bet.

So at the end of August, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was able to attend the grand opening of the partnership with the Suncrest College Emergency Response Institute firefighting training academy. It was very well attended by many of my colleagues and the Minister of Advanced Education. This school will train, you know, Saskatchewan people who want to pursue a career as a professional firefighter. It also educates our volunteer firefighters and our many, many industrial firefighters.

Volunteer firefighters are an absolute cornerstone in rural Saskatchewan, and we truly appreciate all the excellent work they do serving their communities.

Our government in the Throne Speech outlined that we will introduce changes in *The Workers' Compensation Act* to include six additional types of cancer. Firefighters are important members of society. When typical people run away from harm, these guys are running into it. I'm proud to be an MLA who represents many volunteer firefighters, and I'm incredibly grateful for the work that they do.

As many members know, a couple of years ago in the springtime my daughter had a fire, and the volunteer firefighters saved her house and saved most of her farm. I was sitting in this Chamber at the time, and it was very tough to hear those messages coming in our family group chat and the challenges they face. So thank God for the volunteer firefighters and thank God for their great neighbours.

Well five minutes left? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay, you betcha. I've got time. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that this might seem like something that some of my colleagues have talked about before, but it is something that I need to get on the record . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I will.

The closure of the Plains hospital is something that still resonates in rural Saskatchewan, people driving by and looking at that, now being used as a Sask Poly school, but it was under an NDP government that did that. That was a hospital that was easily accessible for all of rural residents. It was very accessible for ambulances, and it had a state-of-the-art building with all private rooms.

My mother was in there for heart medication in 1987, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I was very young but I definitely remember it — and it is absolutely something that we as a government have to educate so many of our young people on what was happened before when the NDP had the chance to govern.

I am going to let another colleague of mine speak going forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I do want to say that I am so proud to serve with this Premier. I am so proud to serve with this cabinet, and I'm so proud to serve with this caucus on the good work that we have going forward. And there is so many opportunities for young people in this province. And I look forward to many more throne speeches with this government. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, yes, deputy deputy. I'd like to start off my chat here tonight, a chat thanking my staff in my ministerial office, Ken, Kielle, Anshumaan, and Emni. I also want to thank very loyal service and over a long period of time in my constituency office, Kirsten and Jackie. Without them, without competent, capable staff would make our jobs so much more difficult. That's for sure, so I appreciate each and every one of them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech spoke to several topics that I believe are incredibly important to the people of

Saskatchewan. We have seen significant investments in our health care and education sectors. There have been increased investments to ensure our citizens are safe. And our economy is strong, growing, and on track to achieve many of the government's '20-30 growth plan targets.

Our province is the place to be with unprecedented population growth across this province. To see people entering the province in just this past year was once viewed as unachievable, but it is so great to see. These people have settled into more than 450 communities across Saskatchewan, which has enabled our government to reinvest into this great province.

I've had the honour of representing the people of Regina Wascana Plains since 2007, which means I have seen many times and first-hand our government investing almost \$66 billion into this province. This includes 20 000 kilometres of highways repaired or improved; \$780 million invested in post-secondary infrastructure; and over 22 billion in Crown corporation capital, including the expansion of wireless services to more than 99 per cent of the province.

Our health care . . . And I'm just touching on what I believe to be some salient points. Growth — health care growth, industry growth, population growth, job growth — has allowed this government to reinvest in the most precious resource, and of course we all know that precious resource is our people.

We've focused on providing appropriate services to those with addictions and mental health challenges. Now, Mr. Speaker, this addictions issues and challenges are very near and dear to my heart. I recall many times being in a Health minister's office over the last 10 years, I guess, advocating for what we see today, and that is, you know, ensuring that there is emergency spots for detox, appropriate length of time, rehabilitation for an appropriate length of time.

Mr. Speaker, I had to send both my children out of the province to ensure — and this is quite a while ago now — to ensure that they got the addictions assistance and services that they needed. As a result . . . And it wasn't about me and my circumstance with my children. It was about all of those out there who didn't have the resources to be able to send their children out of province for long periods of time.

And it was the length of time, the detoxing length of time, type of services provided outside of this province, that my children are good today. My children are alive. How many nights spent sitting up, no sleep? I was an MLA then, Mr. Speaker. Sitting up, no sleep, waiting for a phone call that thankfully never came.

[21:15]

So what we have today with mental health and addictions services that are going to be provided to our citizens are, like, so much better. It is about ensuring that the rehabilitation follows the steps necessary, provides the amount of time necessary. Not everyone is going to need six months, which my children did, but I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the majority of people that are suffering with addictions require more than 28 days. Seven to nine days for detox, Mr. Speaker, then that 28 days doesn't leave a lot of time for a person to get the services that they needed.

I'm very, very proud of my children. It was a long haul, but they did it. They did it when they were afforded the dignity to ensure to the best of their ability that they will, that they would become valuable, productive members of our society today. And for that, I'm grateful. But I'm grateful to this province for listening to what we were told is needed in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I recall during . . . at the tail end of the pandemic, that all of us started to see things that were happening in our society. And a lot of us, you know, were somewhat, I suppose, shocked by it. What the pandemic . . . I mean I'm not sure if that would be 100 per cent the pandemic, but it was a large part of it, where we saw our young people, our people getting, you know, becoming addicted for a variety, a variety of reasons. Social isolation, no school — I mean it could be a myriad of different things. But I recall seeing happening what I went through as a parent. It's heartbreaking, devastating, to say the least. And you know, I always hearken back to sitting in a chair, 3, 4 o'clock in the morning and rocking, waiting for the call. I knew my kids were at risk, so waiting for the phone call of overdose, waiting for the phone call that they had died.

And this side of the House certainly has heard my story over a number of Health ministers over time, and I'm so proud. I'm very proud of what this government has done to ensure the services are available. That doesn't mean that people who are suffering with addiction are going to avail themselves of those services. It's important though to ensure the services are there and ready and willing to assist in this regard.

The new mental health and addictions plan will have concrete, near-term actions to address the addictions issues impacting all of us — families, communities right across this province. While other jurisdictions have taken a different approach, and that's fine, I believe that the province of Saskatchewan has taken the right approach. And I am proud that this government will not be supplying illicit drugs through our publicly funded health care system. I do believe health dollars should be spent where it is needed in the recovery model and emergency care.

Instead a compassionate approach will be used, built on the three pillars: increasing capacity, get more people the help they need, improving the system to better serve patients, and transition to a recovery-oriented system of care. The target of 500 new addictions treatment spaces across the province will provide many individuals . . . and again it's ensuring that those services are available with the help when they are needed.

Funding rehabilitation and treatment centres is how this government is tackling these heartbreaking and all-too-often tragic outcomes. We're set to work on enhancing our health care system in this province. And as we always say, there is always so much more work to do, but as a government forever thus, there's always more work to do because you can never do everything all at once. And people change, societies change, and that's what we need to continue to do.

Twenty-five health care facilities have been built since 2007. Saskatchewan people deserve a quality health care system. New investments in Humboldt, new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon, and the new Dr. F.H. Wigmore Regional Hospital in Moose Jaw. Long-term care centres have been built — Meadow Lake, Swift

Current, Prince Albert, Rosetown, Tisdale, Saskatoon, and Watrous. In addition, integrated facilities with both acute and long-term care beds have been built in Leader, Kelvington, Biggar, Kerrobert, Maple Creek, Kipling, Radville, Redvers, and Shellbrook. It sounds to me that pretty well, pretty close covers the entire province of Saskatchewan.

We have more doctors, more nurses, and again it is about attracting and bringing in, recruiting. We're no different than any other province in this country. We're all having the same challenges and issues. I always wish I could just snap my fingers and all of a sudden we would have enough nurses or enough therapists or radiologists, GPs [general practitioner], whatever the case may be. That is not real, but the work is being undertaken by our government to try and get as many health care professionals as possible.

'23-24, this government is providing 100 million for construction of Prince Albert Victoria Hospital, 12 million for capital and operating funding of the Regina urgent care centre, 3 million for Saskatoon urgent care centre in partnership with the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation, 38 million for Weyburn Hospital, 500,000 for Regina General Hospital parkade.

Health services or the health human services action plan — I don't know what it is about government; they give these initiatives such long names, long titles — to recruit, retain, and incentivize health workers. We're all doing it. In each province, we're all doing it and looking for the same people.

There's always more work to be done, and we're investing 25.2 million in continued support for approximately 500 new post-secondary training seats for Saskatchewan students across 18 health training programs. We've reduced and streamlined a pathway for internationally educated nurses from nine months to 14 weeks. That is significant. We continue to expand the scope and practice for pharmacists, nurse practitioners, and advanced care paramedics to utilize their skills. In June 2023 the total surgical wait-list has decreased by 15 per cent. We're on track to eliminate the COVID-related backlog and return to pre-pandemic wait-lists by March 31 of 2023.

This government budget plans to invest in the next generation. 2.4 billion has been invested by this government to build over 60 new or replacement schools and to fund 30 major renovation projects. This includes Saskatoon, Regina, Martensville, Langenburg, Hudson Bay, Lloydminster, Swift Current — again right throughout the province.

There is 147 million in Education budget this year to build a francophone school in Regina, St. Frances Cree Bilingual School in Saskatoon, joint-use school in Moose Jaw, elementary school in La Loche, Regina north joint-use school, Saskatoon city centre school, and Harbour Landing joint-use school. As the MLA for Regina Wascana Plains, I've seen this government meet the needs by building a joint-use school in my constituency, actually two. And I was pleased to attend the groundbreaking ceremony for the Regina north joint-use school. Total operation funding has grown to 2.09 billion for '23-24 school year, an increase of 89.4 million or 4.5 per cent over last year.

Mr. Speaker, as the previous minister for Corrections, Policing and Public Safety — my nose is running — I am proud of this

government's commitment to protecting communities across this province. Saskatchewan joined with other provincial and territorial governments in calling on Ottawa to reform Canada's broken bail system. Mr. Speaker, this is about public safety. We will continue to hold the federal government accountable for their promised changes to the Criminal Code for the sake of all Canadian citizens.

We will continue to work with the federal government and First Nations to develop solutions . . . Oh, thanks. Thanks, darling. Ah, relief. We could write an ad about that, couldn't we? And continue with working with P.A. [Prince Albert] Grand Council to look at self-administered policing options. During this session our government will introduce the protection from human trafficking (coerced debts) amendment Act. This will relieve human trafficking victims of negative credit factors incurred through coercion during these particular nefarious, questionable relationships.

We also protect communities in other ways, such as through the training of our firefighters — and that's been mentioned already tonight — right here in Saskatchewan. Our government recently established the Saskatchewan Emergency Response Institute through our partnership with Suncrest College just outside of Melville. This will provide firefighter education and train industrial and volunteer firefighters.

Proudly we are a province no longer the place to be from. It is the place to be. We have what the world needs, and this government will continue to protect and build for the future. While our resource sector continues to be under attack from our own federal government, as the Minister of Environment I am proud to highlight the work our government has undertaken.

Our government's own climate initiative, Prairie Resilience, focuses on developing and implementing policies to improve Saskatchewan's resilience to climate change while standing up for the people of the province. It is a plan that supports the people of this province and allows us to continue bringing sustainable Saskatchewan products to the world while maintaining economic competitiveness.

The products the Saskatchewan people create are some of the most sustainable products in the world. Saskatchewan grows the most sustainable canola, mines the most sustainable potash, and exports some of the most sustainable fertilizer. Saskatchewan also sequesters more carbon in agricultural soils than any other province in Canada. Members on this side know that we must continue to provide food, fuel, and fertilizer that the world needs, while at the same time significantly reducing the emissions required to produce it.

[21:30]

Okay, I'm getting the . . . Okay. We will continue to support our sustainable Saskatchewan industries. What we do not support is, of course, the carbon tax. Taxing people into poverty is not any way to resolve or solve anything.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do know and understand that there will be a time . . . If we unleash the creative ability of our technological sector, there will be a time that we will be able to create technology to assist us in reducing emissions. Our tech sector is

doing yeoman service today and there's more to do with the support of a lacklustre federal government, but the support of this government to ensure that we have what we need going into the future. We have today ways to ensure that our emissions are as low as possible. But tomorrow and the next day and the next year, we will see our sector create what we need to go into the future.

The members opposite will say they are opposed to a carbon tax, but we know that they are in full support of the Trudeau Liberal government carbon tax. And if you would like me to quote what the member from Walsh Acres has stated publicly, "My take on the carbon tax, the climate change from here is Saskatchewan [spoiler] I'm in favour." If the opposition were in government, our province would be stuck with the overreaching federal backstop. That means less investment, fewer jobs, less growth that works for everyone, and a worse-off Saskatchewan.

I am proud of our government's economic record. Saskatchewan's economy has expanded by 5.7 per cent last year, leading all other provinces. The growth our province has seen works for all of Saskatchewan. It means that the average family pays thousands of dollars less in provincial taxes than they did in 2007. This is at a time when many believed that this growth was not possible. I think we all know who thought the growth was not possible. Growth is not for its own sake, but to reinvest in Saskatchewan and its people. The plan, 1.4 by 2030, that is people. Doubling the growth of Saskatchewan's forestry sector. Agricultural food exports hit 18.2 billion, the largest on record.

As an exporting province, what we sell creates thousands of jobs right here at home. Our government has opened trade offices around the world, actually nine — United Kingdom, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Germany, India, Japan, and China. This is indeed a tremendous success story.

We will continue to foster these relationships with other countries, but we also must build this capacity within Canada. We will continue to tell Saskatchewan's story. It's imperative that we do, to continue to build a strong economy that attracts people, investment, talent, and business. We are so blessed with natural resources, and it is this government that will ensure Saskatchewan continues to be at the forefront of all of the opportunities.

Now I'm going to finish here tonight with a story. Now there was . . . Well I'm going to keep it short, apparently. You all want to hear my story? Okay. There was a family. They were in Canada but they had immigrated to Canada, so they were in a province in this country. I'm not going to say which province. So what their interest was was to register their children into school in Regina. And they didn't care that they didn't have jobs because they said, we'll get jobs when we get here. How many are on the list on SaskJobs? They had no worries at all, but it was important to them to get to Saskatchewan.

And as I delved further into this conversation, what she said, what the mother said to me, Saskatchewan is Canada. Saskatchewan is the province that we believe Canada is. She said, we're telling all our friends. We're getting all our friends to move with us because Saskatchewan is what Canada is. Anyway that's my little story for the night.

Anyway I will not be supporting the amendment, of course, and

I will be supporting the motion put forward by government members. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to rise this evening to speak to the Throne Speech. Before I do, I want to thank a number of people as members have done in their speeches.

First and foremost, to the constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who have given me this opportunity since 2006, I do not take it for granted and I appreciate their ongoing support.

I want to thank my staff that work in the building. As Minister of Crown Investments Corporation, I have an opportunity to work with a new set of staff members. And so I want to thank David, Mike, Robyn, Cindy, and Jesse. Jesse was my summer student we shared. Between the Education office and the CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] office we shared a summer student, and Jesse stayed on part time in the afternoons. After he finishes his courses in the morning, he comes over and does a great job for us. And so I want to thank them.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank the staff that I had the great pleasure of working with as Minister of Education. Holly, Amy, Aaron, Daphne, Mr. Speaker, all did a tremendous job in supporting me as minister, but most especially Mitch Graw, the chief of staff. Mr. Speaker, I can't say enough about the work that Mitch, the support that he provided me, Mr. Speaker. Certainly know that the Minister of Education will be well served by his new staff, but most especially by Mitch.

Mr. Speaker, I want to as well thank my constituency assistant, Marcie Swedburg. Marcie has been the constituency assistant for — I always lose track of this — somewhere in the neighbourhood of 25 years. She's probably watching and she'll text me and let me know what the answer is. But she has been serving the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy longer than I have, Mr. Speaker. She was there with the previous MLA. And I'm so glad that she, all those years ago, had agreed to stay on and work with me. And so I want to thank Marcie for all of her support.

I want to thank my family. Mr. Speaker, tonight was a little bit of a treat for me. Amanda brought the kids — Jack, Ephram, and Penelope — to the building for supper. She brought all of us supper. McDonald's, in case you're wondering. It was great. And so I would just, you know . . . I would say, I think that all members will know, being around this building, how these halls and the rotunda are very echoey. And so if you heard during the recess at 5 o'clock, in any of that time if you heard things like "slow down" or "don't touch that" or "get off of that," I hope whoever that family was that those parents were able to get those kids under control, Mr. Speaker. But I want to thank Amanda and our kids for their love and their support, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to thank my other family, and that would be my colleagues here. Mr. Speaker, it's just a privilege to work each and every day with these women and men that I've been privileged to be a part of for a number of years, even though members' faces and the people change. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is certainly as close to having a second family as one can get.

It's a treat. It still is a treat to hear just the talent.

And you know, it's hard to name everybody but what we had right before suppertime from the member from Indian Head-Milestone, if you could see it, for the people at home who can't see it, who comes in here with nothing more than an oversize sticky note and for the next 10 minutes or 12 minutes can absolutely, in probably the most charitable way that you can imagine, absolutely eviscerate the opposition and do so with a big smile on his face, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So privileged to be able to hear a member like that.

And then this evening to be sitting in the pew and be a member of the congregation when the member from Melfort stands and delivers a wonderful message. And then this evening the member before me from Wascana Plains, who absolutely eloquently talked about the government's plan and the government's vision for some of the most important and crucial areas of government and — I don't even know how she did it — was able to just weave her own family story into that, Mr. Speaker. And really I just can't thank her enough for her words this evening. So it'll be definitely a tough act to follow.

And I do want to as well acknowledge our colleague, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, who is not physically with us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but certainly is with us in spirit and we certainly wish him a speedy recovery.

I want to, before I do get to the Throne Speech, I do want to congratulate the member from Saskatoon Southeast on his speech in moving the motion. As members will know and as the public will know, he's a long-serving MLA — with the Minister of Finance until the time of his leaving cabinet, the longest serving cabinet minister currently in Canada.

And I always thought that was a great thing because he's such a seasoned member and such a wise individual. But now I've found out that actually the really good reason for why he was so busy being in cabinet is because we're now seeing what he has with all this time on his hands, and all the time that he has to think of new ideas for pranks and to action and execute those. So if the Premier can maybe in the final year find him even more work to keep him busy, that would be appreciated by all members.

I want to as well congratulate and thank the member from Lumsden-Morse for his speech in seconding the motion and the Speech from the Throne. And he certainly has big shoes to fill, but I think he's going to do so in a very good way, Mr. Speaker. And I want to as well . . . So congratulate him on his election. And I want to congratulate the member from Regina Coronation Park on his election in the by-election, as well the member from Regina Walsh Acres on his election. And I want to as well commend him and thank him for touching words that he had to say about a former colleague of ours, Derek Meyers. It was nice to hear Derek's words here in the Chamber again, so I want to thank him for that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the remaining time that I have of my 12 minutes that were allotted to me by the Deputy House Leader, I want to talk a little bit about the theme in this Throne Speech — build. You know, this certainly is something that has been a high priority for my constituents, and we see that in a very visible way. So you know, when you look at the role of the government and

you look at the province . . .

And you know, I hear from time to time across the way that somehow the members opposite see this as a lack of vision in terms of the Throne Speech. And I look at it both at a macro level as well as a micro level in terms of what the vision of this government has been and continues to be — a growth plan that sees 1.4 million people. I think when we talk about things of the growth plan or the Throne Speech or in previous budgets, I think it's easy to lose sight of the context in which those plans are developed and delivered.

[21:45]

And so you know, people can see that the government has set a goal of 1.4 million people by 2030. And we just have gotten used to I think in this province growth and growing economic development, growing number of people.

And you know, even for me I think it's important to just take a step back and realize what that means, 1.4 million people by 2030 as a goal, and that I think we are well on our way of achieving. And if you think about it, not that long ago, where just getting to a million people and staying at a million people was the goal even though there wasn't really a plan around it, but that was the hope, you know, just by hanging on by our fingernails to a million people.

And now we think about 1.4 million people in this province in . . . basically it will have been, you know, 15 going on well 16 years now. And so over the course of a 20- to 25-year timeline, Mr. Speaker, seeing an unprecedented amount of growth that we have seen and will see, you know, I think that that lays out and continues to lay out the vision, a large part of the vision for the province.

And what that means certainly for my constituents in terms of building, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech does identify a number of projects that are important to my constituents. As was identified in the budget, \$38 million to begin construction on a new hospital in Weyburn, something that had been long desired by my constituents. Construction is well under way.

5th Avenue was blocked off for a number of months right at the north end of the city because the new hospital grounds will be built on the north side of the street. And so the city blocked it off because they were putting in all the underground infrastructure and so had to block off the street. But people are seeing that the fruit of the vision of what this government has been about since even before we were first elected in 2007, that fruit is becoming more visible for my constituents.

As well I know a big project for myself and the member from Estevan, the minister from Estevan, is the ongoing project of 6 and 39. And we are seeing certainly when I head back to the constituency and head south on Highway 6 and you get to Corinne, there is an incredible amount of earthwork that's going on to twin that portion and that curve on your way to Milestone, Mr. Speaker. And so certainly for my kind of stretch of the project, that is the culmination of a lot of work that's been done in the intervening years, to put in place the passing lanes that have been built over the last number of years.

So that's, you know, some real tangible ways that we are looking to continue to build this province and build certainly for my constituents. And then there's the idea around not only building, but also protecting what we've built and protecting our opportunities to continue to build into the future.

And certainly for me, when I look at my role as the minister responsible for the Crown investments in the province — SaskPower, SaskTel, and the like — you know, we look at what the position of the government has been on things like the clean electricity standards and the work that we have done as a province in establishing our case in terms of why these are not realistic for the province. They're not feasible. They're not achievable and certainly not affordable for the people of this province because we want to continue . . . we want to protect our ability to build and continue to build this province.

And so that continues as well with the work that has been done by the Justice minister when it comes to establishing the Sask first Act, *The Saskatchewan First Act* and the announcement in the Throne Speech of moving . . . Well that's all the time I have so I'll try to wrap up here because I've reached my allotted time. Many people will say this has been my best speech, many people will say.

But the work that has been done by the Justice minister and, you know, I think work that we've seen in terms of not only the creation of *The Saskatchewan First Act* but also as a part of that, the work of the tribunals, that we will now put through three federal standards or regulations and legislation, Mr. Speaker, which really is work that's not being done anywhere in this country, Mr. Speaker. And really a creative way, innovative way to really assert our provincial jurisdiction while I think demonstrating to the federal government, as well as the people of the province, we are proud of what we've built and we're going to do everything that we can to protect it regardless of what the federal government says.

Mr. Speaker, that extends to what the Premier announced today and the position that the provincial government has taken just in the recent days since the federal government announced, unilaterally the Prime Minister has announced that heating oil will no longer be subject to the carbon tax for the next three years.

You know, and we've indicated — the Premier has as have I, Mr. Speaker — the reasons why obviously we think that that's not fair. And so we will and have indicated to the federal government that we expect that that exemption would be applicable to everyone in this country. Certainly it's our position that there should not be a carbon tax on anything for anyone, but if they are now going to essentially cherry-pick which citizens in this country are going to have the carbon tax applied to them and cherry-pick who and who won't have that applied, then we will — if they don't change that essentially in the next two months — we'll be proceeding to removing the carbon tax from SaskEnergy bills and will not remit a carbon tax to the federal government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that my kids continue to shock me, Mr. Speaker. Members will know that or may know that I did a little bit of a video to post on the social media accounts of the Premier late last week about this issue. And so at supper on Friday night, I think it was Friday night, we showed the kids the

post, the video, and kind of tried to explain a little bit.

Jack was asking some questions about what all this meant. And from a nine-year-old whose interest in politics to this point has been limited to dad's got a pretty cool office, that's been the extent of it, he watched the video. And then after we tried to, you know, explain a little bit of this, he asked, "Well when is the next election because we need a new prime minister." And that's a direct quote. I'm not making that up. I did not ask him to say that or tell him to say that.

And so I continue to be amazed by these kids and their growing interest in more than just dad's cool office, which is a little unnerving if I could be honest, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just in closing, I just want to talk a little bit about, in terms of protecting families and building out this province, Mr. Speaker, I think, again going back to what I talked a little bit about in terms of things like population growth and how we can take things like that for granted. I know the Throne Speech does mention about the \$147 million that's being invested in education capital and why that is so important for a growing province and lists out all the projects, Mr. Speaker. And I know we kind of had the debate, is it 16 or is it 17 major projects that are ongoing at any given time in this province?

And I think what's important to note, Mr. Speaker, and I know certainly in my time in the role, talking to officials, but certainly widespread through government, I think it's easy to lose context that it wasn't that long ago when two or three major capital projects was a huge year for this province. Like a banner year for this province when there were two huge . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Huge.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Huge, huge years when there were maybe two projects going on in education. And so it's easy to lose sight of the fact that 16 or 17, you know, it's kind of just become a regular part of the capital plan of the government, Mr. Speaker.

And on that I also want to just acknowledge and thank the work that has been done by the ministry and by certainly the government, my colleagues, in establishing the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Corporation. I think that this is going to have tremendous opportunities for students right across the province regardless of where they live.

I think the DLC [Distance Learning Corporation] in its original, previous iteration has really done a tremendous job of working with organizations like the ag tech dealers association and others in creating innovative projects that might not necessarily be on the radar of the Ministry of Education but certainly speak to niche markets and niche opportunities for young people, particularly in rural Saskatchewan.

And so we've expanded that into, for instance, a partnership with the Saskatchewan Auto Dealer's Association, who want to enable kids to have better opportunities to get into taking a course in autobody. And you know, not every school in this province, particularly in rural Saskatchewan, will have the opportunity to have kids in a shop just because of physical limitations of the actual class or the actual school. And so to have an organization like the Saskatchewan Auto Dealer's Association that have car

dealerships with autobody shops right across this province to be able to allow for that in-class opportunity.

And I can just say prior to the cabinet shuffle, I had an individual reach out to me from Calgary who has interests in an important sector certainly in my constituency — in the Estevan constituency and in Lloydminster and Kindersley and others — and heard about what the SDLC had been doing with organizations like the Auto Dealer's Association and with the ag tech equipment dealers association and basically said, we have a problem in a very important industry in this province and a very important industry in my constituency where in the past operators were easy to come by because usually you could hire a farmer who was looking for some part-time work to be an oil field operator.

And the individual that phoned me from Calgary said, based on the way that agriculture is today and the size of the farms, you know, there just aren't those same types of opportunities or maybe the requirement for those opportunities, and so we're having trouble finding operators. And is there a way that we can work with the Education ministry in creating a program to maybe get the tickets that that kid in grade 12 needs that may want to go out and join the workforce right away and get a full-time job working in a really important industry and an active industry? And so we said, well yes, the SDLC. They have experience. And they knew about the SDLC, or the DLC.

And so those are some of the opportunities that I think an organization like the SDLC will be able to contribute for students right across the province.

And finally, I just want to, in closing, I do want to . . . I've said "in closing" like four times, I think so. So once the band starts playing some music we'll be in trouble.

I do want to just note the decision of the government to move forward with the Saskatchewan remembrance observance Act to protect individual's rights to wear a poppy. Mr. Speaker, we're approaching that time of year, we all have our poppies on, where remembrance is going to be first and foremost in our minds.

And I want to acknowledge the work of the Weyburn Legion and also recognize that likely our last World War II active veteran, and likely the last member of the South Saskatchewan Regiment from my constituency, Howard Schmidt, had passed away earlier this year. It is going to be a different Remembrance Day for us in Weyburn, as Howard was always there, every single year, was in good health right up until about the last month of his life when he passed in April.

And so, you know, certainly I want to thank my colleagues for bringing forward this legislation. Thank you. Probably not a well-noted thing that came out of the Throne Speech, but I think when we talk about protecting this province, honouring those that did the most to protect us.

And so, with that, Mr. Speaker, I won't be voting in favour of the amendment, but I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Friesen): — I recognize the member from Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, mister deputy deputy speaker. It's nice to be here tonight. It's nice to be on my feet. I'm honestly thinking about how nice it's going to be not to be here tomorrow night.

[22:00]

So I'd like to start out by thanking some of our colleagues, not because this work isn't important but thanking some of our colleagues from out of town who are going to cover off night sitting tomorrow and give their replies, their responses to the Throne Speech so that some of us can take our kids out trick-or-treating, which I am really looking forward to.

And I'd also like to thank the Government Whip for agreeing to be flexible with us on some of this so that those of us who really want to get out there and steal some candy from our children tomorrow night and take part in a pretty fun holiday have the ability to do that. I also want to give a shout-out to the member for Douglas Park for supplying us with snacks for this evening in our members' lounge. It is much appreciated.

And I want to thank my family. Honestly, after the special session it feels a little bit strange to be up kind of reopening the session. It feels like we never really left, but here we are. So I want to thank my family. It feels like we've been back three weeks, but I guess we've really only just begun, mister deputy deputy speaker.

I'm really lucky, not only in my partner and my two healthy and happy children, I'm also really lucky to have my dad here who is a frequent flyer in the legislature, often, to my dismay, on the internet but also provides wonderful support to me, helps out with canvassing, and also looks after my son and my daughter as their beloved pops. I also want to give a shout-out to my husband who's been on bedtime duties for a few weeks now, and of course my two beautiful kids who I'm just so, so lucky to have.

I also want to give a shout-out and a thanks to my executive, my volunteers, the plucky people who come canvassing with me, and my absolutely wonderful constituents. I also want to speak briefly about my wonderful constituency assistant, Jocelyn Adema. She is, honestly after my husband and my kids, probably the most important person in my life. She is just a remarkable public servant. She is far better than I deserve. She's so thoughtful. She does such good work for so many people with a real servant's heart and immaculate attention to detail and a sense of humour and commitment to justice that I admire just so thoroughly. And I'm so thankful for her and all the work that she does not just for my constituents, but for people across the province, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to take a moment and give a shout-out to our wonderful staff here in the building, certainly in our caucus office, who have just put in a mountain of work over the past month. They are few and far between, but the team is growing. And they're just a miraculous group of people who not only do incredible work but genuinely seem to like each other, which is amazing in an environment like this that is not always conducive to perhaps a positive work-life balance and socialization. But we just have a remarkable team of hard-working people who are as kind and as good-humoured as they are talented.

I also want to give one shout-out to my two new colleagues in the Assembly, the new member from Regina Walsh Acres and new member from Regina Coronation Park, with a special shout-out to the new member from Regina Coronation Park who I believe has been quietly heckling for this past week, which is a sad but important rite of passage.

And I kid but it's so, again, fantastic obviously to have additional members on this side of the House, but also to have just two accomplished and fun and hard-working colleagues who've again probably been on their feet more in the past few weeks than most members are in their first year. And they've done it with good grace, they've done it with humour, and they've done it with just an ever-growing level of commitment and engagement that I think is really remarkable. So I'm so glad that you're here. I can't imagine you not being here, and I'm just so thrilled for the work that we have ahead of us.

All those niceties aside, I guess I'll start to talk about the Speech from the Throne and my response to it, mister deputy deputy deputy speaker. And I think to begin, it was really a remarkably kind of light Speech from the Throne in terms of substance and in terms of ambition. And I really enjoy this process as somebody who, you know, loves politics and loves, loves . . .

Oh, it has also been pointed out I should also welcome the new member from Lumsden-Morse. And I'm sorry about that, sir. It's lovely to see you here in your seat. It was lovely to meet you in the community as well before we interacted in the House. I think it's a nicer, more human way to meet each other, and I enjoyed your maiden speech very much. I thought it was wonderful. It made me laugh. And I do mean that very sincerely, and my congratulations and welcome to you as well.

And now for something completely different: the Speech from the Throne. You know, really as somebody who loves politics, who loves policy, I always think this is such a magnificent opportunity. What a really interesting exercise this is for the government. You have this heady ability to lead and shape the province based on your morals and your values and your vision. And you're experienced at this, right?

I'm setting myself up probably to be heckled here, but it's been 16 years. That's a lot of opportunities, a lot of speeches from the throne, a lot of budgets. And after 16 years, when I looked at this Speech from the Throne, when I listened intently to the Lieutenant Governor deliver it, I thought, you know, what does Saskatchewan have to show for it? Because that was kind of one of the themes. It wasn't just looking at the record of this recent government, but it really focused on that record since 2007.

So you know, I'd like to look at that record and the Saskatchewan that the members opposite have built. And maybe I'll start with a couple questions. You know, when we look at Saskatchewan today, when we look at the record, where's this government's minimum wage? Do we have an environment ripe for entrepreneurs, for small businesses, you know? Is crime down by, I don't know, a third? Are students getting better grades than ever? Personal savings, economic confidence — is that sky-high?

Do we have the shortest surgical wait times in the country? Has child poverty been cut in half? Do we have a thriving and prosperous North? Affordable, reliable, sustainable power?

Professionals and experts moving here to Saskatchewan to set down roots in this province, nurtured by an environment of creativity and excellence? The most affordable rent and the clearest path to home ownership in the country? Healthy safety nets there for people when they need them, where they need them?

You know, mister deputy deputy speaker, I'm not going to do the whole list because I do have a limited amount of time. But I wanted to start with those questions because I think the contrast is actually quite stark. A government that 16 years ago started with hope beating fear, and now 16 years later we've really only got the fear that things could be worse.

And you know, there are different stories of the past 16 years. I recognize that. But when we look at the things that matter, when we look at the things that we hear on the doorsteps, that we see reflected not just in the stories that people tell us — that we hear in hockey rinks, in grocery stores, in line at the coffee shop — but we see reflected in opinion research, there's two very different stories. There's the story in the Throne Speech, and I think there's a story that people in Saskatchewan believe because it's the story that they're living. It's the story of their lives.

And yes, we believe in this province, believe in its spirit and its people and its communities, and we need unity. We need vision. We need opportunity. But we also need that hope, Mr. Speaker, because right now we see people sleeping on the streets here in Regina, outside in winter. We see four times . . . Just this past year, this was the statistic I was really heartbroken but interested to hear from the food bank here in Regina. Last year to this year, there has been a fourfold increase in the number of new Canadians using the food bank. And we see this. But we don't just see that, Mr. Speaker. On this side, you know, we also choose to see the volunteers, the people who care about their neighbours, giving, fighting, sacrificing to help their neighbours.

And you know, members have said, well you shouldn't be so negative. You should smile a little bit more. So let's try. Like we don't just see the crumbling schools, the caved-in roofs. We see teachers in portables, in hallways, still fighting to give students the best education that they can, which is the education they deserve. You know, Mr. Speaker, we don't just see bodies sleeping in hallways on hospital beds because our ERs are overflowing. We don't just see crowded walk-in clinics because nobody can find a family doctor. We see our heroic health care workers — nurses, doctors — doing the best that they can to provide care as they're able.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we're not just being negative. We don't just see closing small businesses. We see those restaurants, those retailers, those coffee shops, those workers, still pushing and grinding and fighting skyrocketing costs, interest rates, labour shortages. Like the worst of both worlds, and they're still serving their communities, bringing that colour, that joy, and giving so much to local charities and initiatives.

You know, we see parents who are struggling to give their child opportunities equal to those of other kids around Canada and the world, and what a shame. Because we cannot and we should not just accept that a child's life chances should be determined the moment of their birth, the moment of their circumstances. There's still that hope, and that's what was really missing: that

vision and that relief.

And you know, I think some of the speeches from members on both sides, especially those with those personal stories, those are the most impactful. And I think those are the hardest to hear for all of us because those are the speeches that actually bring us together, right. It's the humanity that matters and should matter more in this place.

And I want to talk about one person in particular and it's a constituent of mine. She came to the legislature during the height of the pandemic. Her name's Dallas. She was waiting for a hip replacement, and then her other hip went while she was waiting for that hip replacement for two years, so she was here in a wheelchair. I didn't know her from Adam. I door knocked her. She said, well I've been waiting for years. Came to the legislature, just a feisty lady.

And I saw her outside at one of the rallies in support of . . . well opposed to Bill 137. And hadn't seen her, and she's, you know, a retired senior citizen. I said, hey, Dallas, what are you doing? She's like, well gosh I just, you know, just finished cancer treatment. I went through the hip replacements, and like this is the priority? I just had to drag the old bones out to, you know, let them know that I just think this is a waste of time and totally misplaced.

And you know, she's a raging granny in the informal sense. But it was great to see her. And I thought, well you know, that's right. Because we may have disagreement on this side around some of the priorities, but I think the most fundamental disagreement that we have in this House right now and when I look at the Speech from the Throne is around the urgency of some of the needs out there.

You know, I think about some of the casework that's come through my constituency office just in the past few days, the number of cut-offs of utilities while it's freezing outside. And I know there's a November 1 deadline, but still it's cold. It's snowy. It's dark. It's Canada. The number of people we've had come through our office who have had their power cut off, who haven't been given the opportunity to have their power limited but just had it fully cut off with no opportunity to do anything but repay it in full.

I think about a piece of casework that's come across my desk with somebody who just moved into a bachelor suite and had a smart meter installed and immediately got a \$13,000 power bill with no opportunity for a fair and achievable repayment plan. Like these are pretty serious concerns for people as we approach winter.

[22:15]

I think about the seniors and their loved ones who have come through my office, you know, having had their loved ones and their parents essentially evicted from Regina Lutheran and Parkview. I spent some time on the phone with a constituent this week whose mother was kicked out in less than 28 days. As per the regulations, you know, they weren't followed. And she and her husband spent days and days and days and days driving around trying to find a place for her mom to live.

And just some of the stories she told me about the very few spaces that she was able to find. You know, seniors, four to a basement suite with no chair lift and no way to get up or out in the night. Just some of these things that people are dealing with that are very, very urgent for them because these are about people, and these are about people that they love.

You know, I think about some of the struggles that many of us and many people out there are having within their own families, with their friends, with addictions, with mental health, and you know, it's easy to see it here in the city.

I think I've spoken about this before in the House. My daughter goes to the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] for daycare downtown, which is wonderful. She loves it. It's a fantastic place. They do such great work. And there has not been a day, I think, in the past 18 months maybe, that there hasn't been a tent city growing just up the street next to the Sask cancer building. And you know, we drive up and my daughter says, oh look, Mommy, people are camping. And she thinks it's fun. And nobody in Canada should be sleeping outside in winter.

I was in Whitehorse recently, mister deputy deputy speaker, for a public accounts conference. And on the last day, the Leader of the Opposition there who's a friend of mine, despite our political differences, he drove me around the city, was showing me his constituency. Whitehorse, beautiful place. Everybody should go. Big shout-out to the Yukon. And I said, you know, Currie, I'm really interested. This is a northern city. This is a remote city. It's a heavily and visibly Indigenous city. I haven't seen a single homeless person.

And I was there with my baby, so we walked, like, the entirety of Whitehorse trying to get him to sleep. Like, I put miles on. And so I said, you know, like what's up? I haven't seen anybody sleeping in the parks. I haven't seen anybody panhandling. You know, I saw a couple of people out maybe having a good time late at night. But what's the Whitehorse model? Like, how does this work?

And he said, well gosh, Aleana, it's Canada. You know, we've got a couple of people, we've got a dozen people who kind of hang out downtown. Everybody kind of knows them. It's a small city. But this is Canada. Nobody's sleeping outside.

And it was, honestly it was like a bit of a gut punch when I think about the situation here in Regina, in the city, with people that we know, with people that we love.

You know, Mr. Speaker, you talk for a few hours and all of a sudden 20 minutes comes up pretty quickly on you. So you know, I'm not even going to go through some of these recycled and tired announcements in the Throne Speech or things that will, you know, really only impact a small number of people. But I recently read a quote that really stuck with me, and I'll maybe end with this. And the quote is:

We should never forget that politics should tread lightly on people's lives, that our job is to shoulder the burden for working people and carry the load and not add to it.

And I think that's what was really missing from this Throne Speech. I've talked about, you know, what a missed opportunity

I felt it was to really set that new course, that vision for the province and the lack of urgency that we see in some of these announcements and re-announcements and recycled talking points, and pointing back to a record from 2007 instead of actually owning the record of this government.

People in this province, you know, are asking themselves — and they need to be able to answer a resounding “yes” to that burning question — are you better off than you were five years ago, let alone 16 years ago? People in this province need that vision, they need that unity, and they need that hope, and we did not see that from this Throne Speech. We saw a lack of vision, a desperate grasping at 2007, and a continuation of this era of uncertainty, mister deputy deputy speaker.

So for those reasons and so many more that have been canvassed thoroughly by my colleagues and will be in the next day or so, I think it’s safe to say I will not be supporting the Speech from the Throne and I will be supporting the amendment moved by my colleague, the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Friesen): — I recognize the member from Regina Pasqua.

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to stand on this floor and represent the constituency of Regina Pasqua. Mr. Speaker, this is my seventh response to a Speech from the Throne, and lots of my colleagues having their 17th response and a few of them having 20th response to the Speech from the Throne. Mr. Speaker, absolutely a privilege to sit between this experience, this wisdom, and moreover this positivity, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say thanks to the constituents of Regina Pasqua for their trust in me and support and feedback, and engage me from time to time on their doorsteps and drop into my office and on a phone call. And their feedback is very important. That helps us to make policies in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say thanks to all my colleagues for their valuable suggestions and support. Thanks to all the ministerial staff for their hard work and efforts they put into all MLAs’ work, Mr. Speaker. They are sometimes available after work and on weekends, especially in our caucus office, Mr. Speaker, and you can call them any time. I would like to say thanks to all of them, especially the chief of staff of our caucus, Ang Currie. Thank you very much for your support.

I would like to say thanks to my CA, Josh Fryklund. Mr. Speaker, he is going back to school now. He is only working on Friday. I hired a new CA — it’s been one month, more than one month now — Mounir Rahwan. Previously he was working in the Canadian Armed Forces. He’s a very intelligent guy and taking care of my office really good. Thank you very much for your work in my constituency, Regina Pasqua.

I would like to say thanks to my family, extended family, my siblings, my brother and sister for their moral support and their prayers while I’m working. And I would like to say thank you very much for my wife. We’ve been together, we’ve been married since 24 years, Mr. Speaker. Going to celebrate silver jubilee next year.

I do remember that 25 years ago, Mr. Speaker . . . This is the family values, the system. It was June and I was sleeping — very hot weather in Pakistan — and was sleeping at 3 a.m. My brother, older brother came in and he tried to wake me up. Actually I was up and pretending not to wake up. And he was trying to tell me, I found a girl for you. So when I kept sleeping he said, you know, whatever. I found a girl for you, just would like to tell you that.

I jumped on the bed and so I was sitting there and said, say what? He said, well I found a girl for you. I say, okay. And I said, well can I see the picture? He said, well her father did not give me the picture. I say, okay. And I said, what is her name? He said, well I forgot the name. And that’s a very true story. This is how the system works.

So I could not sleep for one month. And I say, the marriage was in first week . . . no, the last week of . . . actually the 14th of July, actually. Yeah. The 14th of July. And that the first time I saw the girl walking towards me, and I look at my brother, and he look at me and said, well this is it. This is your wife, and you’re going to spend life with her.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, a very responsible mother, very responsible lady, and very beautiful girl I found. Actually, my brother found for me.

We have, Attia and I have three boys, Mr. Speaker. The first boy is Ayaz. He is in final year of university, is taking biochem, Mr. Speaker. And he says, the future is bright here in Saskatchewan, and I’m ready to serve here in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, middle boy is Kashif. He is first year in U of R [University of Regina] taking electrical engineering. I do not know how he is going to complete, because most of the time I can find him in squash court playing squash. Mr. Speaker, he is an excellent athlete. I am so proud that he participated in Canada Winter Games last February, 2023, in Prince Edward Island. With that, I would like to say — all the squash coaches and especially that’s team manager, Tara Richter, and Thomas Jackson, that’s provincial coach — thank you very much for getting all the team ready for Prince Edward Island for Canada Winter Games.

And, Mr. Speaker, the third boy is Arsalan. He is in grade 9 in Campbell Collegiate. All those three boys went into French immersion school. And he’s a very intelligent boy, Mr. Speaker, also plays squash. Recently he completed gun safety and a hunter safety course, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne set our target and goals and the directions to achieve. This Speech from the Throne is a great plan, covers everything that one government can offer for well-being of people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start my response from the Premier’s quote. Premier said:

Together with Saskatchewan people, we will continue to build a strong province, a strong economy, strong communities and strong families.

Moe said, and:

We will protect what we have built together from the risks of a global uncertainty and from a federal government that seems intent on shutting down important parts of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I read that phrase, that's "build and protect." And this government since 2007, we are building and protecting. But when you say that — protecting — and you know, what exactly is that mean, what we protecting? Protecting is our primary responsibility, which we almost pledge every day. You know, when I go on . . . read that or sing the national anthem, we say this: we stand on guard for thee. What exactly is that mean, Mr. Speaker? That what we guarding for, what we protecting?

That, Mr. Speaker, that's of course, this is a very patriotic emotion that mean that we are protecting our boundaries. That's very true, but what else? Yes, we are protecting our land. Yes, we protecting our waters, we protecting our air, and we protecting our economy, Mr. Speaker. And also we are protecting our people. And that imply, mean they are making sure they have a quality of life in this province, having food on the table and pay the bills and everything, Mr. Speaker.

Protecting people, making sure that people thrive in their life and having very valuable jobs, Mr. Speaker. Our government recently partnered with Suncrest College to establish the Saskatchewan Emergency Response Institute located outside of Melville, Mr. Speaker.

Building and protecting since 2007 our education system by investing \$2.4 billion to build 60 new or replacement schools and fund 30 major renovation projects in many communities all over Saskatchewan. Our government this year projects a francophone school in Regina. These are the few highlights, Mr. Speaker, that our government is investing into.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Friesen): — It now being 10:30 p.m., this House stands adjourned till 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Scott Moe
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Highways

Hon. Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Education

Hon. David Marit
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Tim McLeod
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
Seniors and Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Government Relations
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for
First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the
Provincial Capital Commission
Minister Responsible for the
Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Joe Hargrave
Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement
Minister Responsible for the
Global Transportation Hub Authority

Hon. Paul Merriman
Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety
Minister Responsible for the Firearms Secretariat

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Energy and Resources

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Trade and Export Development
Minister of Immigration and Career Training
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Hon. Laura Ross
Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for
Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation

Hon. Everett Hindley
Minister of Health

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Environment

Hon. Gordon Wyant
Minister of Advanced Education