



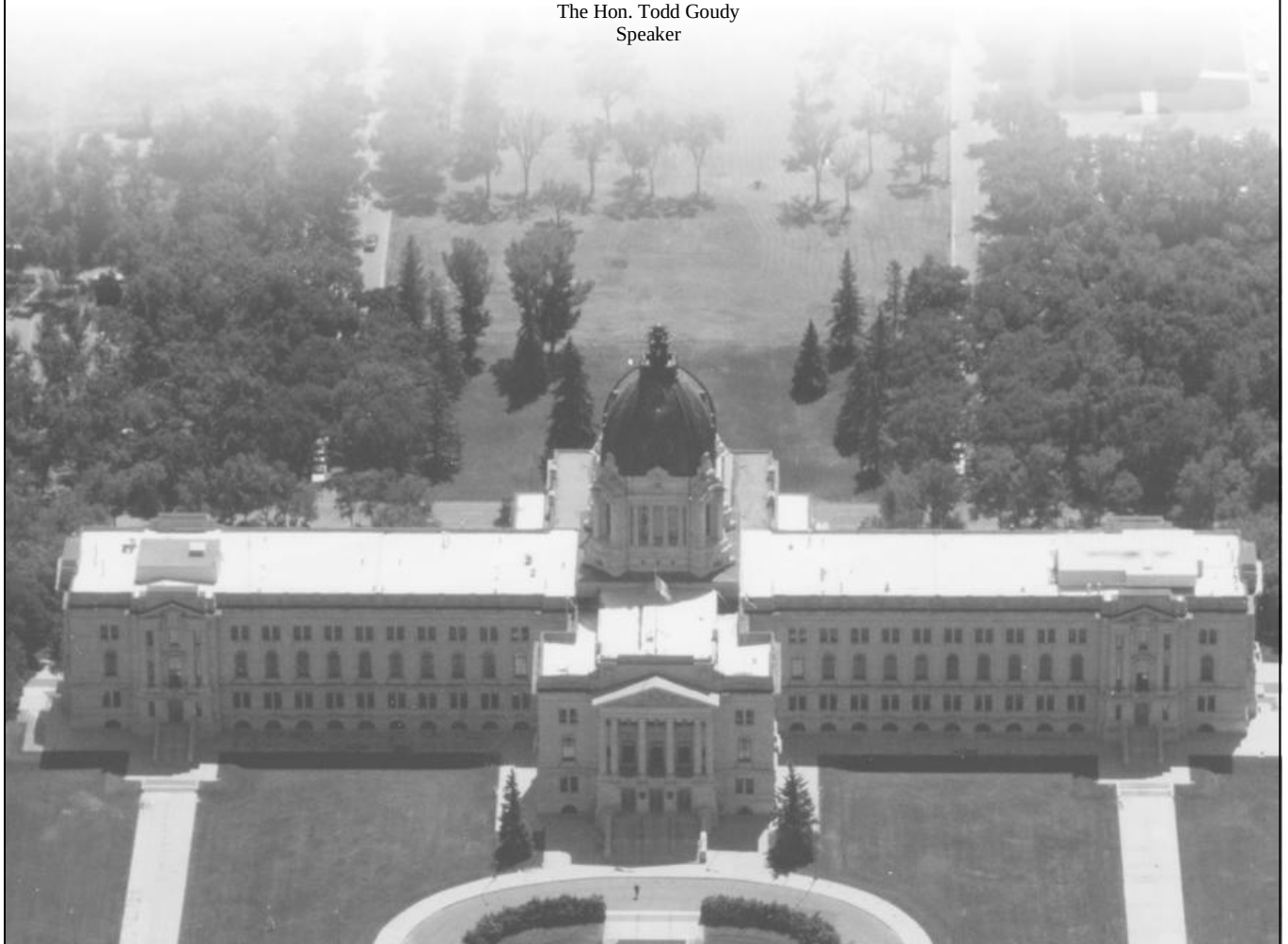
SECOND SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)
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authority of
The Hon. Todd Goudy
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 30th Legislature

Lieutenant Governor — Her Honour the Honourable Bernadette McIntyre, S.O.M.

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Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

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Keisig, Hon. Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)
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Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
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Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Schmalz, Hon. Eric — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
Senger, Brittney — Saskatoon Southeast (NDP)
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Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Thorsteinson, James — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)
Warrington, Darcy — Saskatoon Stonebridge (NDP)
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Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Mount Royal (NDP)
Young, Aleana — Regina South Albert (NDP)
Young, Hon. Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 34; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 27

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

Speaker Goudy: — It now being 7 o'clock, we will resume debate.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Michael Weger, seconded by Terri Bromm, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Jordan McPhail.]

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

Brittney Senger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will pick up where I left off. Last week the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Cumberland, someone I am proud to call my colleague and my friend, delivered a powerful speech about his experience with the wildfires. He demonstrated the kind of leadership that is expected from any member of this Legislative Assembly. And frankly I am disappointed that our own government didn't step up in the way that the MLA from Cumberland did.

Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatoon Southeast were devastated to see the government's inaction. While the Premier was golfing, people were losing their homes, their businesses, and their cabins. Mr. Speaker, residents in Saskatoon Southeast told me that they believed this government did everything wrong in how they handled the wildfires.

When the government failed, Saskatoon Southeast stepped up. I was moved by the countless community members who donated items to evacuees. Through their generosity we collected truckloads of items that were delivered to evacuation centres. I have never been prouder to represent a community that steps up for others. True leadership means showing up when people need you most.

Mr. Speaker, this summer I learned of another community devastated by government inaction, the town of Richmond. For two years a cult terrorized residents. They filmed and photographed children. They dumped sewage in the street. They intimidated and threatened and harassed locals. The community begged for help. They reached out to their MLA. They reached out to the Premier, to anyone who would listen. And still they were ignored. That is not leadership. That is abandonment.

And it wasn't the only failure. That same MLA knew of a woman who he thought was being trafficked. And instead of contacting the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], he referred to her as "pretty lady."

Mr. Speaker, when I was the shadow minister for the Status of Women, I asked this government what steps it was taking to

combat human trafficking. I was shown posters that hang in bathroom stalls, posters that refer people to 211, a service that, based on their website, is not equipped to handle labour trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, a poster is not a plan. We need real investments in prevention, in survivor support, in training for front-line workers. And yes, we need education. We need to allow third-party educators back in schools.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech fails the people of Saskatchewan. It fails to make life more affordable. It fails to address the health care crisis. It fails our educators, our social workers, our families, our children, and people living with disabilities.

Saskatchewan deserves better. Saskatchewan deserves a government that will listen, that acts, and that leads with compassion.

So, Mr. Speaker, I cannot and will not support this government's Throne Speech as moved by the government, but I will proudly support the amendment brought forward by the member from Cumberland. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Travis Keisig: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the famous words of former MLA Nancy Heppner, "and now for something totally different."

As always, Mr. Speaker, it's a great honour to rise and enter into remarks. It was a very busy summer filled with many events, but I'm happy to be back in the House today with all of my colleagues, debating the Speech from the Throne.

The day of the Throne Speech is always very exciting, Mr. Speaker. The building is bustling with so much activity. We all have friends, family, constituents sharing our excitement about Her Honour delivering a speech, and just having so many people in the building, Mr. Speaker, adds to that level. And I was very fortunate to even have guests arrive from Texas and Montana, made the long trip up to see the Speech from the Throne.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, my wife, Sheila, was not able to make it this year as she was in Ottawa with SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] members advocating for the people of the province. My wife does fantastic work, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very proud of the work she's done and continues to do for the province as the president of the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association. I'm very happy to have a wife who not only supports every aspect of my career but also has such a strong ambition to be successful and pave an incredible legacy for herself.

Before I get too far, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not thank other people who have assisted me in my journey as your MLA. My daughters — I have to talk about them, Mr. Speaker — are very passionate, hard-working, and I may be a little biased, but they sure have turned out to be amazing young women.

My eldest daughter, Shannara, when she's not busy at work as an

LPN [licensed practical nurse], is looking up her next destination where she's going to travel off to. She's really got a travelling bug, Mr. Speaker, but her and her boyfriend do have a lot of fun. And she really enjoys her work as an LPN working within the province of Saskatchewan.

My younger daughter, Sharlize, started a new job in Yorkton. She's a veterinary technician and loves animals, loves her work, loves the veterinarian she works with. And when she's not at work, Mr. Speaker, she is busy on the farm. Her and her boyfriend have rented a bunch more land and have been very busy. And I can honestly say I have done more farm work this year, Mr. Speaker, than I have in the last four years combined. It was really good to get out and operate a combine and assist them with harvest. You know, they did such a good job of planting the seeds, and very happy to report to the House that they had a very successful harvest.

I also want to thank the people in the building who keep this building running, Mr. Speaker, from the custodians to the Clerks, you know, the legislative staff, the staff that works in caucus. I want all of them to know that the work you do to keep this building running smoothly is essential, and we appreciate everything that you do for us and the people of the province.

And I also want to thank you, Mr. Speaker. You have done some really good work with the Legislative Assembly Service, starting the new program you have for the mock parliament. I was really excited to have . . . Southey school was able to attend. They were the inaugural school. It's a great program that really teaches students about how the legislative process works, and I'm going to be doing a lot of lobbying to have other schools from my constituency attend, Mr. Speaker. You did a fantastic job, and the Legislative Assembly Service did a great job on it too.

I also want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, on your work with the library staff on something that I planted the seed with the Speaker and he has followed through with it. There is 296 rural municipalities within the province of Saskatchewan. And the Speaker's been very passionate about this: there should be an RM [rural municipality] map for every RM in the Legislative Library. And they are slowly getting there. I check in on them every now and then to pull a map and see how they're progressing. It's a slow process. The mail strike has kind of thrown a monkey wrench in, Mr. Speaker, but they are doing great work at the library.

I also want to thank the team I have in the building here, Mr. Speaker: my chief of staff, Kenneth; Kielle; Leona; and Emily. Your hard work is evident, and I'm very grateful to have you as part of the Environment team and assist me on my journey as Minister of the Environment.

And there's always that ongoing debate in here, Mr. Speaker, about our constituency assistants. Tina has done fantastic work serving the constituents of Last Mountain-Touchwood. We started together. She's been with me for over five years now, Mr. Speaker, keeps the office running smoothly. And I really can't say enough good things about her, like her work ethic and her diligence and everything else. It's noted by the constituents, and it's definitely noted by myself too. I truly have a great team that kind of surrounds me, and I really appreciate all of them.

And I also have to thank the constituents of Last Mountain-Touchwood, Mr. Speaker. None of us would be here without the support of our constituents. And I really appreciate them reaching out to me and understanding that your role in cabinet, it can be quite demanding. But they are very honoured to have a member representing them in Executive Council. And you have to say thank you, Mr. Speaker. You truly do.

It is also our duty, Mr. Speaker, as members of the Legislative Assembly, to keep this province and its people strong, safe, and secure. If we were to fail at this, we would be dishonouring the legacy of all of those who've come before us. This is why ensuring that the government works closely with our greatest asset — the people of the province — to build confidence in our economy, so they can feel safe in their homes and communities and that their future and this province's future are secure.

When the Lieutenant Governor was delivering the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, you may have heard the word "legacy" being mentioned. And that truly made me think about how legacy plays such an important role in a family unit. And I think back to the passing of my father, Mr. Speaker, and since his passing, I've come to appreciate the importance of building a legacy that both of my parents would be very proud of.

With each new generation our government has the opportunity to build and improve on what those before us have built, while ensuring we honour their hard work and the challenges that they faced. What's important about a legacy is that we take the situation we were left with, the lessons we were taught, and begin to leave our own mark in history by working together to build a stronger, safer, and more secure opportunity for all the future generations.

There was lot of investments that are going on in the constituency, Mr. Speaker. And one thing that I'm very excited about and I know many of my constituents are excited about, it's the passing lanes from Highway 10 from Fort Qu'Appelle to Melville. This project includes turning lanes and the construction of eight passing lanes. As we are sitting here today, work is under way. They have culverts there now, Mr. Speaker, and large cattle culverts for some of the livestock producers there.

When the initial announcement was made, I had a lot of phone calls and text messages and constituents reaching out to me and just, you know, one word: finally. They were very happy to see it moving forward.

I always remember in 2013-ish when the very first passing lanes in the province were put in from Fort Qu'Appelle to Balgonie. That was the most dangerous stretch of highway, Mr. Speaker, and when those passing lanes were built it was an absolute game changer for safety and for productivity. They work very well. They're a very important part of our highway network, and people really, really appreciate that.

Saskatchewan has also led the nation in year-over-year job growth with the lowest unemployment rate, and leads the country in capital investment growth. Our economy is the strongest economy in Canada, Mr. Speaker. That did not happen on its own — took a great deal of work and a group of forward-thinking individuals. And we also have to say, a lot of hard work from our Premier.

Now it was truly an honour, Mr. Speaker, to be asked to serve as Minister of the Environment. And you get a lot of great opportunities. Earlier this summer, I was down in Estevan for the opening of the new Sarcan recycling centre, and I also had an opportunity to tour the Regina Sarcans.

Sarcan is, you know, truly a hidden gem in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's a leader in environmental protection, job creation, and economic growth. I was really honoured to witness first-hand, and got a real nice behind-the-scenes tour of the meaningful work they're doing for our province, our community, and our citizens.

Also, Mr. Speaker, this summer I had the opportunity to head up to Denare Beach. You have to really see some of the challenges they were facing after the wildfires, and I went up there several times, met many of the community members. And you have to see it to really get a handle on the scope of the challenges that they were facing.

I met with the local leaders to discuss how our government could put families in the North first as they recover from the severity of the fire season. Along with many of my colleagues, we met with officials and were provided with regular briefings. Our government has committed 20 million to support cleanup and debris management efforts.

[19:15]

The Ministry of Environment has worked with Denare Beach and East Trout Lake on landfill expansion plans for the wildfire debris. Now I really want to put this into the record, Mr. Speaker. The plans were reviewed and the team at the Ministry of Environment worked diligently, and it was approved later on that day. They had the entire team focused on these landfill construction permits, and it flowed seamlessly.

The team at the Ministry of Environment did fantastic work, and I really want to thank them for all of their due diligence. It's greatly appreciated by the people of Saskatchewan. The wildfire recovery task team is committed to community-centred recovery. We remain committed to working together to rebuild in that northern part of the province.

Also this summer, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to join my colleague, the member from Moosomin. We did an aquatic invasive species event at the boat inspection station on No. 1 Highway on the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border. You can't have a Minister of the Environment get to his feet without talking about aquatic invasive species, Mr. Speaker.

We truly see the devastating impact that aquatic invasive species have, like zebra mussels, and they continue to spread in Ontario, Quebec, and right next door in Manitoba and North Dakota. This province is a premier destination for boaters, anglers, and anyone looking for opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors. We know that Saskatchewan's thousands of beautiful lakes and rivers are a big part of what makes this province so special.

Members of the public have a role to play in reducing the risk of introducing AIS [aquatic invasive species] into our waters by becoming knowledgeable on how aquatic invasive species can unintentionally spread. The clean, drain, dry watercraft campaign

ensures everyone understands the risks and our government's priority to ensure our communities are safe and secure from aquatic invasive species. Prevention efforts as a province have been very successful, and I'm happy to report that no invasive zebra mussels have been found in Saskatchewan waterbodies to date. We must remain diligent and continue to ensure Saskatchewan is free. And our government is committed to ensuring that Saskatchewan's economy also remains the strongest in Canada.

Another environmental program I've had the privilege of bringing forward, Mr. Speaker, is the derelict building pilot program. We believe municipalities are best suited to know what they need when it comes to disposing of them. This is a voluntary program, Mr. Speaker. It will allow municipalities and our world-class volunteer firefighters to partner and provide training opportunities that communities and fire chiefs deem relevant. This pilot project will be totally voluntary and require sign-off from both the municipality and the volunteer fire department. Applications are now open for municipalities to start filling out, with an official start date of November 1st. Our government is always putting families first by ensuring Saskatchewan communities are safe and secure.

In the Throne Speech too, Mr. Speaker, we talked about how the government will amend *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act* to protect Saskatchewan gun owners from financial liability resulting from the federal firearms prohibitions and preserve the right to receive fair compensation, since the federal government continues to move forward on their gun buyback program that takes firearms away from responsible, law-abiding firearm owners.

This program will do nothing to reduce firearm-related crimes across the nation. Our government will always continue to ensure our communities are safe and secure by addressing the issue of firearms-related crimes, and not going after legal firearm owners and our great hunting community.

Also this summer, Mr. Speaker, I really had the privilege of being elected president of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, or PNWER. PNWER is an organization representing the American states of Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska; the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan; and the territories of Yukon and Northwest Territories. Combined, Mr. Speaker, we are the 11th-largest economy in the world, and we do a lot of work on cross-border trade, animal health issues, economic corridors, among a myriad of other things.

During these challenging times with our neighbours to the south, these organizations truly show their value. We need allies in our negotiations and people who are truly informed on the issues with a deep understanding of just how intertwined our economies are, how all of us benefit from free and unfettered trade moving north and south.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, I was in Portland, Oregon for the PNWER economic forum, and I had the opportunity to address many participants in both the public and private industry sectors. And I talked a lot about widgets. Now I like to use the term "widgets" to describe what your jurisdiction produces. In Saskatchewan's case it's agri-food products, energy, fertilizer,

forestry, and manufactured goods, just to name a few.

You can produce the best widget in the world, however it's worth nothing if you can't get it to your customer. Oregon, Washington, BC [British Columbia], and Alaska have truly won the geographical lottery by having access to tidewater, which allows them to ship their widgets anywhere in the world. And there's not only an economic case, Mr. Speaker, but there's also a moral case, I feel, to allow every jurisdiction to have the ability to access those tidewater ports. Because in Saskatchewan we produce the most environmentally, socially, and sustainably produced widgets, and we want to get it to the global marketplace.

I just want to end on this note, Mr. Speaker. Twelve months ago Saskatchewan people had a choice at the polls, and they chose this Premier and this Saskatchewan Party to lead the province during these challenging times. But like the Premier said, they also voted for change. And that change was delivered.

An all-new cabinet that has been working diligently alongside caucus on new energy policy, supporting our farm families with land ownership review, and innovative ways of delivering health care all across this province with one true goal in mind: to keep our economy strong, keep our communities safe, and secure our future. So my children and your children, Mr. Speaker, and all young people across Saskatchewan will have opportunities to stay, work, and raise their families in Saskatchewan. And that, Mr. Speaker, is truly the ultimate goal.

So with that, I will be supporting the Throne Speech moved by the member from Weyburn-Bengough, seconded by the member from Carrot River Valley. And I will not be supporting any amendments brought forward by the opposition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Matt Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very happy to rise tonight and present my response to the Speech from the Throne. And before I get into some of the pleasantries that we start with, I'll just say this off the top. If I see any more cheering from members opposite, they can say that they're cheering for the Jays game. I'm going to tell myself they're cheering for what I have to say tonight. So they might want to be careful if they're checking the score.

Mr. Speaker, you know, it is an honour to work in this building to represent the good people of Saskatchewan that we all represent. And you know, over the last number of months, like many of us, I've had the pleasure of connecting with my constituents in a number of ways.

In Saskatoon Eastview, knocked a lot of doors this summer trying to stay in touch, you know. Like some of us had a big boundary change, and those folks were new to me in the last election. So I made sure to get out and knock on all of those doors this summer and reconnect with all of those folks, and that was incredibly valuable. Number of community barbecues, community association barbecues, our MLA barbecues, seniors' teas, the families that I get to coach and work with with my kids' sports. I coach some flag football and coaching some tackle football this

fall. I'm not there tonight, but when I'm there I help coach offensive line with the KFL [Kinsmen Football League] Raiders. I'll have more to say about that later on.

You know, what I keep hearing from people in my community in Eastview and around Saskatoon when folks come up and chat with me at these events, at barbecues, on their doorstep, they always say the same thing. And I know that we've heard this lots in the past, they say, just keep going. You're on the right track. Our province needs change. And they encourage me to just keep going. I'll tell you, I bring that encouragement with me here to my seat on the floor of their Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to a few people who support me in my work here. I'm going to start with my staff back in my constituency office in Saskatoon. I've had lots of turnover. My full-time assistant has been on mat leave for a number of months. Katie Edwards had her second child back in the winter, and she's taking time to be with her young, growing family, which is amazing that we have the opportunity to do that here in Canada and in Saskatchewan. And I wish her well as she cares for those two young ones.

But recently I've had Sebastian Gardulski join me in my office. You know, it was a really short job interview because he was already working in our shared office space with the member from Saskatoon Southeast and had been a casual in my office. And I had already seen the work, the quality of work that he brings each and every day. So it was a pretty short interview, but I am incredibly thankful to have him in my corner and on my team.

He is multi-talented, deep connections in the community in Saskatoon, is incredibly well organized. And I think, most importantly, he is deeply committed to the constituents of Eastview. And just in the last week he has gone above and beyond to support some folks in desperate need in my community. So I want to thank him for that, thank him for being part of my team.

And I think most importantly, Mr. Speaker, my family. You know, we all say a lot, and sometimes when things become cliché we forget the deep meaning behind them, but none of us serve here alone. And my family back home in Saskatoon, you know, it all starts with my wife, Emma. She is not just the love of my life, she's my person. She supports me in what I do when I'm away from home. And she's right now probably the busiest that she's ever been, taking care of our family and our three kids, our home, our pets, running a business, supporting people in her circle, and supporting a lot of folks in our community.

So I want to say thank you to her for everything that she does, not just in support of me in this role but our family and our community. She's really an incredible person, and I'm very thankful to share this life with her.

My daughter, Etta, you know, a lot of members opposite often check in, and I just want to say how much I appreciate that. You know, even the member from Willowgrove came and watched her at a weightlifting competition back in June. And I want to say, you know, how much I appreciate the support. She's doing great. She's on the right track. She's had a little bit of adversity this fall. She didn't get invited to a competition that, you know, we thought that she should have, and I'll save my opinions on

that for another time. But you know, when your kid's faced a ton of adversity, she didn't skip a beat. She just got right back to training.

She's working hard. She's on the right track, and you know, there's a lot of travel in the year ahead. I think in the next year she's got to travel to Scotland, Egypt, and China, Venezuela. I'm missing a number of places. So she'll continue to represent our province and our country internationally through the sport of Olympic weightlifting, and I think she's very much on track for the next Olympic Games in LA [Los Angeles] in 2028. That's her goal.

My son Tom, you know, again it's one of these clichés, like they grow up so fast. He's 12 years old; he's wearing size 13 shoes. And he played a basketball game the other weekend, and he did such a good job rebounding. I couldn't believe it. Like he's not as tall as me, Mr. Speaker. I've still got about 2 or 3 inches on him, but we stood next to each other and raised our hands and he's got a higher reach than me. He's 12 years old. And I remember holding this little baby boy. It feels like yesterday. And he's got a higher reach than me. And you know, it's just one of those clichés. They grow up so fast.

And he's just, he's on the right track. I mentioned the team I help coaching earlier. He plays tight end for the KFL Raiders through Saskatoon Minor Football. We're getting to the end of an undefeated season. City finals coming up next week. I hope in a week's time, I've got a good story to tell about how that city final game goes. But we've got a busy next week, and he's watching game film with his team tonight.

My youngest, Myles, you know, he's having a great year in grade 3. He's working so hard at speech therapy this fall trying to improve; you know, he wants to be understood. He's working so hard at it, and I just admire that. And something that I try and instill in my kids is that there's two things that you can always control and that's your attitude and your effort. And if they're watching at home right now they're probably laughing that I said that because they hear me say it all the time. But you always have control of your attitude and your effort, and I'm so proud of Myles the way that he brings his best, most positive attitude and best effort to everything that he does.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues, my colleagues in opposition. I get to work with incredible people. And to each of them as a person, I appreciate the camaraderie and the teamwork that we have. But there's two that I just want to single out, and those are the members from Athabasca and Cumberland.

[19:30]

You know, we've heard a lot about the speeches that they've delivered in here and the integrity with which they represent their constituents. It's remarkable, and their constituents can be very proud of the representation that they have here. And yes, that is often emotional. They care so deeply about their communities and the people that they represent.

And you know, earlier today, Mr. Speaker, I heard an apology from the Premier. I'll say it was unlike anything that I've heard in here. I actually thought it was quite sincere and commendable.

But you know, for these two guys, they've only been here for a year, and they've already got it figured out that leaders need to show up. And they have shown up for their constituents through some of the worst times that they'll ever experience — terrifying times being evacuated from those wildfires — and they continue to show up for their constituents right here in their Assembly. And I'm so proud to call them colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank our leader, the Leader of the Opposition. She's a leader who continues to show up, whether that's showing up in the North when disaster strikes or showing up for people here in Regina Lakeview in her constituency. She's a leader who shows up by putting other people first. She never makes it about herself. It's never about herself. She gives credit to others, always takes time to listen, understand, and collaborate. And I think that those are key qualities for a leader, and she embodies every one of them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in response to the Speech from the Throne, as shadow minister for Education, I want to take a few minutes to talk about what I heard and went back and read through as far as what was in the Speech from the Throne. You know, the items included that were related to Education were really quite remarkable. Because while this government has certainly earned a reputation for refusing to admit a mistake, and they often double down on their biggest failures, we have some commitments here and some things to discuss from the Speech from the Throne that I thought were real admissions of past failures by this government, and I would say ongoing failures from this government.

Number one is funding for education. You know, in the Speech from the Throne we actually heard this government boast about hiring 500 new teachers. That's true; we have 500 new teachers, roughly, working in the province this fall. But let me remind the Assembly that it is not the government that we should be thanking for those new teachers. The people that we should be thanking for these 500 new teachers are teachers. It was teachers who stood up and fought for the conditions in our classrooms.

Now I do not remember seeing any Sask Party members outside in minus 35 degrees waving signs calling for adequate funding for our schools. I don't remember seeing any Sask Party MLAs marching up and down 8th Street in Saskatoon or around Midtown mall in the dead of winter calling for the supports that our students need.

I do remember, Mr. Speaker, seeing this government fighting teachers tooth and nail, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars putting up billboards to vilify teachers. I do remember this government engaging in the longest teacher job action in the history of the province. And why were teachers out there? Fighting for the supports that their students need because of this government's failure.

Now if this government asks their own friends at the Fraser Institute, they'll tell them that from the years 2013 to 2023, in their most recent study, the rest of the country saw education funding go up nearly 6 per cent. When adjusted for inflation and enrolment, the rest of the country saw a 6 per cent increase in education funding. Saskatchewan saw nearly a 15 per cent decrease — 15 per cent decrease in per-student funding adjusted for inflation and enrolment.

The result of that decade of failure is that this province — by this government's own numbers — in just the last four years, before this school year, saw 15,000 new students and 86 fewer classroom teachers. That is a decade of failure.

Now this government didn't decide to just listen. They didn't see the light. They didn't decide to invest in education. This government got schooled. They got schooled by teachers who were standing up for their working conditions because their working conditions are our children's learning conditions. That's what happened, and I do not give credit to this government for funding those teachers. That was the agreement that they signed. They had to do it, Mr. Speaker.

Now the second thing that I heard in the Speech from the Throne was about literacy rates and early years supports. It's great to see this government identify a problem that is a problem. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it's been a problem for a long time. That decade of underfunding has had a negative impact on literacy rates in this province, and of course it would. That makes a lot of sense.

In the Throne Speech they said, "Having students read at the appropriate grade level is one of the most important measures to guarantee future academic success." And my question to the government is, did they just figure this out now? Did they not know that early years literacy was important when they cut \$50 million from the education budget in 2017? Did they forget this fact for an entire decade when they drove education funding in Saskatchewan to last place? Did they just figure out now that early years literacy is important for the health and prosperity of our province? It's actually quite remarkable to see that in a Speech from the Throne.

The third area in education, Mr. Speaker, was to see this government identify a problem, which is the slow — I would call it a crawling — pace of building new schools. They said in the Speech from the Throne that they would introduce legislation to avoid "unnecessary delays in new school builds." Well I've got news for members opposite: that those unnecessary delays are nearly all of this government's making.

We have schools in this province that were announced six years ago that are just now breaking ground. Six years of waiting. I'd call that an unnecessary delay. This is not normal, and the changes that this government brought in are the root cause of those delays.

Now everyone in the education sector can see this. Everyone sees this, and I'm glad the Sask Party government finally sees it. And I'm glad that they've identified a problem that they created, but Mr. Speaker, I will reserve my judgment until I actually see the legislation. As the saying goes, the devil is always in the details. So we'll wait and see what the solution is to the problem that they themselves created.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I wrap up, you know, overall in the Speech from the Throne there's really nothing new here for the biggest issues that Saskatchewan people are facing. We have tariffs imposed on our nation — impacting our province, many sectors of our economy — from China and from President Trump. And we know how hard it is for members opposite to stand up against President Trump and his job-killing and economy-crushing

tariffs. We know why they struggle to stand up to him, and I think that that's something that they need to answer to, Mr. Speaker.

We have a cost-of-living crisis. And while we bring forward solutions and ideas when it comes to rent control, this government refuses, despite the fact that today we had folks filling these galleries, seniors on fixed incomes, who we represent that this government refuses to listen to. We have a cost-of-living crisis. My question to the government is, is everything as great as they said it was in the Throne Speech? If people are doing so well, why are Saskatchewan people the most stressed in the entire country about their finances? Saskatchewan people report the highest financial insecurity in the entire country.

So if things are as great as they say it is in the Speech from the Throne, who should we believe? And I'll tell you, we're going to believe and rely on what folks are telling us. The people of Saskatchewan are stressed about their finances, and this government needs to get to work.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health care, you know, we need big, bold changes to get health care out of last place in Saskatchewan, and there was nothing new in the Speech from the Throne, nothing to address the challenges. What I did hear was a lot of boasting, a lot of back-patting when it comes to health care — quite remarkable.

When we say that this government is out of touch, this is the exact kind of garbage that we're talking about: boasting about the situation in health care on the same day that 450 actual health care workers write to this government, sign their names, and publish that publicly to say how bad the situation is in our biggest hospital in Saskatoon. That's what out of touch means. And we had a perfect display right here on Throne Speech day.

And, Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech fails to deliver on anything new on the biggest issues that Saskatchewan people face when it comes to tariffs, economic issues, cost of living, health care, and education. And for that reason I will not be supporting the Speech from the Throne. I will be supporting the amendment brought forward by my colleague from Cumberland. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Megan Patterson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, as the MLA from Last Mountain-Touchwood said at one time, "now for something totally different."

It is a great privilege to rise in this Chamber and respond to the Speech from the Throne. I want to begin by saying how deeply honoured I am to serve the people of Moose Jaw and the province of Saskatchewan.

First and foremost, I want to thank my family for their love and support, which allows me to do this important work. I want to thank my constituency assistants, Denise Maki and Carol Acton, for their ability to connect with constituents and to keep me organized. I would also like to thank the staff here at the legislature for all they do behind the scenes, and of course to my colleagues for all their support. It is truly an honour to work every

day to improve the lives of the people of Moose Jaw and our beautiful province.

Before I respond directly to the Throne Speech, I'd like to reflect on the last year. This year has been one of growth and transition for me. Coming from the business world and post-secondary, where I taught professionalism and ethics, I've both been surprised and sometimes disappointed at the behaviour and allegations we've seen in this Chamber. I want to sincerely thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your ongoing efforts to improve the tone and decorum within this Assembly. I believe we can still do better. We must all reflect on the examples that we set both here and online for the students that sit in this Assembly and for our province.

As elected representatives we are called to be servant leaders to put the needs of our province above our own. We must remember at the end of the day every one of us here shares the same goal: to make life better for the people of Saskatchewan. A more collaborative, respectful approach would enable us to better serve the constituents we represent and maintain a strong, growing province.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege though for me to sit on this side of the Assembly with the government focused on three key priorities: keeping our economy strong, our communities safe, and our future secure.

A strong economy gives us the ability to respond to challenges such as the devastating wildfires that impacted northern Saskatchewan this summer. My heart goes out to all those affected. I want to take a second to commend my colleague, the Minister of Public Safety, for his strength and leadership during this crisis. Thank you to our public service, the community leaders, firefighters, pilots, volunteers, and emergency responders who worked tirelessly through these fires to keep people safe.

Due to our strong economy and strong leadership, our government was able to respond by providing 15 million to the Canadian Red Cross for direct support to residents, 10 million for temporary housing, 20 million for community cleanup. And you have our commitment to continue to work with you to rebuild your lives in any way needed.

Mr. Speaker, a strong economy is the backbone of our province. Right now Saskatchewan's economy is not only strong, it is the strongest in the nation. More people are working than ever before. We've led the country in year-over-year job growth. There are more women, more young people, and more First Nations and Métis people working than ever before. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada. And despite global uncertainty, our economy remains relatively resilient, thanks to this government's strategic thinking.

Diversification has been key. Our government's foresight and long-term plan to expand export markets is paying off. We now trade with 160 markets around the world and the value of our exports has more than doubled since 2007, from 20 billion to over 50 billion annually.

[19:45]

We continue to see record investment and growth. Saskatchewan's real GDP [gross domestic product] is at an all-time high of 80.5 billion, and this is up 2.6 from 2024.

We continue to lead the country in capital investment growth. Capital investment in Saskatchewan reached \$16 billion, a 10 per cent increase over 2024, leading the nation. In Moose Jaw, we have seen exciting local investments including the new pulse flour mill by Simpson Seeds. This family-owned, homegrown business is now the largest independently owned pulse processor and exporter in Saskatchewan. Supported by our government's incentive programs, this project creates more jobs for our economy and adds more value here at home.

Mr. Speaker, last week was Small Business Week, an important time to recognize that small businesses are the heart of our province and the heartbeat of our communities. In Moose Jaw, tourism is a key economic driver, generating roughly 134 million in economic spinoff last year alone.

The Tunnels of Moose Jaw welcomed over 95,000 visitors, making it the most visited tourist attraction in the province. Since opening in 2000, they've welcomed more than 2.3 million guests from around the world. If you don't know the story behind our notorious city, you better plan a trip to Moose Jaw and call me when you get there.

I want to highlight three strong, successful female business owners in Moose Jaw who all shared inspiring stories at the WESK [Women Entrepreneurs Saskatchewan] Business Women of Moose Jaw event recently: Kelly Gosselin, the owner of High Regard Catering & Kitchen; Julie Howe, president of Bar Over HC Livestock; and Elyce Simpson, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Simpson Seeds. It was an incredible evening of authenticity and inspiration, catered by none other than High Regard Catering.

The downtown Moose Jaw business association has been a vital force to nurturing our local business community, hosting tourist events such as the Little Chicago Show 'n' Shine, Greek night, and the Christmas In October which brought vibrancy to our downtown last weekend.

The recent launch of the Helping Hands initiative reflects a deep commitment to community renewal, not only beautifying downtown Moose Jaw but also providing hope and purpose to those on their path to recovery. Volunteers, empowered by honorariums and expectations, actively contribute by sweeping, collecting litter, and picking up broken glass and debris.

Remarkably, nearly half of the participants in this 12-week program have found employment and no longer live in government housing. This demonstrates the profound impact of community-driven initiatives and the ability of the human spirit and body to overcome challenges and the deep need for purpose.

Our local businesses give back every day. They support the hospital foundation, sponsor youth events, and contribute to countless community causes. They create jobs and generate the tax revenue that vital programs and services access across Saskatchewan.

This government understands the challenges that small

businesses face, the risks that they take, the investments that they make. That's why we maintain one of the lowest small-business tax rates and highest income thresholds in the country. We will prioritize continuing to cut red tape and regulatory burdens so entrepreneurs can continue to focus on what they do best.

Mr. Speaker, we know that despite our economic strength, many families are feeling that a dollar today does not go as far as it used to. But let us not forget the affordability crisis that we see across Canada is a direct result of federal policy, policy supported by a Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] coalition, which was policies of runaway spending, printing of money, devaluation of the dollar, and inflationary taxes. But despite all those challenges, Saskatchewan still remains the most affordable place to live in Canada.

Our strong economy allows us to make smart, targeted investments to help people make ends meet. These include further income tax cuts, removing another 54,000 people from paying income tax at all; enhancements to the personal care home benefit; first-time homebuyers tax credit; graduate retention program; home renovation tax credit; active families benefit; and the disability and caregiver tax credit. These aren't one-time measures. They provide lasting relief year after year.

Every person in Saskatchewan deserves to feel safe, Mr. Speaker. This is why our government has committed to hiring 100 new police officers, 14 SCAN [safer communities and neighbourhoods] personnel, and 70 officers within the marshals service. This is in addition to funding 180 new RCMP officers. Thanks to our Minister of Justice, these officers now have more tools than ever before to keep communities safe. These new tools include the safe public spaces Act, amendments to *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*, and *The Trespass to Property Act*.

I recently participated in two ride-alongs with the Moose Jaw Police Service. I was truly impressed by their professionalism, compassion, and community engagement. From crime prevention education to local initiatives that reduce theft and vandalism, their work is making a difference. The care and compassion of the Moose Jaw police force is evident. But all too common, the cause of the threat to our communities and safety are the same — it's often illegal trafficking and drug use.

Mr. Speaker, this government knows that public safety means addressing addiction. That's why our government is investing in 500 new recovery beds with nearly 300 already open across the province. While the criminals who traffic these deadly drugs deserve to be dealt with swiftly, our friends, family members, and loved ones who find themselves caught up in addiction deserve compassion and care. While the members opposite advocate for policies that prolong the struggle of addiction, we recognize that the longer someone suffers, the greater the harm to themselves, their families, and their communities. Their effects are often felt across our entire province.

Our government does not believe in offering another needle or pipe. There is no safe amount of illegal drug use. Instead we are committed to making recovery the easiest, most accessible choice through a fully implemented, recovery-orientated system of care.

We also know that there are some people who simply are unable to seek treatment on their own because of the impact these drugs have on their brain and decision-making ability. This is why we are introducing the compassionate care intervention Act to help the small number of individuals, whose addiction makes them a danger to themselves or others, receive the care they need to recover and re-engage with their families and society.

Mr. Speaker, our government is investing to ensure our future is secure. We are making record investments in education because learning today means success tomorrow. Our growing and strong province means there are more students, so more schools and more classrooms are needed. That is why our government is making record investments in education. We're investing in infrastructure, specialized classrooms, and more teachers. These investments will help us ensure classrooms are manageable and students receive the attention they need to succeed. This will enable teachers to focus on teaching, and students to focus on learning.

In Moose Jaw, I'm especially proud of the opening of the Coteau Hills Elementary and Our Lady of Hope Catholic School, our city's first joint-use school. This \$68.2 million project represents a significant investment in Moose Jaw's future, providing modern classrooms, shared spaces, and child care supports for students and families for generations to come.

To ensure our future is secure, our government is also investing in health care to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Since 2022 we have added 346 doctors and over 2,000 nurses through the most aggressive health care human resources action plan in the country. We are expanding access to care, ensuring every resident will have a primary care provider by 2028. Planning is under way for new urban care centres in Prince Albert, North Battleford, and Moose Jaw, further demonstrating this government's commitment to bringing care closer to home.

Mr. Speaker, the people who built this province didn't only see challenges, they saw opportunity. This government will honour their legacy by doing the same, facing challenges head on and providing even more opportunities to the people of this province. The government will continue to ensure Saskatchewan's economy remains strong, our communities are safe, and our future is secure.

I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Weyburn-Bengough, seconded by the member from Carrot River Valley. I will not be supporting the amendment. God bless you, God bless Saskatchewan, and God bless the Blue Jays.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Nathaniel Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, colleagues. It's an honour to rise in the Chamber here today to do a response to the Speech from the Throne.

But before I begin my response, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a moment to say thank you to a few people who are important to me. You know, we always say we don't serve alone in this Chamber. And today I want to start by thanking my family, including my partner, James Rayner, and my immediate family at home: my mother, Carolyn, and my sister Melissa. I just want

to say a big thank you for your constant love and support.

Now I'm going to leave it at that, Mr. Speaker, because I know that all three of those folks are sitting at home watching a baseball game and not watching my speech. So even if I say nice things about them, they'll have to find that in *Hansard* later, and they probably won't do even that. But always appreciative of their love and support.

I'm also very happy to say that our immediate family bubble in Saskatoon got a little bigger this summer with James's mother, Kim Alexander, moving to Saskatoon with her husband, Jim, from Grande Prairie. And so we're really happy to have them a little bit closer to home. We'd been working on them to move here for quite a while. Kind of the central area where all the family seem to be gathering in the last couple years. So pleased to welcome them here. They found a fabulous acreage just outside of Saskatoon where they get to enjoy a lot of nature. It's all everything great about Saskatchewan: big skies, nature, trees, animals, dogs, you know, the whole thing.

I want to also send a big welcome and thank you to my new constituency assistant Avery Beaudin. Avery is no stranger to the Saskatchewan NDP, having served as the constituency assistant to the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre and, for a short period, the member from Saskatoon Eastview. Avery is passionate about making the lives of people in her province better, and I have to say the people of Saskatoon Meewasin are in great hands.

On September 26, I celebrated my third year as a MLA, having won the Meewasin by-election on September 26 in 2022. And to say that the time has flown by — as we all probably say here and there about this job and about the nature of the work we do — would be an understatement. So I just want to say a big thank you to all the folks in Saskatoon Meewasin who renewed their faith in me in the last provincial election and elected me the first time in 2022.

Mr. Speaker, it's been a busy spring-summer since we last left this Chamber in May. Our Saskatchewan NDP team has been in every corner of the province engaging with residents and being propositional every step of the way. When the crises hit the North, our northern MLAs and our leader were there with the communities most affected. They were there every step of the way, proposing solutions and calling on the government to act as thousands were evacuated and hundreds lost their homes and property.

[20:00]

I want to thank the member from Cumberland for his impassioned response last week. I know the people of the North have two very strong advocates in the member from Cumberland and the member from Athabasca.

On other fronts, Mr. Speaker, as Saskatchewanians saw the worst rental increases in the country over the last eight months, our housing shadow minister acted quickly. She held consultations, talking with seniors and families and folks on SIS [Saskatchewan income support] and SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability], all folks deeply affected by the steep rent increases, and all to start us on the path toward a Saskatchewan where

people in Saskatchewan have access to affordable housing.

She launched a website called Rent Control Now! to continue gathering that feedback on future rent control legislation. Saskatchewan remains one of the only jurisdictions in Canada without regulations in this space, and I believe that it's gravely needed. I'm so proud to work with our team, work with this team, work alongside them doing that work to bring forward important rent control legislation later this fall to address the concerns of both renters and landlords alike.

And as our health care system continued to spiral and to collapse this summer and the mental health and addictions crisis continued to rage after 18 years of cuts and poor policy, our health care shadow ministers have been there every step of the way, travelling across Saskatchewan, advocating for health care workers wherever they're needed. Every member of this team took summer to engage with their stakeholders and to keep pressing the government for solutions.

So much also happened this summer. We had a fantastic MLC [Midwestern Legislative Conference] conference. And I have to say a big shout-out to the members from Saskatoon Willowgrove and Estevan for the fantastic work that they did putting together a really world-class conference that brought so many folks to Saskatoon, really highlighted the gem of a city that we had.

And it was really talked about later in the summer when I was able to attend BILLD [Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development] for the first time, with the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow and the member from Kindersley-Biggar. It was talked about in those rooms of just how fabulous the MLC conference was here in Saskatoon and how all those folks from across the Midwest had gathered here.

And then we all got to gather in Madison to really take a kind of an intensive leadership course, and I say intensive. There are like five-minute breaks working like 8 to 8 every single day. It was a really important opportunity, and I'd really encourage anyone who has the chance to take in BILLD, to take it.

In July, Mr. Speaker, I was also honoured to be named the first shadow minister of 2SLGBTQ [two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning] affairs in Saskatchewan's history by our leader, Carla Beck. I'm proud to represent this community in their Legislative Assembly, and I'm proud to add this to my role as the shadow minister for Labour, Workplace Safety, and the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Speaker, it was under the auspices of my new role that I got to make my *Power & Politics* debut this summer. I got a chance to go on the national stage and talk about this government's record, Mr. Speaker. What I talked about is the second-worst job creation record in the country. The second-worst GDP growth in the country under this Premier. Second-lowest minimum wage. Now at the time, we were the last in the country for minimum wage. We've come up one since.

Worst health care funding in the country. Worst surgical backlogs in the country. You know, we have the worst per-student funding in the country. The highest rates of financial insecurity and the highest mortgage arrears in the country. That is the government's record that I was able to talk about.

But I was also able to talk about something else that's really important to me. And it was about the harm that this government continues to do, to inflict on queer and trans youth in our province through the dangerous Bill 137.

Now you might ask what got . . . I guess I'm allowed to say my own name? No. What got the member from Saskatoon Meewasin on *Power & Politics* this summer? Well it all started with a surprise shout-out from one very special pop icon, Chappell Roan, when she sang her now-iconic lyrics. And I'll clean them up for parliamentary language. I was looking for a clean edition; I made my own. I quote:

I made a promise if in four months' time,
This feeling ain't gone,
Well forget this city.
I'm moving to Saskatchewan.

And I think that people across the province were a bit lit up by hearing our beautiful province mentioned on an international stage. And I have to say, so Chappell Roan is a bit of a queer icon, a bit of an icon within our community and has an international platform.

And so our team took quick action. We penned a letter to Chappell's management inviting her to visit Saskatchewan. And it went off, Mr. Speaker, I guess. You know, I don't like to use the word "viral." I don't know, I don't like to say that whatever I'm doing is actually going viral. But it went off a bit, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible].

And in that letter we explained that, you know what, Saskatchewan is a beautiful place, but we have a political environment where we've seen the notwithstanding clause used against children to roll back the human rights of children and attack queer and trans youth in our province. And so I wrote the letter. I got to talk about those things this summer. It was quite the highlight.

So on the floor of this here Legislative Assembly today, Mr. Speaker, I want to renew that invitation. Chappell, we'd love to welcome you to Saskatchewan. We would love to show off this beautiful province that we call home. And we'd love to talk about all the issues that are facing Saskatchewan's queer and trans community.

Mr. Speaker, I will always use my time to speak in this Chamber on behalf of my community and will continue to call on this government to repeal Bill 137; to restore third-party educators who teach important consent, bodily autonomy, and sexual health; and rebuild the government's now non-existent relationship with that queer and trans community.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on to the Throne Speech. This is the fourth Throne Speech that I've had the pleasure of being a member in this Chamber and witnessing. As is custom, the Throne Speech of course lays out the government's agenda, and if you took the government's word for it, everything is pretty hunky-dory in Saskatchewan. Everything's great. Nothing to see here, folks. But herein lies the problem, is that when you look a little bit closer, when you look just below the surface, the facade of that starts to crack a little.

What this Saskatchewan Party government won't tell you — and like I've said before — we are last place when it comes to health care and education; the residents of Saskatchewan have some of the worst rates of financial insecurity; and crime rates are double the national average under this government.

But nowhere is this facade cracking more than in the crisis in our health care system, and I want to look at that crisis through the lens of the workers who work in that health care system, as the shadow minister of Labour. Because as we said about the teachers, our teachers' working conditions are our students' learning conditions. It's the same for health care workers. Health care workers' working conditions are our patients' health care conditions, Mr. Speaker.

So let's look at health care. Under this government we have the worst surgical wait times in the country, the lowest levels of health care funding in the country. And we've seen a mass exodus of both rural and urban health care workers leaving for other jobs or other provinces. The workers who remain haven't received a wage increase in almost three years, making them the lowest paid health care workers in the country.

And nowhere in this Throne Speech did the government acknowledge that just days before they had their Throne Speech, 450 health care workers signed an open letter to the Premier and the Minister of Health decrying the war zone-like conditions they are facing at Royal University Hospital.

In rural Saskatchewan, the crisis isn't just hallway medicine, Mr. Speaker. It's whether your emergency room will be open at all. All summer long we watched as rural ERs [emergency room] shuttered and they would send folks to another ER that was also shuttered. We call that the Kamsack shuffle on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The state of Saskatchewan health care is in shambles after 18 years of this Sask Party government's rule. It's time for big, bold changes in health care, and that's our promise.

Now not only did 450 health care workers pen an open letter, Saskatchewan's three major health care unions also wrote to this government. Mr. Speaker, just this week, leaders from CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] 5430, SEIU-West [Service Employees International Union-West], and SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] — the three main health care-provider unions — wrote a joint letter to this Premier urging him to keep his word and fix the health care crisis.

They reminded the Premier that a year after the Sask Party was narrowly re-elected, health care workers have yet to see any meaningful improvements. In their words:

Health care workers are at a breaking point. Short-staffing is leading to closures in every corner of the province. Workers are leaving the profession and not coming back. And patients are paying the price.

Together these unions represent nearly 30,000 health care workers in Saskatchewan, and they are united in demanding that the government finally invest in the people who make health care work. What was completely lacking from this Throne Speech

was a commitment to get to the table and sign a deal to ensure that health care workers who have gone three years without a raise because this government continues to slow-walk those negotiations finally get a raise and the respect that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I have been proud to stand in solidarity with health care workers across this province who deserve a fair deal from this government. It's time to get to the table and sign a deal. Nowhere in this speech do we see those concerns addressed.

Now I don't have time to delve into some of the other issues — the last-in-the-country per-student funding that we continue to see, skyrocketing crime rates, and a dismal economic growth. But I want to highlight one other area where the Throne Speech was pretty silent.

We saw a Throne Speech nearly silent on the Chinese tariffs crippling our canola sector and absolutely no plan laid out with the escalating trade war imposed on Canada by US [United States] president Donald Trump. What has our soft stance on Donald Trump gotten us thus far? Absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker. And on Chinese EVs [electric vehicle] and tariffs, after flip-flopping all summer on Chinese EVs, the government again offered almost nothing in the Throne Speech. Canola producers have been left adrift.

Instead of finding common ground in this legislature, the next day the government introduced a nonsensical, self-congratulatory motion about how great the Premier is and how we should all be patting him on the back for a job well done. Mr. Speaker, I'll let the members opposite clap. I'll let them pat themselves on the back.

We have the worst surgical wait times in the country. As my colleague said, it'll take a long time to get that shoulder and back surgery done with all the back clapping that we're seeing from this government. And, Mr. Speaker, I was not elected to pat the Premier on the back and tell him he's doing a good job.

Canola producers, all producers in this province deserve a better deal.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, the people of Saskatchewan deserve a government that's going to deliver results, not empty words. They deserve health care that works, affordable housing, a fair and just economy, and respect for all communities.

My Saskatchewan NDP colleagues and I will continue to fight for real solutions, meaningful investment, and bold action in this Chamber and across every corner of our province. We will stand with workers. We will stand with families, with communities. And we will continue to hold this government accountable every step of the way because, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan deserves better and we will not stop until we get it.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I will not be supporting the government's Throne Speech. Instead I'll be supporting the motion put forward by my colleague from Cumberland and seconded from Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis. Thank you very much.

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

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am thankful for the opportunity that I have to serve the people of Saskatchewan and represent the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers for the last 12 months. It is a privilege that I do not take for granted. As I reflected on everything that has happened since the last Throne Speech, I have been struck how much can truly take place in a year. I am proud of the work of the Government of Saskatchewan, and I am happy for the opportunity to both reflect on this past year and look forward to the future of our province.

First of all I want to take a few minutes to highlight some of the incredible individuals and initiatives in and around my home constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers over the past year. My job as Minister of Government Relations is all about supporting communities, so it gives me great pleasure to recognize some of the individuals in my constituency who work hard to make their communities great. People like Christopher Lake's Citizen of the Year, Dwight Desormeau; Maisie Krienke, who does great work in Big River to fundraise in support of community initiatives and youth recreational opportunities like the Timber Ridge ski hill.

Recreation spaces like these in our communities are so critical, and I'm happy that this year included the opening of the Prince Albert Lake country co-op leisure centre. This incredible facility will serve Saskatchewan residents from across the North, including those in my constituency, in Batoche, and of course the city of Prince Albert.

[20:15]

Over the course of my 14 years of service in the RCMP I saw first-hand a strong relationship between opportunities for youth recreation and increased community safety. These facilities aren't simply rinks, pools, and field houses. They are spaces that provide insulation from unsafe situations while helping vulnerable youth forge strong social connections, develop teamwork, and engage in meaningful hobbies.

In addition to the recreational centres, community facilities provide a place for municipalities to gather and events to happen. This past year I had the opportunity to attend fundraising events for community centres in Garrick and Choiceland. Seeing communities come together and support such important spaces is incredibly encouraging. It's strong, unified communities like this that define Saskatchewan.

This same spirit was evident throughout the year in a number of events that brought people together to celebrate culture, service, and community pride — events like the Métis gala which showcased the rich heritage and vibrant traditions of the Métis people that reminds us of the importance of cultural connection and identity.

The marshals' swearing-in ceremony was another proud moment, honouring those who have committed themselves to service and safety in our province.

Each of these events, whether celebratory or ceremonial or reflective, demonstrate the strength and unity that define Saskatchewan Rivers and the province of Saskatchewan.

While there has been lots of celebration in my home

constituency, there have also been challenges. With agriculture and forestry being important industries in Saskatchewan Rivers, my constituents have felt the impact of tariffs from America and China over the past year. These tariffs are hurting Saskatchewan industries and this government is working hard to ensure economic stability for our producers.

I want to recognize all northern communities who were impacted by wildfires this season. I deeply sympathize with the fear and trauma that comes from losing your home. The emotional toll of such an experience is profound, and I recognize the grief and sense of loss that accompanies the devastation of losing one's home.

A home is more than just a structure. It is a place of safety, memories, and connection. When it's taken away it leaves a lasting impact. As a neighbour and as the minister, I want to acknowledge the difficulty of these circumstances, reaffirm this government's commitment to supporting affected individuals and communities as they rebuild, recover, and heal.

I want to acknowledge that communities across northern Saskatchewan endured some of the most challenging conditions in recent memory. The wildfires brought fear, disruption, and uncertainty to many families and individuals, stretching local resources and testing the resilience of the North — testing it, Mr. Speaker, but not breaking it.

This year's wildfire season was unlike any we've seen before. The scale, intensity, unpredictability of the fires were unprecedented, driven by extreme weather conditions and dry landscape. Thanks to the swift action of emergency responders, local leadership, and community members, we are deeply grateful that no lives were lost.

I would like to extend my gratitude to all those who worked tirelessly to mitigate the impact of these fires, not least of all the firefighters who came from far and wide to fight these fires on the front lines. As Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs, I've had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the strength and solidarity of northern communities. Despite the adversity, residents came together and supported one another, protecting their homes and demonstrating an unwavering commitment to their neighbours and land.

Specifically I want to acknowledge the communities of Denare Beach, East Trout Lake, and La Ronge. The devastating impact in these communities is significant and has been felt across the province. My sympathy goes out to these communities who have lost so much and have much work ahead of them. I look forward to continued opportunities to meet with you and support your communities. To these communities, your government has not and will not forget about you. We are committed to work together with you to rebuild and restore what was lost.

Throughout the past number of months I have made several visits to northern communities to meet with residents, assess the situation on the ground, and ensure that provincial support was reaching those who needed it most. These visits reinforce the importance of partnerships with northern leaders and communities. During one of our recent northern visits, I had the honour of joining our Premier to deliver a formal apology in Ile-a-la-Crosse for the province's role in the residential school

system. This marked a step forward in our journey toward reconciliation, healing, and justice for survivors and their families.

Continuing to partner and support First Nations, Métis, and northern communities and organizations will be key in restoring a strong, safe, and secure future for northern Saskatchewan.

In spite of challenges in parts of our province, Saskatchewan municipalities are in a season of opportunity. Saskatchewan is a strong and growing province, and many of our cities are eager to expand and develop. Cities like Regina, Yorkton, and Moose Jaw are seeing unprecedented growth and are excited at the opportunity that the construction of key infrastructure would present.

Earlier I mentioned the opening of the Lake Country Co-op Leisure Centre in Prince Albert. This is one of many Investing in Canada infrastructure projects that opened this year. The ICIP [Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program] program enabled municipalities to partner with the provincial and federal governments to fund critical projects across our province.

I am proud to take a moment now to recognize some of the milestones from the past 12 months of ICIP projects. The following represents significant investments in municipalities all around Saskatchewan: the grand opening of the Martensville Recreation Centre; groundbreaking of the town of Delisle's replacement sewage lift station and force main; groundbreaking on Muskoday First Nation cultural centre; grand opening of the Buffalo River Dene youth centre; grand opening of the Meadow Lake Co-op recreational centre; grand opening of the Kemoca regional swimming park, pool, and main facility enhancement; grand opening of the town of Balgonie's aquatic centre; grand opening of the White Bear First Nations community spray park; groundbreaking of the city of Regina's aquatic centre; grand opening of the town of Wilkie swimming pool; grand opening of the town of Langenburg rest stop and walking trail; grand opening of the town of Moosomin water treatment plant; grand opening of Lloydminster Cenovus Energy Hub recreation facility; grand opening of the city of Melville wastewater treatment system and expansion just last week, Mr. Speaker.

These represent just a portion of the \$700 million invested across over 400 projects in our province through the ICIP program, a program that is no longer available for new projects to access.

This June I attended provincial-territorial meetings in Saint John, New Brunswick. In these meetings I connected with the federal Minister for Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, Gregor Robertson. The feedback I heard from my federal counterpart was that Saskatchewan in many ways had been in a blind spot with regard to the federal government. This conversation inspired a delegation to Ottawa earlier this month comprised of leaders from Saskatchewan's seven largest cities: Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Yorkton, and North Battleford, as well as representatives from SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], and of course our all-important rural communities represented by SARM and president Bill Huber.

We are a government that believes in listening to the needs of our municipalities. Partnerships with our municipal and federal

partners are critical to building a strong, safe, and secure province. This Throne Speech highlights these partnerships, identifying record investments in community infrastructure across our province. Between our funding programs and partnerships, this provincial government has invested over \$1.1 billion into municipal infrastructure since 2018.

When accounting for municipal revenue-sharing programs in the same time frame, that figure is over \$3 billion invested in municipalities to secure growth and sustainability. This government is excited to engage in partnerships to continue our strong, safe, and secure province.

Before I end today I would like to take some time to acknowledge key individuals who have supported my work over this past year and beyond. Thank you to my wife, Lesley, for your sacrifices and hard work back home which allows me to serve the people of Saskatchewan in this capacity. Thank you to my kids for reminding me every day of Saskatchewan's next generation. It is your future we are investing in today.

To my constituency assistant, Kristina Ross, who is also a veteran of our military, Mr. Speaker, thank you for being the first point of contact for the Saskatchewan Rivers constituency. To the staff in my minister's office — Ryan, Candace, Zach, and Alex — thank you for your diligent work day in and day out.

I would like to thank the First Nations chiefs, councils, and Elders that I have met with over this last year, and thank you for sharing your knowledge and guidance with me. I will also take this opportunity to thank every mayor, councillor, administrator, and municipal staff member. The work you do is so important to the communities not only in the constituency that I call home but across this province. This is especially true for municipal leaders in communities that have been affected by the fires.

Thank you once again for the bravery and hard work of the firefighters and emergency responders, for the long hours and hard work in the face of these wildfires. Equally as important, Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the communities and their residents for supporting firefighting and evacuation efforts across our great province.

In closing, I am excited about our partnerships across this province, whether those are municipal, federal, or with Indigenous organizations. The future of Saskatchewan is in good hands, Mr. Speaker. And with that I will not be supporting the amendments. However I am happy to support the motion in support of the Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Nicole Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise this evening and enter into the Throne Speech debate. It's always a pleasure and an honour to get to participate in the democratic process broadly speaking, but in particular entering into Throne Speech debate and budget debate. It's really the opportunity for everyone in the legislature to have a chance to speak about their constituents, speak about their families, but even more importantly speak about the issues that matter to both them and the people that they work so hard to serve, Mr. Speaker. So like I said, it's an honour to be here again this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to thank my family. As we always say but cannot say enough, we do not serve alone. I know that my family makes a lot of sacrifices for me to be able to do this work, and I am extremely grateful to them to be able to do that.

I feel like last time . . . I'm often doing this Throne Speech debate talking about Halloween because we are usually really close to Halloween. And I'm usually in a bit of a semi-chaotic state trying to get Halloween sorted for my kids each year because the costumes tend to change on a whim.

This year my kids were very set in what they wanted to be, which I was very grateful for because I was able to actually get them costumes in advance. It may have been last year or the year before — we had night sitting, I think, the day before Halloween — and I had to employ the help of a few friends to find a costume for my son, who randomly changed his demand of what he wanted to be on a whim that day. So very grateful I didn't have to go through that process this year.

For those who are interested, I'm sure everybody is on bated breath to know what are they going to be this year. Well my four-year-old, he wanted to be two things. He wants to be a slice of pizza for daycare and a banana for door knock . . . or for not door knocking. Oh my goodness. For trick-or-treating. That just shows the level of maybe I've been doing this a little bit too long when I automatically think I'm going door knocking with my kids instead of trick-or-treating. That is a really big sign, Mr. Speaker, to get out and do some other things in life.

My daughter though, like most girls I think aged 6, 5 to 13 this year, is being a KPop Demon Hunter. She's being Rumi, which is the main character, the lead girl. And if you have seen the show, she has a very intricate hairstyle. It's like a purple-haired dragon braid situation.

I am not a creative person. My husband is not a creative person either. We're both lawyers. We became lawyers because we're not creative, Mr. Speaker.

[20:30]

But I have spent a lot of time watching Instagram and trying my best to formulate a braid for her for Halloween. I think I've got a subpar situation going that I think will hopefully pass her very stringent requirements. So if you don't see me next week, Mr. Speaker, it's because I haven't survived Halloween and the stress of trying to make the appropriate braid for this particular costume, Mr. Speaker.

But if you are wondering, if you don't have younger children and you're wondering what sort of costumes you're going to see on your doorsteps, you can expect about 60 to 70 per cent of them to be some form of KPop Demon Hunter costume because it's very, very popular. And it's a great show, may I say, Mr. Speaker. I would highly recommend it to anybody who is interested in watching something on Netflix or for some, whatever reason doesn't like to watch baseball, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank my constituency assistant, Paige McKillop . . . The Premier is giving me the soda pop hand gesture. I refuse to do the dance. I would strongly

encourage the Premier to do the dance next time he has a scrum. Maybe we'll do it together tomorrow after question period. I think that would be a lot of fun and show some sort of bipartisan, cross-party solidarity — which I think is what the people really want to see, Mr. Speaker — and I'm very happy to contribute to that process.

Like I was saying, my CA [constituency assistant], Paige McKillop, she's been in my office for just over six months now. She's been a fantastic addition to my office. She serves the constituents so, so well. I'm so happy to have her there. I know that she's been a great, reassuring voice to so many people who come to our office especially who have concerns about access to social services benefits, is a huge problem that we often see coming through my office. And Paige has done a phenomenal job of leading our constituents through the process and trying to do what we can to advocate for them for all of their needs. So I'm so thankful to Paige for providing that service and helping me be able to be here knowing that my constituency office is in such good hands.

And we did a lot of work within the constituency this summer that I want to speak about very briefly, Mr. Speaker. We made sure that we made a priority right after spring session ended in May to canvass the constituency, to do some door knocking, speaking to as many constituents as possible. And we were able to reach out to half of the riding in the month of June, Mr. Speaker, Paige and I and a team of support that we had, and were able to really hear right in the front line in terms of what folks were concerned about, what they wanted to see from their elected representatives, and what hopes and dreams they had for their province and for their families, Mr. Speaker.

And I always find that to be such a useful experience and so helpful in being able to ground us and frame the work that we're trying to do. Because you can do as much polling as you want, or you can sit in the Chamber and have debates. But it's really doing that front-line work in terms of going door to door, talking to your constituents, and actually asking them, "What do you want to see from your elected representatives?" where you get the freshest ideas and the most honest thoughts as well, Mr. Speaker.

And every year — I've been doing this for about 10 years now — every year I'm always humbled by how many people are willing to share their life stories with us as elected representatives. And it's such an honour to be able to get to do this work, and such a humbling experience. Because I think a lot of people trust their sometimes most painful, most intimate stories to us, and you share that story in the hopes that we will use it to advocate for better for the province. Not just for them, but for their neighbours, for everyone in Saskatchewan.

And that's not something that I take lightly. I think that's not something that any of us take lightly, Mr. Speaker. It's a heavy weight on our shoulders, but it's a very important weight that we have the opportunity to get to do that, Mr. Speaker.

We also attended . . . I know my colleagues and I were around the province doing tons and tons of outreach, attending events like crazy. A lot of barbecues, a lot of powwows, a lot of incredible community-building opportunities.

I wanted to talk about one in particular I really enjoyed that I

hadn't had the opportunity to go to before, and that is the Pilot Butte Rodeo, Mr. Speaker. It is a lot of fun. I missed, sadly — for probably the first time since being elected — the Regina Pride parade to attend the Pilot Butte Rodeo, and it was a blast. I brought my four-year-old with me. We went to the parade in the morning in Pilot Butte and then the rodeo after, and he loved it. He absolutely loved it. It's amazing how close you can get to the action, and it's definitely an event that I will be taking my entire family to again.

My son afterwards has talked about the rodeo multiple times. We were at Boston Pizza one night and a rodeo, I think it was probably Calgary Stampede, was on the TV. And so he was explaining it to my daughter and they were quite enamoured.

So we're planning, we're trying to organize with some friends and their kids a trip to Agribition this year, check out the rodeo there because my kids are absolutely hooked. My husband is thinking about maybe putting him in the sheep riding, where you take and stick your little kid on the sheep and send them . . . Yeah, it's called something specific that he said to me, and I was like, what, what is that?

Anyways now I'm really . . . Okay, thank you. Now I'm making myself look like an urbanite so I need to stop talking now. But we're very excited. We're mulling over whether we're going to stick them on that sheep rodeo situation, but we really enjoyed the Pilot Butte Rodeo. And I'm very grateful to the new friends and the old friends that I made at that particular event.

Also had the opportunity to do quite a bit of advocacy based on the outreach that we were doing and the folks that we were talking to in particular, with my file being Justice, Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. Did a lot of work consulting on public safety. And what we heard brought back to us is a need for a government that is both tough on crime but also tough on the causes of crime. It's not just one or the other. You need both to be able to seriously address crime.

And it's a huge concern for people throughout the province. We have rising rates of crime, in particular rising rates of gun-related crime and domestic violence, Mr. Speaker. There was a drive-by shooting in my constituency that happened in Eastview a few months ago, Mr. Speaker. And in that shooting, a young girl, an 11-year-old girl was harmed quite seriously. Thankfully she survived. She is now out of the hospital from what I understand. There have been several people who have now been charged. And I very much thank the Regina Police Service for their tireless dedication and the work that they did in addressing that issue.

That's just to say that it's an issue throughout the province I think, Mr. Speaker. And it's something that we need to continue to address. And we need to continue to talk about what we can be doing at our level of government to address this concern and help solve this problem and alleviate the stress that I think a lot of people in Saskatchewan are facing right now.

Another one that I've had the honour of advocating for is for a fallen first responder medal. Now I know there is no one in this Chamber that doesn't see the value of our first responders. And I think all of us can't show enough gratitude to them for the work that they do on behalf of the people of this province.

I had the opportunity to meet an individual by the name of David Reed who is a military veteran, but he's also an advanced care paramedic. And he's had a pretty incredible career. But what he is advocating for right now with the support of many in the community — many in the first responder world including the Saskatchewan police federation, the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police — is for a medal that can be presented to the families of those who have lost their lives in the line of duty or due to PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder]. Because those are both very important things that we as a province should be thanking the families for.

And I'm grateful to the Minister of Justice who has created — and I know this was work that has been happening behind the scenes for a few years now — a dedicated memorial that will be created in short order, that will help to be a place for families and the public to go to be able to recognize these first responders and thank them for their service.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, though, is the need for a medal — something that can be handed down from generation to generation. So I just raised that because it's been an absolute honour of mine to be able to have the opportunity to work with David in advocating for what he's pushing for.

As for the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, as throne speeches often are, they're usually quite light on detail. There's a lot that we will be able to flesh out as legislation gets introduced: in particular, the response to illicit drugs Act, the compassionate intervention Act, two bills that were highlighted in the Throne Speech. We obviously don't know the details of that legislation yet, but we've laid out what our values are and what we want to see for compassionate care in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Centre, very eloquently laid that out in her Throne Speech response today, Mr. Speaker, and she's done a lot of work on that front.

One particular thing that I want to highlight that we really want to see is that any measures that are implemented are done on a not-for-profit basis. We do not want to see companies capitalizing on the pain and the suffering of anyone in Saskatchewan, and that's a concern that we have. We want to make sure that this is done thoughtfully and that this is done as a last resort, and that this is not done on any sort of for-profit model, Mr. Speaker.

There are a lot more other things we could be doing on the public safety front that I didn't see addressed in this Throne Speech. I always want to be a little propositional so that the government doesn't accuse me of just being only oppositional. But an anti-gang strategy, a comprehensive one that's province-wide. Expansion of the PACT [police and crisis team] teams. I haven't talked to a police force yet who hasn't told me that those PACT teams are invaluable, and if anything, they could be expanded and that would be very beneficial. They partner a police officer team with a social worker, and they go out on calls together. And it's incredibly beneficial and helps to reduce some of the issues that we see.

I wanted to talk a little bit about a comprehensive domestic violence strategy. We did see the government announce the cyberstalking and coercive control Act, Mr. Speaker, but we have the highest rates of domestic violence in the province. When you

talk with police, they will tell you that that is one of their most frequent calls. It's causing a lot of backlog.

If you want to just talk about it from a public safety standpoint, it's a public safety issue. Not only is it an issue that we should all be addressing in terms of women's safety, but it's eating up a lot of police time frankly, Mr. Speaker. So not taking a preventative approach to domestic violence is causing some problems in terms of being able to allow police the opportunity to address other issues that people are concerned about: drugs and gangs and guns, Mr. Speaker. They're busy attending domestic violence calls.

So a comprehensive domestic violence strategy is something that we've been calling for, and stakeholders have been calling for, for years now. It's something that we've seen be created in Ontario, and Ontario's one of the few provinces that's actually been able to reduce their numbers.

I know this is an issue that's not partisan. I know colleagues on the other side have talked about this issue as well. We've had the benefit of getting to work . . . I'm old enough to remember times when we've worked together on this issue and feel confident that we'll be able to work on this issue again.

I know I have used up my time, Mr. Speaker, but very grateful for the Deputy Whip's indulgence. I am not going to be supporting the motion for the Throne Speech, but I will be supporting the amendment from my colleague, the member from Cumberland. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Moosomin-Montmartre.

Kevin Weedmark: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I rise to respond to the Throne Speech, I'm going to do three things at once here. I'll focus on the Throne Speech, but also, since it's 364 days since the election on October 28th last year that brought all of us here to this Assembly, I'll reflect on what I've learned over the last year. And since it's the first time I've spoken in the legislature since the spring session, I'm going to do something that I first did in grade 2 and recount what I did on my summer holidays.

But first I have to thank a few people. All of us in this Assembly are able to do what we do because we have so many amazing people behind the scenes supporting us, doing the research, doing the follow-up, and more often than not, keeping us grounded.

[20:45]

So first of all, I want to thank all the staff in the building for all they do to support all of us, Gene and the staff in the caucus office for the incredible work that they do for us. And there's lots of people who help me by supporting me back home. In my role I'm away from the riding a lot, and I couldn't do what I do without having rock-solid support from Charlene in the constituency office. She does an amazing job and I don't thank her enough for that.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I took on this role, I left a large and growing business behind, and I have to say a huge, huge, penultimate, gigantic thank you to Kara. She keeps things going

back home in our business. It's still growing. I think she's running it quite a bit better than I did. In addition to running the business, of course, Kara is also the love of my life and the inspiration for everything I do. So I have to say . . . thank her for everything.

And, Mr. Speaker, most importantly I thank the people of Moosomin-Montmartre for putting their trust in me. It is truly an honour to represent them, and I work hard every day to live up to their expectations.

Mr. Speaker, it's been an incredible year and I've learned so much from all of my colleagues. I've learned so much at every event and every facility I've been to. On the health file, I've learned so much from the Minister of Health and the Minister of Rural and Remote Health. I've learned so much from the Premier, who came out to Moosomin recently, to Moosomin-Montmartre, and met with lots of people around the constituency. And from him I've learned what true leadership really looks like.

And the one thing that I keep learning every day, especially on the health file, is that I've still got a lot to learn. I come away from every event knowing more than when I went there, and appreciating the work of so many people and organizations.

Just for one example, I had the privilege a month or so ago of speaking at the Suicide Awareness Day event hosted by Caring Hearts in Regina. I met with dozen of groups around the province. And so many of those groups like Caring Hearts, which provides grief counselling and suicide prevention work, are doing just amazing work that changes people's lives.

And there've been so many fun events as well where I've had fun as well as learning a lot. A couple of weeks back, I got to speak at the KidSport gala here in Regina. That was an amazing event that honoured some of the volunteers who make that program operate in communities right across the province. I was happy to be there at the KidSport gala because I recognize that sport teaches our kids some of the best lessons in life: how to work together, how to win graciously, and how to lose with dignity. And, Mr. Speaker, I know a few politicians of all stripes who are still working on that last one.

Over the summer I spoke at the Whitewood-Chacachas Rodeo. Chief Charlie Bear of Chacachas, he's a former competitive bull rider. He was there and Chief Shelley Bear of Ochapowace was there. Chief Shelley and I were speaking at the beginning of the rodeo, and we rode out into the arena in the back of a pickup truck. I told Chief Charlie afterwards how much I admire him for being able to stay on the back of a bull for eight seconds so many times, because Chief Shelley and myself barely could stay in the back of that pickup truck for eight seconds. We almost got bucked out of the pickup truck as we were riding into the arena.

So, Mr. Speaker, back in grade 2 when I spoke on what I did on my summer holidays, I spoke about going to parades, going to fairs, going to festivals, pancake breakfasts, rodeos, hanging out at the pool. Well, Mr. Speaker, now that I'm all grown up and I look back at what I did on my summer holidays this year as I went around the riding, I went to parades, I went to fairs, I went to festivals, pancake breakfasts, rodeos, and enjoyed hanging out at the pool when I got to speak at the opening of the new pool and waterslides at Kemoca Regional Park. And I loved every

minute of it.

Mr. Speaker, as outlined in the Speech from the Throne, we are working to ensure that Saskatchewan's economy remains strong, our communities are safe, and our future is secure. Saskatchewan has the strongest economy in Canada, and our goal is to ensure that our economy remains strong and growing. We'll also work to ensure that Saskatchewan remains the most affordable place to live in Canada, our communities are safe, our students are getting their best start, and that our health care system is giving everyone the care they need.

And as I've travelled across the province, I've seen so many examples of just why this province is so exceptional. I've been inspired by visits to so many communities. In my previous career I was at Kahkewistahaw First Nation many times, helping tell their story as they worked on economic development and trying to build a bright future for their nation. This summer I was there for the Kahkewistahaw Powwow. I was there a couple of weeks ago when my friend Chief Evan Taypotat was named Honorary Colonel of the Snowbirds.

And, Mr. Speaker, it was such an honour to be at Kahkewistahaw for two announcements a few weeks back. First I spoke on behalf of our government at the opening of a new training initiative that's taking place in partnership with Kahkewistahaw and with SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], supported by our government.

And that same day it was such an honour to speak on behalf of our government as we designated Highway 201 from the Trans-Canada Highway to the Qu'Appelle Valley as Chief Kahkewistahaw Way. Highway 201 is now the third highway in Saskatchewan named after an Indigenous leader and will forever be known as Chief Kahkewistahaw Way. I know how important this was to the people of Kahkewistahaw, and I was proud to be part of that announcement.

I was also fortunate to visit White Bear First Nations this summer. I've always been inspired by the leadership at White Bear. I was there in the golf clubhouse many, many years ago when they first set up a casino, asserting their rights and helping them tell their story.

This summer I was there. I got to speak at the opening of a new splash park on White Bear that our government helped fund. And I was also very honoured that Chief Jonathan Pasap, who I've known for many years, invited me to be part of their celebration of the 150th anniversary of entering Treaty 4. And I was so happy to be there for that important event.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, it was emphasized that we're building a strong, safe, secure Saskatchewan. And I see that every day as I travel around the province. One of the most rewarding parts of my role as Legislative Secretary to the Ministers of Health is seeing the impact of some of the programs in health care. I've had so many opportunities to learn and, in so many health care facilities from one side of the province to the other, met so many amazing front-line health care workers. And I'm always inspired by their dedication when I get to meet with them and talk to them.

And Moosomin is home to the South East family medicine

residency program, and I see the difference that it's making in southeast Saskatchewan. It was wonderful to have the Premier visit my riding this summer and meet with Dr. Cara Fallis in Whitewood, who's serving patients in the area after completing her residency in Moosomin.

And it was great to be in Yorkton this summer when we announced there would be a new family medicine residency program to serve the communities of Yorkton, Tisdale, and Melfort. Dr. Fallis was one of the first graduates of that new program in Moosomin, and she's a wonderful example of exactly what can happen with that program as she, her family, and even her parents from Toronto are all making our community their home. And she's become an important part of our local medical community.

I like to promote that residency program whenever I can. So a few weeks ago I had the chance to speak at the White Coat Ceremony for the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine. 120 students of the class of 2029 received their white coats that day, signalling the start of their transition from medical students to eventually becoming doctors.

Dr. Fallis sent me a text that morning and asked me to put in a plug for the South East program, and I did. I spoke about the bright future ahead for these students. I spoke about all the opportunities for them in Saskatchewan, and I mentioned that there is a program in southeast Saskatchewan providing residency training in family medicine.

And, Mr. Speaker, following that ceremony, one of the students came up to me, a young woman from east central Saskatchewan, and told me that she'd been considering medicine for a long time. But she loves the region she's from, and the idea of doing undergrad, then med school, then residency all in the city far from home was a little bit too much time away. So she opted for a different career path, that is, until the South East family medicine residency program got started.

She told me that when she saw that that program was starting in Moosomin and that she could do her residency in the region that she loves, she decided that she would go into medicine. And that day, Mr. Speaker, she was one of those students who received her white coat as part of the class of 2029. What a testament to how successful a program is, when not only is it training people who are staying in the local area but it's actually getting people to go into that profession who might not have otherwise.

And all around this province I see the efforts to improve health care. I've toured the breast health centre in Regina, and when I spoke at the breast reconstruction awareness event, I heard from many women about what a difference the breast health centre is making for patients.

This summer we celebrated the first year of the Regina Urgent Care Centre, which has seen more than 41,000 patients, and I was in Saskatoon as we marked progress on the urgent care centre there. And while planning is under way for a large, new long-term care facility in Regina, in my own riding we have a new 33-bed long-term care facility under construction. Those 33 beds are going to serve the needs of southeast Saskatchewan for decades to come.

And as the Throne Speech emphasized, we're working to ensure Saskatchewan's economy remains strong, our communities are safe, and our future is secure. Some steps on the way are the response to illicit drugs Act, which will take action to protect families and communities from illegal drugs and crack down on those who profit from them, and the compassionate intervention Act, which will require people whose addictions are posing a threat to themselves and others to get the care they need.

And, Mr. Speaker, some of the guests that I had with me from Moosomin-Montmartre at the Throne Speech last week were there to hear about these commitments. From Ochapowace First Nation, I had Chief Shelley Bear and Headwoman Audrey Isaac. Chief Bear tells me that she believes the compassionate intervention Act will literally save lives, and she welcomes the difference this will make.

The Minister of Rural and Remote Health and myself had met Chief Bear this summer and got her thoughts on compassionate intervention. She believes the legislation can't come soon enough and is exactly what is needed to deal with the epidemic of addictions. A couple weeks back I was speaking at a health event in Regina, and I got a call from Chief Bear telling me that she had been at a conference but was back in Ochapowace for a funeral of one more person who succumbed to addiction, and she asked when we'd be able to bring forward legislation.

So I was proud to have Chief Bear here for the Throne Speech to hear that commitment to the compassionate intervention Act.

Also with the Throne Speech, from Moosomin, I had Bonnie McTavish. She has advocated for compassionate intervention because she's seen lives cut short because of addiction. She had a loved one in the throes of addiction, and she came to me and told me that she was terrified he was going to lose his life to addiction if he didn't get the help he needed.

But he wasn't willing to undergo treatment. She worked with the police; they got mental health warrants. She entered trap houses to find him here in Regina, trying to get him the help he needed. Nothing was working, and there was no legal avenue to get him the help he needed.

She told me when she spoke to me a while ago that what Saskatchewan needs is a form of compassionate intervention because in her opinion it was a matter of life and death. Mr. Speaker, her loved one was able to get the help he needed, but she fears for others and doesn't want anyone else to go through what she went through.

She was here in this Chamber Wednesday, and I watched as she teared up as the commitment to the compassionate intervention Act was read in the Throne Speech. After the Throne Speech she told me . . . And I'm going to quote her words directly. She said:

It was a huge emotional relief to hear that this law is coming. I can't imagine how many families out there, this might be their answer. This might be their last hope to get a family member into treatment. It's going to be life-saving.

Still quoting her:

I'm really happy to hear that someone is saying that this is

enough. We've had some wins since I came to you, but I also know a lot of people that didn't have wins. In that time, two of my son's close friends overdosed. I can't think of a worse thing for a parent to go through than losing a child.

Bonnie did everything she could to save her loved one from addiction, and for people like her I am proud that our government is listening and responding.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of important issues in this Throne Speech, but for people like Chief Shelley Bear, for people like Bonnie McTavish, there is nothing more important than the commitment to the compassionate intervention Act. Providing those in the throes of addiction more drugs will not help. Providing a crack pipe or a needle will not help. Leaving vulnerable people on the streets will not help. The compassionate intervention Act will help by getting people with addictions in extreme circumstances the help they need.

So for every community leader, every parent, every mother who has seen the ravages of addiction, the compassionate intervention Act will make a difference, making our lives safer and more secure.

[21:00]

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of this and so many initiatives in the Throne Speech, and I'm proud to be part of a government that is building a strong, safe, and secure Saskatchewan. And for that reason, I will be supporting the motion moved by the member from Weyburn-Bengough and seconded by the member from Carrot River Valley, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Jared Clarke: — Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to be on my feet here this evening to enter into debate on my response to the Throne Speech.

As I will begin tonight, I just want to say a big thank you to my constituency, Regina Walsh Acres. As the member in front of me from Saskatoon Meewasin said, it was his three-year anniversary. August 10th was my two-year anniversary of being a MLA, and so it is with great privilege and honour that I get to stand here and enter into debate.

I, over the last two years, have had an immense privilege to get to know so many of the folks in my constituency, to hear their successes, to hear their struggles, to hear their ideas, and to see them work together as a community. I try and get out to all of the community events in Regina Walsh Acres as I can. One of the organizations — the Regent Park Community Association, Normanview Residents Group — they put on a number of different events during the summer like a barbecue, like a community cleanup. And it's just amazing to get to work with those folks that have great pride in their community, great pride in their neighbourhood, and work so hard to make sure it is a welcoming, inclusive, and vibrant part of Regina. And so to them, I just want to say thank you for putting your faith in me to represent you here in this building.

Over the summer we did a lot of outreach, hosted our annual barbecue in Regina Walsh Acres. We did a lot of door knocking. Like I said, we attended a lot of events in the community: the trade show, community cleanups, all sorts of opportunities. I went to a number of grade 8 grads. And, yeah, it was a really good summer of connecting with folks in the community.

I also want to say thank you to the incredible team that I get to serve with here in the Chamber. I had the privilege to be a MLA a year before the fall election in 2024, when there were just 13 of us, and then after this election with 27 members on this side of the Chamber. I have been continually inspired and grateful that I get to work with such thoughtful, caring people who are here, that do such good work in communities in their own constituencies but across this province, and work so hard to represent those people, to bring ideas and solutions, and to offer feedback to the government on where we hear from folks and where we feel government needs correction on.

And so I just want to say that I'm really proud to be part of this team and have been so grateful to develop great relationships with so many of my colleagues here. I do want to single out my colleague from Cumberland, as many other of my folks here on this side have done so far. I want just to share my utmost respect for his speech that he opened our side's response to the Throne Speech with. Well one, I'm deeply touched by his experience of what his family and his community and what he went through as a leader in the North this summer.

I had the opportunity to drive up to La Ronge, up to Missinipe this summer in July, after all of the communities that had been evacuated in May and June had been able to return to their homes. And I got to see first-hand the devastation of those fires, and to drive for miles and miles through just charred forest was jarring.

And to imagine what so many of the people of the North had to go through to drive through that fire, and to hear my colleague talk about, you know, wondering whether he was going to survive that trip down through the fire, I just have been in awe of him this summer and how he's represented his community and the people that he works for. And also the MLA for Athabasca as well. Both just outstanding leaders in the North, and again grateful to be able to work with them.

I just want to say thanks quickly to some of our staff, the folks in our caucus who work day in and day out to just make sure that we're on our game on our side and doing the work necessary to hold government to account. In my own constituency office I've got Wren as my constituency assistant who has been just a great addition to the office, works super hard, and I'm super grateful for her passion and her energy and how she works with the constituents in Walsh Acres and does a great job.

Also in our office Bre, Nadine, and Trish, just also continuing that high work ethic, making sure that they're getting their job done and working for the people of north Regina. Shout-out to my constituency executive, Regina Walsh Acres constituency executive. They support me through all of this and put in a lot of volunteer hours to make sure that, you know, we're getting ready for the election in 2028 and making sure that we are out doing the work, connecting with folks in the community, and all of those things. So to my team on the executive I want to say, thank

you.

And lastly I'll just mention my family. And I just want to say just how proud I am of them and how grateful I am that they allow me to do the work here in this building. And it takes a toll on the family, for sure, and especially with what my family went through a year ago today. It's still challenging and there's still repercussions from that that we deal with. But I just want to say that I'm very, very proud of them. And that extends to the rest of my family as well — my sisters and mom and dad and brother-in-laws and in-laws who, you know, put in a lot of effort to make sure that I can be here as well. So I want to say thank you to all of my family.

Mr. Speaker, I was a teacher before I got elected, and I deeply believed that each one of my students deserved to get a good education, to have a chance to dream about what they could be and work towards a life that they could be proud of. As an MLA I bring that same core value of believing that each person I represent in Regina Walsh Acres and in this amazing province is worthy of a fair chance in life, that government's role is to deliver essential services that should be there for people.

That's why I believe it is not a radical idea that people should get high-quality, free, public health care. That's why I believe it is not a radical idea that people should be able to make enough money to put food on their table and make ends meet, that it is not a radical idea for our children to get a high-quality education. And it's not a radical idea that when workers thrive, our province thrives. It is not a radical idea, Mr. Speaker, to feel safe in your home, in your neighbourhood, or in your community. And it is not a radical idea to care about the environment and make sure that we leave this world better for our kids.

These are all ideas I think Saskatchewan people deserve, and as long as I am an MLA in this House I will work towards those ideas. A student once gave me a water bottle that they had inscribed a quote on, and I recently pulled it out of my cupboard and had a look at it. The quote read, "Courage, my friends. 'Tis not too late to build a better world."

So with that, let's dig into this Throne Speech because there's a lot to talk about, and I know I don't have a lot of time left. But I've talked a little bit about the wildfires in the North, and I want to just take a moment as the Environment shadow minister for our team to just talk about . . . We've talked a lot about the response. We've talked about some of the issues around the water bombers not being in the air providing that support.

But I want to talk about the link between climate change and the wildfires that we are seeing. And for decades scientists have been predicting that as global temperatures rise, we will see an increase in the severity of forest fires, amongst many other impacts. And in Saskatchewan we're seeing increased drought, increased flooding events, extreme weather.

And we know that climate change disrupts normal weather patterns that we are used to in this province and particularly in the North, which means that the forest can be drier, the days and the nights during the spring and summer can be hotter. And the forest is then supercharged, so that when a fire does occur it is bigger and more significant. So when a fire does start, it is hotter, it moves faster, and it burns deeper and longer. And this is a direct

result of climate change.

And when we talk about the issues around the fires that we've seen around La Ronge, you talk to those folks and they just experienced another extreme fire just 10 years prior. So we are seeing these fires become increasingly . . . they are increasing. We are in a situation where this is unprecedented. This year we had 30 communities evacuated at the same time.

My colleague from Cumberland talked about how 15,000 people in his constituency were evacuated at one moment. And we heard first-hand accounts from volunteer forest fire fighters that are in the North, and they've been battling wildfires for decades. And they talked about how these fires this year behaved differently. They burned hotter. They moved faster. And we saw the consequences of that in the many communities across the North.

Now even though some of these forest fires were started by humans, whether intentionally or by accident, climate change still had an impact on how fast these fires spread and how large these fires became. And this is the piece: we know as temperatures increase over time, that these fires are going to become more and more common. And they're going to get hotter and larger and impact northern Saskatchewan more and more.

This government needs to have a plan on how we are going to fight these forest fires in the future, because just because it happened this year does not mean it's a free pass next year. So we need a plan. And that is why we have called for a comprehensive public inquiry led by an independent judge into the entire wildfire disaster that destroyed homes in the North. We need to be prepared for the next time this happens. And I hope that the government will hear that, that they will be prepared and they will plan going into next fire season.

I also serve as our team's rural and remote shadow Health minister, and so I'm going to dive into a few pieces on the health front. A quote from the Throne Speech: "Saskatchewan's health care system is ensuring everyone gets the care they need." That's a bold statement, Mr. Speaker. And I hear, you know, members on the other side of the House talk about, they're glass half full and we're glass half empty. But when you have the facts that I'm going to talk about here in terms of the state of our health care system, it's hard to imagine being a glass-half-full person when, you know, we've seen an eightfold increase in hospital disruptions over the time that this Premier has been in his seat.

We've seen hospitals, closed hospitals in rural Saskatchewan that have a piece of paper on their front door so when people drive up, they find that their hospital is closed, directing them to another hospital. They drive to that other hospital and that hospital is also closed. That is a problem, Mr. Speaker. That is not health care ensuring everyone gets the care that they need.

When you have 450 health care workers sending a letter, a public letter to the Health minister begging for help about the conditions that are in the Royal University Hospital's ER, that is not health care that is ensuring everyone gets the care that they need. When you have bed after bed lined in the hallway and people having to be there for days in the hallway getting their care when . . . In question period last Thursday, I talked about a gentleman who estimated he had 2,000 people go by him in the two days that he was in the hallway. That is not health care that is ensuring

everyone gets the care that they need.

[21:15]

I could talk about the AIMS [administrative information management system] IT [information technology] issues that we're seeing in the former Cypress Hills region, where health care workers are not getting paid properly for the time that they have put in. I think a basic expectation of workers in this province is if you work a certain amount of hours, you should be paid for the hours that you've worked. I don't think that's unreasonable.

And one of the things . . . And this really struck me, Mr. Speaker. And I'm getting close to my time already. But I've been attending a number of health care rallies over the summer. And one of the sentiments that I hear from health care workers, health care workers who haven't had a deal, a collective bargaining agreement for two and a half years, who haven't had a raise in three years, who I feel in my conversations talking with them are holding on by a thread and staying in their job but they tell me that they no longer tell their kids to go into health care as a profession. They are actively telling them, don't go into health care because it is too hard; the conditions are too bad; we're not paid for what we do.

I think that's a testament to the state of our health care system. And I think that should be a wake-up call to the government to hear those front-line health care workers that are saying that. And I encourage this government to hear those workers, to work with front-line health care workers to deliver.

There's a few things in the Throne Speech that aren't there. One, a hospital for Yorkton. I really thought that was going to be there. I've toured the Yorkton hospital this summer, about a month ago now, and the conditions in that hospital are a bit shocking frankly. There are great health care workers doing amazing work in there, but when you have, you know, no hot water in the maternity ward for women giving birth, that's unacceptable to me.

When you have . . . The air conditioning needs to be run in certain wings of the acute care wing during the winter. They need to run the air conditioning because the boiler makes it too hot in those rooms, and their people are just overheating. And on the other side, in the summer it gets too hot, so they're having to put in a ton more air conditioning that are just those little like window air conditioners. The ER is too small.

The list is quite shocking as to what the state of care in that hospital is. Or sorry, not the state of care but rather the state of the facility. Again I say the care that health care workers are providing is exceptional, exceptional. However they need the facility to meet the demands of a growing community.

We don't see any solutions to fixing ERs. We don't see a deal for health care workers.

The last thing I'm going to say, Mr. Speaker, is on the urgent care centres. You know, we see this government championing urgent care centres as taking the pressure off our busy emergency rooms. But here in Regina we have the urgent care centre already in place. It still is not functioning at full capacity; it is still not operating 24 hours, 7 days a week, as was promised in the

election. And we've heard from the minister that that is not going to be happening any time soon.

But what I've heard from the urgent care centre is that the existing emergency docs from the General and the Pasqua are the ones who are manning the urgent care centre. So instead of just having the emergency docs covering those two hospitals, they're now covering a third hospital. And we're not staffing that at full capacity yet.

So now we're going to build a second urgent care centre in Regina. We're going to build another urgent care centre in Saskatoon. All of these things, how are we going to staff them? We can build buildings but we need to staff these buildings. That seems to be something that the government doesn't seem concerned about.

I had a lot more that I wanted to say, Mr. Speaker, and I'm getting the hook because I've already gone two, three minutes over my time. But I want to just say that I'm very proud to be from Saskatchewan. This is an amazing province. And one of the best parts of this job I think is getting to travel across the province and meet amazing Saskatchewan people doing amazing things. And I am continually inspired by Saskatchewan people, proud to work for them, proud to do this work here in this legislature.

With that, I will not be supporting this Throne Speech, instead will be voting in favour of the amendment put forward by my colleague, the member from Cumberland, and seconded by the member from Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis. Thank you.

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

Hon. Alana Ross: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour for me to rise in this House today to speak to the Speech from the Throne for 2025. But like everyone else has done, there are some people in my life that are very important to me and I'd really like to recognize them tonight, starting with my family.

I only have one son who lives here but he, when I'm tired, he'll drive me to Regina or run errands for me. And I really appreciate the fact he's kind of put his plans on hold to watch out for me. And my family in Alberta, I'm kind of an absentee grandma and mom, but the time we spend together is good quality time. I've always talked about my grandson and he's now nine and he's in his first play. And I keep telling him grandma needs the date of opening night, so I can get out and see him in his play because he loves to act. So I'm really looking forward to that.

And our family was blessed with a new little boy. My youngest son and his wife have a little baby boy as well who is just over two months old whose name is Stetson. And I always say just think of the name — and I could show you pictures of what he wears — the little guy has no option but to be a cowboy. But I think he'll do very fine.

I have some wonderful people who help me up in the Prince Albert office. I have my veteran CA, Patt, who is still working a bit part-time for me. She's doing some media posts. She attends events with me when I'm up there.

And my new CA, Lisa, has stepped right up, and it's like she's been there forever. She's doing an amazing job. She establishes a very good rapport when she's doing casework; she's prompt at follow-up. So I really appreciate the fact that I have these two amazing ladies to support me in Prince Albert. And I should mention, Lisa's also likes to do a bit of interior decorating. My office looks better than it has in five years, so I'm very happy for that because that's not my strength.

And I'm very blessed to be the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport, and my office staff here are phenomenal. I could not do any of this without them. My chief of staff, Elias, he's just a wealth of knowledge. He's high energy, a workaholic, I think. I have a young man, Josh, who is my MA [ministerial assistant] of communication. And he's really, he's come a long ways. He has learned what that role is, and he's doing an amazing job.

We have a new MA of casework. And we started out we had Pooja, and she left me to go help the Minister of Rural and Remote Health in her busy office. And now we have Ayaz who is really picking up and really contributing a lot to our office. And then we have Bonnie. Bonnie, she's the one in charge. She's our senior admin, and she keeps all of us in line, knowing where we're going. She is a true sergeant major. And we were very fortunate to have a new junior admin assistant come and join us, Danika, and I see such promise in her as well. So I feel very blessed that I have these wonderful people to support me while I'm here in Regina.

And of course the good people of Prince Albert Northcote. I've always said I represent the northern part of the city of Prince Albert. My condo is right along the river. We border the North Saskatchewan River in my constituency. And these are just . . . they're good, hard-working people. You know, they're very relatable. They're very honest with how they feel. And they really are there to work hard to support their families. We're so close to the lakes that that's something that people work to do, is to be able to go up and appreciate our beautiful lakes during the summer. And I see that a lot with the people I'm very blessed to represent, and I can't thank them enough.

I was also at the Prince Albert Grand Council assembly this morning — assembly of Nations. And we have quite a high Indigenous population in Prince Albert, and again good, hard-working people. They want what's best for their families, their friends, just like we do. So we have a great relationship. I met the new president of the Women's Commission today so we're looking forward to future conversations.

And as we know — and most of us probably haven't seen times like we are seeing lately, maybe in our lifetimes — the world today is pretty unpredictable. And we are very fortunate in Saskatchewan that the strength of our economy allows us to weather this storm. Through all of this, Saskatchewan still remains the most affordable place in Saskatchewan to live, work, and raise a family.

And I had the pleasure of speaking with the owners of a company that's going to be relocating to Saskatchewan from Ontario. And they are amazed at what we have. And he said, "I just know once we go back and tell people what we've seen, there is going to be great interest in coming to Saskatchewan to start a business, to get a profession." So that was very encouraging.

One of the reasons . . . like we live right on the border. Our minerals and mining, our natural resources, are very important to Saskatchewan. And where I live is kind of where that starts, in the north part of the province, and it really does impact Prince Albert as well. Many people who work in the resource sector live in Prince Albert. They buy their homes in Prince Albert. And they fly up to the mines on a regular basis to do their shifts and then come back, but they're raising their families in Prince Albert.

So just because you live in a city, it doesn't mean you don't get direct impact from the resource sector. And it's also that having a strong economy and a thriving resource and ag sector has also allowed us to fund projects. And Prince Albert has benefited greatly from that.

I'm always excited when I go back and see the progress on the new Victoria Hospital that's being built. And you can just hear the buzz in the community from people excited to see it's above the ground. People are so excited to see that progress. And it has done so much to increase the morale of the staff to think that we are going to get this state-of-the-art building in Saskatchewan.

We also have, when you look around the city, we have, as the minister from Sask Rivers mentioned, the Lake Country recreation centre. That's not just a centre for Prince Albert. When I was talking to people up in La Ronge, for example, they were excited. There's new restaurants in that area. There's stores in that area, hotels. They couldn't wait for that to be finished so they could come into Prince Albert for a weekend and have a holiday with their family. So it has been a very positive asset to the city of Prince Albert.

There are a number of affordability measures that our government has. You know, the students take advantage of the graduate retention bonus; homeowners, the home renovation tax credit.

[21:30]

In the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, I'm very happy to say we have the active families benefit. And you know, I met a lovely young lady when I was in Moose Jaw, and she was saying that she applies for that every year because without that support, her kids couldn't go into the same type of program that she is able to put them in. So that is very, very positive.

The ability to keep small-business tax at 1 per cent, that supports all of our small business in the province. And I know in Prince Albert, as I've seen here, there's a lot of small businesses, so not raising that tax has helped them significantly.

So safety is paramount and we've heard that. We all need to feel safe and secure in our homes. We now have the marshals service stationed in Prince Albert, and that has been a great asset to the city of Prince Albert. And the increase in the municipal police force, ongoing investment in the RCMP, all of those investments help make our communities safer with the increased manpower to be able to do the policing.

And I have to say, I'm on kind of a main street, and I have noticed it is a lot quieter when I go back to what it was before. Because we get a lot of people with loud cars racing up and down the

street, and the last couple times I've been home, I haven't noticed that, which to me was very, very positive.

We also have a number of pieces of legislation making Saskatchewan stronger, safer, and secure: the safe public spaces Act, safe communities and neighbourhood Acts, and *The Trespass to Property Act*, and several legislative and regulatory policies to protect citizens of Saskatchewan against illicit drugs. And we've heard that in this House already today. All of these support the people of Saskatchewan and help get the drugs off the street and make our communities safer.

We've heard about the recovery-oriented system of care. I had the privilege of going out to Alberta when they were implementing that program and saw first-hand and heard first-hand the impact that that has made on families, on individuals. And it was really hard not to buy into that because they are doing such great work and they are helping so many people.

The compassionate intervention Act. You know, sometimes I think as a parent . . . And I was very blessed I didn't have issues with addictions with my kids. You know, we all have certain challenges, but I feel so blessed that I didn't have that. And I don't know how would I feel as a parent if someone said to me, all your child is worth is a clean needle. I mean, harm reduction, we want our needles to be clean, but people who are in that condition do not have the ability to make that decision for themselves. I have also had the opportunity to speak with survivors who have participated in that type of programming and are so grateful that someone cared enough to implement that. So I thank our minister for that.

We also have the provincial approach to homelessness that will be positively impacting Prince Albert; funding supports for shelters, spaces, supporting housing units; continued work with community leaders and the federal government on bail reforms.

There's so much going on. When I sat and listened to the Throne Speech, I was just, I was absolutely amazed. Like you get caught up in doing the work, but when it's laid out as to how much is actually happening and how positive it is, our Throne Speech really, really spells that out.

Inter-jurisdictional support orders Act will ensure that support orders can be enforced when a parent leaves the province. That is a very positive step. I had a young woman I actually knew when she was growing up come into my office not long before this was introduced. And she was looking for that because there weren't many tools that they could utilize when a spouse leaves and doesn't provide any type of supports for their children. So that will be very, very well received.

So within my ministry, the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, we also have some initiatives. There were over 930 visits to the Saskatchewan provincial parks as you heard. I had never been to a southern provincial park when I took on this role. Now I have been to a number of them. And people love the parks. The people of Saskatchewan love the parks. It is a very important asset, and we have done some investment in the parks with our facilities and keeping them up to date. And that's very important because that's a real outlet for a lot of our people, to be able to utilize the parks.

We're also introducing the tailgating Act this year that will be in collaboration with the Roughriders. And we will work with the Roughriders and with the city to make sure that it is safe and well regulated so that people can have a good time safely. And this announcement has been extremely well received.

Another initiative we have in our office is the from many peoples, strength Act. We've had many cultural groups reach out to us to talk about permanent legislation, so I have had the privilege to meet with a number of these organizations. So this is something that we will be introducing this session as well.

I just want to speak to the Status of Women file. The Status of Women file leads and coordinates the development of strategic initiatives and public policy through their program. We work with other ministries in order to do this. The Ministry of Justice is one of our major partners. They're the ones who actually are . . . That program is funded and it is set up through the different ministries.

Interpersonal violence is deeply rooted. It has devastating impact on many people, and it requires a multi-faceted approach and commitment from everyone. So that is something we will be continuing to work on.

So, Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak in this House today. I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne as moved by the member from Weyburn-Bengough and seconded by the member from Carrot River Valley. I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

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

Sally Housser: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't be happier tonight to be rising in the coveted 9:30, bottom-of-the-ninth slot for responding to the Throne Speech. But I do rise today with the extreme honour and privilege of responding to the Speech from the Throne on behalf of the constituents of Regina University.

I'd like to recognize right from the beginning the great work of my constituency assistant, Daisy Bowman. She is new like I am new, and together we have been learning. But she has done a fantastic job of serving the constituents of Regina University. Her compassion, her thoughtfulness, her commitment to helping the people of our riding has been unprecedented. She's also an absolute star in organization and keeping me where I'm supposed to be when I'm supposed to be, and making sure that I'm connecting with all the people in the riding every chance that I get.

I'd also like to thank our caucus staff who have worked non-stop over the course of the legislative break, ensuring that we're bringing the concerns of the province to the public eye through daily — often multiple daily — press conferences. And they've also kept all of these opposition MLAs here running to all four corners of the province, meeting with stakeholders, municipal leaders, and citizens across Saskatchewan.

I would really specifically like to thank, though, my colleagues from Cumberland and Athabasca and their constituency assistants for their work over the course of this summer. They

worked through the nights, 24 hours a day, while dealing with their own struggles and their families, to keep the communities and the people they represent safe through tragedy after tragedy.

During my first summer as a provincial MLA, it was a total delight to attend so many vibrant community events in my riding in Regina and all across the province. There is so much going on, and so many people who work so hard and volunteer hours to organize these fabulous and dynamic community events.

I got to experience the excitement of the Dragon Boat Festival at Wascana Lake as the association prepares to host the world next year for an international dragon boat competition. I nearly had to be rolled out of the VicSquare parking lot after being stuffed to the gills with some of the best food this province has to offer at the Taste of the Philippines festival which occurs in my riding. I got to indulge in my love of bagpipes and a good bit of caber tossing during the Highland games. And probably a highlight of the year was getting to attend the Back to Batoche festival, where we were treated to fabulous jigging and, of course, an incredible fish fry.

And now that's only a fraction of the amazing community events that I got to attend since last we met in this Chamber. Unfortunately, to name them all would take my entire allotted time, and I very much do want to get to the well-deserved criticisms of the Throne Speech itself. But before I do, I do want to outline where those criticisms are coming from.

In addition to the great community events, I've met with dozens and dozens of stakeholders and hundreds and hundreds of constituents and many municipal leaders from Yorkton, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Weyburn, Estevan. And in my capacity as shadow minister for Energy and Resources, myself, my colleague for Saskatoon Riversdale, and our leader, Carla Beck, had an extremely productive tour of Calgary just at the end of last session where we met with senior leaders for many of the largest oil and gas producers, energy producers, as well as industry associations.

And the message from them was very clear. There's a reset with this new federal government and there is a willingness to work. And there's a willingness to give a benefit of the doubt. And obviously people have been burned over the past 10 years in the energy industry with the previous federal administration, but people know we need to get the job done. We need to diversify. And in order to be able to do that, we need to start building now.

The past six months have very much been shadowed by the volatile, nonsensical tariff roller coaster that President Trump has kept us on. But the one thing that has been consistent is that the president does not respond to a softly, softly, playing-nice approach that this government seems to favour. What is clear is that if he is given an inch, he will take a mile. Bullies respond to strength, and that is the strength that we have to demonstrate here in Saskatchewan and across Canada.

And in this climate, it really was fortuitous to have this year's midwestern legislators' conference here in Saskatchewan. I was fortunate enough to tour the Cenovus operations in Lloydminster and watch in real time as United States legislators learn and see that 70 per cent of the heavy crude that they refine in their states comes from Canada. And it's imperative that Saskatchewan and

Canada continues to tell our story south of the border so that the people in the United States know that these unjust tariffs are costing jobs and hurting livelihoods in their country as well.

I've also had the . . . And this is something that is great as a new MLA and definitely in the portfolio that I get to have. I got to do some incredible tours of the major operations we have in this province and get to meet so many of the workers that keep this province running. I toured both the solution mine at Bethune for potash and the conventional underground mine at Esterhazy, which is an incredible experience, and to get to meet all the people and see the massive operation and see the product that is so critical to our province's economy from start to finish. And the pride that the workers take in building this province is really something incredible, and those good jobs that they want for themselves, but that they want for their children as well.

[21:45]

And recently I visited the great Saskatchewan success story of Supreme Steel in Saskatoon. It's absolutely the type of local company that has the ability to build this province. They do roads. They do bridges. They do refineries. They do mining headframes. And they just need to get Saskatchewan contracts instead of those contracts going out of province or south of the border.

I also met with many of the unions who represent our workers in industry and across the building trades. And while there's an excitement for the potential we have in this province, there's also a fear. And this was something in all the people that I have met with in the energy and resources portfolio — industry, labour, First Nations, chambers of commerce, municipal leaders — concerns for the growing labour force gap.

We need to build more rail lines, more pipelines, more transmission lines, and modernize our roads and highways. But the thing that's been consistent across all those conversations we have is the worry that we simply don't have enough people now to build, let alone what we plan to.

We need to have practical, achievable solutions for how we address the labour force gap. The number of retiring people in the building trades now should be worrying to everybody involved. And obviously getting our young people involved in those very critical good jobs, good-paying jobs, mortgage-paying jobs, needs to be a priority, and unfortunately I didn't hear any of that in the Throne Speech.

But perhaps the best way to talk about this Throne Speech is to talk about what I heard across hundreds of households throughout this summer and how little this document had to offer those folks. A Throne Speech never comes with specifics — we all understand that — but what we do hope to see as we begin a legislative session is a document that sets out a vision, priorities, or at the very least a base understanding of what the people of the province are facing. The speech unfortunately accomplished none of that.

The absolute disconnect of the government continuing to insist that life in Saskatchewan couldn't be rosier when the economic anxiety, the crumbling health care system, and our skyrocketing rates of crime and drug overdoses tell the real story. This Throne

Speech is completely divorced from the reality that the people of Saskatchewan are facing. It is devoid of innovative thinking, of curiosity, and of compassion. It says that black is white, up is down, and demands that the people of Saskatchewan not believe their eyes or ears, or more importantly, their wallets.

They are putting patting themselves on the back for utter mediocrity over taking real action for the people they represent. And in a moment that perhaps defines this government more than anything else — it came just after the Throne Speech — they took a very non-partisan motion by our leader, Carla Beck, about standing up for canola producers and turned it into such an exercise in sycophantic back slapping that it would make even the most ardent dictator blush.

Mr. Speaker, in the hundreds of doors I knocked on over this summer, there wasn't one person — even among the people, and there were the people, who told me they didn't vote for me — there was not one person ready to defend this government record, even people who said they'd been Sask Party voters their entire life.

The most common thing . . . Well actually the most common thing I heard was that it was the first time they'd ever had a politician knock on their door in between election cycles, which is always delightful to hear. But the next-most-common thing I heard was about the economic anxiety that people are facing. And the great constituency of Regina University is a fairly affluent — by the province's standards — a fairly affluent riding or at least comfortably middle class.

Today I had a constituent join me, Roger Derby, who is a senior who's worked hard his whole life to build the province of Saskatchewan, and he is worried about losing his home because he simply cannot afford to live there anymore. And that is the same fear that every single one of his neighbours in that same building feels. And you cannot say to them, well just find somewhere cheaper. There is nowhere down the line. The wait for affordable housing, there is nowhere to go, Mr. Speaker, and there are so many people that do not have family to look after them.

And the anxiety that I spoke to, that I heard from so many homeowners, people who had their house, still had some time left on the mortgage and they're just getting into retirement. They've done everything right. They've done everything right in their lives, and this should be the time that maybe they get to travel a bit, get to visit their kids. But no, instead they have to be thinking about their parents moving back into their house and also their children not being able to move out. And then the cost and stress of that on a single household is too much to bear for many, many people.

It's simply not sustainable, Mr. Speaker. We talk about the homelessness crisis, and it is that in this province. And it is being driven by that, by people not being able to afford where they live, and there is not a tax credit that is going to solve that problem. We need real systemic action from this government.

The other thing that was incredibly consistent was the state of our health care system. I think probably every second house I hit had some kind of tragedy or horror story that stemmed from a lack of care, a surgical wait time, a lack of diagnostics. And every single

one of these people talked about the commitment of the health care workers that served them and the sadness they felt as they themselves were dealing with all of this but watching the health care workers trying to help them, who were so burnt-out, so tired, and so wanting to help and do better but just being crushed under the weight of a system that simply isn't supporting not only the patients but the workers that provide that care, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing — and again, in a fairly middle class and kind of half-suburban neighbourhood — is public safety. People are really starting to not feel safe in their own homes. And they're sympathetic. We can all understand the root causes of crime and why it's there, but that does not remove the anxiety and the fear that you face in protecting your own home.

And the one thing that I think people . . . It was consistent. You know, they say, we just never see cops around here, and if somebody's breaking into my garage or stealing a bike or something like that, by the time you call somebody, they're acting as EMTs [emergency medical technician] dealing with the drug crisis downtown.

And I'm getting the hook here from our Whip. But the one thing with the drug crisis . . . And we can talk about all sorts of different types of care, but the one thing we need to say is that when somebody in the throes of addiction puts up their hand and says, "I need help," then the government should be there saying, "we will give you that help," and not waiting for beds to come online, not having to call back a line, not being told to attend a Zoom meeting about how to get clean.

So, Mr. Speaker, I had a whole section about the economic record and the debt and deficit and everything like that, but I'll have to leave that till later in the session. And with that I will just say I will not be supporting the motion, and I will instead be supporting the amendment put forward by my colleague the MLA from Cumberland. Thank you.

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

James Thorsteinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess if the member from Regina University was brought in to pinch hit at the bottom of the ninth, I guess that makes me the closer.

I'm honoured to rise for my reply to the Speech from the Throne on this, the eve of the one-year anniversary of my election as the MLA for Cut Knife-Turtleford. I can guarantee, Mr. Speaker, that I will sleep better tonight than I did a year ago.

To say the last year has been a bit of a whirlwind would be an understatement, as I'm sure everyone sharing this anniversary with me would agree. Entering political life brings its significant challenges. Long hours on the road and time spent away from family can be difficult at times, but I am fortunate to have their love and support as I continue on this journey.

I wouldn't be the person I am today without the love, support, and guidance of my parents. They've supported me through all stages of my life, the good and the bad, and for that I am truly grateful. I'd like to say a special thank you to Dad for looking after the day-to-day on the ranch when I'm away. And I'd also like to apologize in advance to Mom for there not being daily

chores this coming winter to get Dad out of the house.

My three sons continue to help around the ranch when necessary, and it's good to hear their thoughts and perspectives on the issues of the day. My wife, Lana, and I were fortunate to not only host the reception for my son Cody and Hayley's wedding this summer, but I was asked to officiate the ceremony as well.

The wedding was a beautiful outdoor ceremony in Banff on Wednesday, then we all headed back to the ranch for the reception on Saturday. A great time was had by all, and by some maybe a little too good, but it was finally the motivation I needed to tidy and clean the shop. That makes two of my sons married off, and, as Meat Loaf so eloquently put it, two out of three ain't bad.

Lana has been beside me all the way since long before this journey began. She's joined me in celebrating the good times and supported me through the tough times. She travels with me on the road wherever possible to various events in the community and helps at the parades, throwing candy from the passenger side of the truck to ensure all kids get a treat. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to say that this year Lana and I celebrated our 10-year anniversary. And I am looking forward to spending many more decades to come, side by side. I love you, honey.

Summer is a time for us as MLAs to connect with people in our communities, to celebrate their achievements, and to hear their concerns. I was blessed to be able to be in every community in my constituency over the summer at parades, 4-H achievement days, fairs, openings, and more. Cut Knife-Turtleford is vibrant and thriving, and I am honoured to be your MLA. Thank you for placing your trust in me to serve you, and I pledge to always work to make the communities of this great constituency and communities across Saskatchewan strong, safe, and secure.

Think about those words for a minute — strong, safe, secure. Strong economy, safe communities, and a secure future. Doesn't that sound like something we can all get behind, Mr. Speaker?

Of course it all starts with a strong economy. It's through a strong economy that we're able to provide the services that Saskatchewan people deserve. In this year's Speech from the Throne our government highlights just a handful of the many policies that assist the people of Saskatchewan, grow our economy.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has what the world wants — no, what the world needs. We have the people and resources here to fulfill those needs, and we're doing just that. What I hear over and over from across the country and around the world is that people would just like government to get out of the way, let businesses do business. This government's doing just that. By reducing the red tape that creates unnecessary hurdles for businesses to succeed, we have saved Saskatchewan companies nearly \$700 million.

But, Mr. Speaker, there's still more work to do. That's why we're introducing the Saskatchewan internal trade promotion Act which will promote freer trade across all provincial borders, making it easier for Saskatchewan businesses to do business in other provinces. When you represent a constituency that runs along the border, you can't help but think about how beneficial

this could be for those that you serve.

We are encouraging business growth by implementing the small and medium enterprise tax credit, which helps those in the food, beverage, machinery, and transportation industries attract investment. The Saskatchewan young entrepreneur bursary, which is administered by local chambers of commerce across the province, is awarded to individuals looking to grow or start their businesses in communities across the province. The winners of this year's bursary will be announced soon, and I would like to say congratulations to all of the recipients.

Saskatchewan continues to be the best jurisdiction in Canada for mining investment attractiveness, and it's not just because of our vast quantity of natural resources. It's because of a stable government, a strong regulatory regime, and a competitive royalty structure.

[22:00]

We will continue to make Saskatchewan one of the best places in the world for companies to explore, invest, and develop resources that the world needs. That investment creates jobs and stability for Saskatchewan residents, particularly those in northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, oil and gas is a key economic driver in the constituency of Cut Knife-Turtleford. A strong oil sector is vital to the economic prosperity of the region and the province. Continued investments by companies such as Strathcona, Cenovus, CNR rail, Cardinal, and others create good jobs for the residents of Cut Knife-Turtleford, providing a better quality of life and helping grow our communities.

Of course the other key industry in the area is agriculture. This year's cash crop is just beginning to hit the markets and prices are very strong. Livestock producers are excited about the future and are able to make perhaps some overdue investments in their operations. With harvest now wrapped up, producers in the area are overall quite happy with this year's crop. With the exception of a few small pockets where rain was short and yields were down, most of the crop was above average in yield with excellent quality.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that recent trade disputes with our two largest trading partners are causing headwinds for Saskatchewan farmers, and I am thankful we have a premier who will stand up for Saskatchewan's world-class agricultural producers. The first premier in six years to lead a trade mission to China, our Premier continues to lead in the fight against Chinese tariffs on canola, peas, and pork.

Thanks to our trade office in Shanghai, we were able to get meetings with Chinese officials that even our Canadian ambassador had been unable to secure. Mr. Speaker, our various trade offices around the world are opening up opportunities for Saskatchewan to expand our international trade and become less reliant on China and the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that we are facing some challenges to our economic prosperity. Some are a continuation of the last decade of policies brought forward by the federal government, and some are caused by the trade policies of other countries.

However despite those challenges, Saskatchewan has the strongest economy in Canada. We have the lowest unemployment rate, and we lead the country in investment growth. I can only imagine how different those stats would be if we were to let the opposition NDP close our international trade offices as they campaigned on, or nationalize our oil industry as they debated at their recent convention.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan residents deserve to feel safe in their communities. This government is continuing to make investments to ensure you and your family are able to go for an evening stroll, take your kids to the local park, and support your local small business. Our government continues to call on the federal government alongside municipal leaders to implement meaningful bail reform.

All too often offenders, some violent, are released on bail almost automatically only to reoffend once back in the community. We need to ensure that those who have repeatedly committed violent crimes remain in custody in order to protect the public. Placing reverse onus on repeat violent offenders for bail will mean that the defence has to prove why a person charged should receive bail, not the Crown having to prove why they shouldn't.

It's no secret that most of the crime that threatens the safety and security of Saskatchewan residents has one root cause — the trafficking and use of illicit drugs. We need to remove those drugs from our streets so that the good people of Saskatchewan feel safe. That is why we passed the safe public spaces Act and have made recent amendments to *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* and *The Trespass to Property Act*.

We will also be introducing the response to illicit drugs Act to protect families from the harms associated with the illegal drug trade by cracking down on those who bring this poison into our communities.

Our government isn't just passing laws to deal with illicit drugs. We are investing in additional law enforcement personnel to enforce those laws. We have committed to funding nearly 400 new officers across the province, including RCMP, municipal officers, and the Saskatchewan marshals service.

Mr. Speaker, while we need to stop the flow of illegal drugs into our communities, we also need to help those who have unfortunately fallen into a life of addiction. Rather than enabling the addiction, our government is focused on a recovery-oriented system of care. We have committed to opening 500 addictions treatment beds across the province, with nearly 300 open and serving those battling addictions today.

With two complex-needs facilities open in the province — one each in Saskatoon and Regina — those who may be at their lowest point have an opportunity to begin their journey of recovery. Those who are taken to a complex-needs facility have the option of being released to police custody, released to a family member, or self-referring to community supports. The self-referral rate is over 90 per cent, Mr. Speaker. It is clear that this model is working, and I am glad to see it being expanded to the communities of North Battleford and Prince Albert.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are those who may not be in a position to seek the help they need on their own. These people

may be members of your community or maybe members of your own family, people whose addiction may be causing them to risk, be a risk to themselves or to others. That is why we will be introducing the compassionate intervention Act. This Act will make it possible to require those who are a risk to themselves or others get the addictions treatment they desperately need but are unable to ask for, keeping our families and communities safe and secure.

People should feel safe, not only in their homes and communities but online as well. That is why we are introducing the cyberstalking and coercive control Act to amend the definition of "interpersonal violence" to include cyberstalking and harassment. Cyberbullying can be devastating to a person's psyche, emotional well-being, and self-esteem, and everyone deserves to be protected from this behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, it's often said that the children are our future and that is so true. That is why our government is giving our students their best start by making record investments in education. We are particularly focused on K to 3 [kindergarten to grade 3] reading outcomes, because those who are able to read at a grade level coming out of grade 3 experience better learning outcomes throughout the rest of their educational journey.

We are also investing in early learning and development for kids not yet going to school. I was honoured to attend the open house for the Heritage Daycare in Lashburn, which expects to welcome pre-K children beginning November 1st. The 45 new spaces will help attract young families to keep this community vibrant and growing for generations to come. We are also investing in spaces in Neilburg, Edam, and Wilkie. When those three projects are complete, that will be an additional 80 child care spaces in Cut Knife-Turtleford alone.

The early learning and child care agreement with the federal government, while beneficial, was not perfect. That is why we are continuing to work on negotiating a better deal for parents, children, and caregivers. Parents and caregivers alike deserve the best possible deal. And I know the Minister of Education is doing his due diligence to ensure that we achieve that.

In the election just one year ago, we committed to making sure everyone in the province has access to a primary health care provider. With one urgent care centre open in Regina and one under construction in Saskatoon, people have the opportunity to avoid the emergency department, reducing congestion and wait times and improving outcomes. With planning under way for additional urgent care centres in Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, and North Battleford, as well as one more each in Saskatoon and Regina, these communities are sure to see a streamlining of services and an improvement in health care outcomes.

The health care human resources action plan has brought in nearly 350 more doctors and 2,100 more nurses since being introduced in 2022. Add to this the expansion of nurse practitioners and the new physician assistant program at the University of Saskatchewan, and we are well positioned to meet our goal of everyone having access to a primary care provider.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have had the opportunity to highlight just a few of the ways our government is working to ensure we have a strong economy, safe communities, and a secure future.

And as I said earlier, isn't that something we can all get behind? So, Mr. Speaker, for all of these reasons and more, I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Weyburn-Bengough, seconded by the member from Carrot River Valley, and I will not be supporting the amendment.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge.

Darcy Warrington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're almost at 10:30. We're almost there, folks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always an honour to be on my feet representing the great people of Saskatoon Stonebridge. And in particular tonight, the opportunity to speak on and respond to the Speech from the Throne is one that is not taken for granted by myself. However I'll start by reflecting on those closest to me who are only the beginning of the list of people I should be thanking, but who by all means I would be almost nothing without.

The first person I'll thank is Saskatoon Stonebridge's constituency assistant, Levi Nilson. I meant to thank him third to my son and wife, but was worried I would start with tears instead of cheers. Levi has been recognized prior in this legislature on occasion, and his story is no stranger to *Hansard*. Thanks for steering the ship, Levi. I'm entirely certain there's no one I'd rather have guiding our work for Saskatoon Stonebridge and its amazing people. They are in good hands due to your experience, character, and compassion.

Secondly but above all else, I'd like to thank my six-year-old son, Miles, and my partner of 22 years, Christina. In some ways Miles gets the benefit of seeing his dad in situations he maybe wouldn't have if I was still a teacher — walking him to school every day; being able to take him to more extracurr without my own extracurr as a teacher, whether it's tae kwon do, baseball, basketball; going to the library; going to the park. He's such an energetic and life-loving human being.

But many times Dad is unexpectedly gone for random last-minute evening events, consecutive days away in Regina, therefore missing for many of those fun moments he loves, including his evening bath and stories at bedtime. Last week my son, in tears, was upset that a last-minute evening meeting had been announced to him before suppertime. And though I'll always try my best to make those moments up to my son, Miles, I know he will have to continue to share his dad with other people who might need his help.

And to my wife, Christina: I ask too much of you and you give so selflessly. You're truly the light of my son's life, and Miles and I are so lucky to have you in our life.

I speak on behalf of all of the members of this legislature across political lines. I understand our spouses and kids give up the most — I think we all do — so we may serve our constituents. The province owes them some appreciation for those sacrifices that they make to have their moms or dads, wives or husbands away from where all the great memories are made.

A suggestion and disclaimer to my colleagues on both sides with young children: if you ever see me talking on my cell phone or looking at it at 7:25 p.m. when I'm not in Saskatoon Stonebridge, it's because I'm enjoying my son reading a story to me before

bedtime over FaceTime. It has become a welcome tradition whenever I'm away, and it's the best part of my day if I have to be away from Miles and Christina.

[22:15]

To my colleagues: I encourage us all to find ways to keep these connections and normalcy with our loved ones, those acknowledgements being made, and the recognition of all of my colleagues and what their families have given up.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to respond to the Speech from the Throne. In particular, I will be highlighting what I felt was absent from the Throne Speech.

Though admittedly education hasn't been top of mind in the media since arbitration was agreed upon, I would like to start here, as education will always be near and dear to my heart — and, it should be noted, is still incredibly important to such a young community like Stonebridge.

Through my career as a teacher, I could talk at great length how teachers and students that I've come to know are failed by this Throne Speech. It failed to acknowledge deficiencies in space for new schools, current space for new schools, as well as new schools being built in a timely fashion in general. I must highlight how this speech fails the kids of St. Kateri in Saskatoon Stonebridge who can no longer go to their neighbourhood school if not grandfathered-in a few blocks away as it's too full, and have to bus across Circle Drive to get to another school. This story exists in its entirety in the same way with Aspen Ridge residents. How this speech fails students who have intense physical and intellectual disabilities being sent home an hour before all other students every day, or worse, being temporarily excluded and being sent home at lunch every day due to lack of supports. Shame.

I worked from 2023 until the fall of 2024 at wāhkôhtowin School in Saskatoon Fairview. Well over half of their students are of First Nations descent and proportionately, roughly half of their EAs [educational assistant] were funded by Jordan's principle. When Jordan's principle funding ran out earlier this year, several EAs were lost to the student population there and in too many other schools. Jordan's principle was created by the federal government to defeat levels of government pointing fingers at each other: "Who is responsible to support First Nations children and others?"

This Sask Party government should have immediately done the right thing and announced they would fund the shortfalls across the province. Instead, they allowed schools with higher First Nations representation than others to just make it work with what they have, disproportionately affecting schools negatively that have higher First Nations populations. They should have taken the opportunity to make it right in the Throne Speech. Shame.

When it comes to health care, the Throne Speech was full of self-congratulations. And don't forget the amendment to our motion on Thursday, talking about how good things supposedly are in Saskatchewan and how the government's plan will make it even better. But we've heard that same promise year after year, and for most people nothing has improved.

There needs to be more acknowledgement of how health care needs to be so much more for the people of Saskatchewan.

Now I'm a numbers guy, a statistics nerd. And if the government really wanted to be transparent they wouldn't just tell us the stats on how many doctors — or the 2,100 nurses that were just announced by the member opposite — that they've hired; they'd also tell us how many left. Those are the numbers that matter. Those are the numbers this tired, out-of-touch government doesn't seem to want to share with us.

We need big, bold change to pull health care in Saskatchewan out of last place, and here's why. At Royal University Hospital, 450 health care workers signed their names out of pure desperation pleading for emergency support. Some of those people are my friends and family; many more are my constituents in Saskatoon Stonebridge. And the same stories can be said about St. Paul's Hospital — emergency rooms running at 200 per cent capacity or more routinely. Shame.

These workers are doing everything they can. They shouldn't have to carry this blame for a system that's failed them. It's funny seeing the minister laughing at that comment. They're exhausted, demoralized and losing confidence. Sometimes they don't even get paid on time due to AIMS which is running over 200 per cent over budget. Retention is getting harder every day, and who can blame them when their government refuses to support them?

And then there are the patients too often waiting eight hours or more in emergency rooms, sometimes a full day before getting a bed. Imagine being in your worst moment, confined to a hallway without privacy or dignity. Or somehow worse, not getting a bed for an extended period of time.

One constituent of mine, Daegan, told me he's chosen not to go to the ER on occasion, even when seriously ill with his illness because he wasn't sure he'd be seen in less than eight hours. No one should ever have to make that kind of choice. It's time for honesty, accountability, and action. Because Saskatchewan deserves a health care system that works for the people who rely on it, and for the people who keep it running every single day.

I talked earlier today at length about seniors desperate for rent controls to stay in their home. And I will echo that people in Saskatoon Stonebridge in general recognize and understand that doing nothing for those folks, asking them somehow to afford 10 to 30 per cent annual rent increases is unacceptable. The Speech from the Throne failed to speak to those. But I'll let those comments stand on their own and focus a little longer on how changes to SIS would make the province better and safer for all.

While homelessness and crime in our neighbourhood grows, housing is definitely the root cause. Changing SIS is simple, cost-effective, and would create an opportunity for Saskatchewan.

Now I was going to go on at great length about this, but I have to make a cut here, so I'll just simply say this: if we were to simply move the payment from tenants to landlords in the way that it used to exist in this province, then we would be able to get a lot of people housed. There'd be less desperation, there'd be less encampments, and there would be less people resorting to crime in our community in Saskatoon Stonebridge. And that's just one simple thing the government should have put in their Throne

Speech.

For more of a Parks, Culture and Sport perspective, I've been fortunate to experience nine provincial parks, a few regional parks, and numerous campers and workers there over the summer. It should be noted we have almost 100 regional parks in our province too, so I'll certainly be adding to my travels next summer.

But to the provincial park experiences. I truly enjoyed the opportunity to jump in the lakes, go for a swim, swing some golf clubs, throw some disc golf, minigolf — no shortage of golf in our provincial parks — mountain biking, and my personal favourite, hiking. Some of these experiences were documented on YouTube. Feel free to check them out.

We have some spectacular views in the province via hiking, including from the top of Mount Blackstrap. I made it up in five minutes with some hustle, and I challenge the rest of the room to see if they could do better. The views there or in Cypress Hills, Buffalo Pound, Lac La Ronge, and so many of our dozens of provincial parks are always spectacular and only to be experienced right here in Saskatchewan.

However, we still have asked the ministry time and time again for a list of private companies contracted within and towards work done in our provincial parks, to seek out where American enterprise is being allowed and encouraged before national and provincial entities. While Aspira Connect is doing business from New York and Texas without ever having stepped foot in our parks, we are hearing more and more that booking fees are unreasonably high and that lifelong campers are experiencing issues with the system, when these online portals could be operated by our own tech companies right here in Saskatchewan.

But that discussion will continue in coming weeks, as we hope to learn more about the particular companies contracted within our parks that were promised to be shared by the minister and ministry officials with us during committee last spring session.

Visual and performing arts were entirely absent from the Throne Speech. Regina Folk Festival just officially folded early in 2025. Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan openly pointed out that they were very close to shuttering the doors themselves without great philanthropic assistance and donation matching. And one of our province's major jewels, the Saskatchewan Jazz Festival, is losing hundreds of thousands, seeking out a new major sponsor. These stories, in my mind, are the canaries in the coal mine. If they were to even close down for a season they might think it is a stopgap to stay afloat in future years, but Regina Folk Fest might tell you that that is not a winning solution either.

Some of these festivals and performing arts companies employ obviously more than just a single artist. Performing arts companies often employ multiple people, even dozens of people per production. It takes a village to make a dramatic production at Persephone or a TV show filmed in Moose Jaw that will stream on Netflix and Prime.

As the provincial government boasts, we have comparatively lower costs of living than many other jurisdictions in Canada. That being said, we are building and rebuilding the infrastructure for industries like film, after tax credits for them were suddenly

removed a decade ago.

And while they admirably are rebuilding, incentives, credits, and human resources in other jurisdictions are still routinely chose more and more to attract these filmmakers, television show producers, video game developers, animators, theatre shows, festivals than what we have unfortunately been able to offer them here in Saskatchewan.

Investing more in arts and culture would create an economic boom here in our province and shift some of these businesses from setting up shop in BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. That investment would be repaid through income taxes, purchases subject to PST [provincial sales tax], and so much more over and over and over again with a proactive spirit and vision.

I've spoken with many organizations that bring amateur sport to youth and adults across this province . . . And I'm running short on time, so I'm going to fast-forward a little bit. While many of these athletic organizations are grateful for the support from Sask Lotteries, they tell me they are funded pretty well and they provide meaningful support for many youth who might not be able to normally afford to play hockey, basketball, volleyball, to dance. The list obviously goes on and on.

They are able to supplement by paying for coaches, instructors, facility time, even equipment. But even in funding all of those things, one of the things I've heard from these organizations is transportation. Transportation to and from practices, games, events, and competitions will often still prevent too many of our children — and in many situations First Nations youth — will often still prevent them from participation.

I encourage the minister to reach out to these organizations to ask if more support should be provided for kids to get to the game, day after day, so that they may have the same opportunity that every child in our province deserves — without falling through the cracks.

Overall my colleagues and I have been diligent in canvassing well over half of our ridings since spring session ended in May. Residents often said to us, "Is there an election?" But they became pleasantly surprised to see that we were there to hear what they thought, what they wanted for their province. I had a joke there, but I'll take it out to keep things rolling.

Our constituents have shared with us all how in particular . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You want to hear it? I wonder how many Sask Party government MLAs knocked on doors this summer . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yeah, I was aware of a couple of those. Yeah, two or three for sure. Two or three for sure.

Regardless of my excellent joke, health care, cost-of-living increases, and crime and safety issues in our community are becoming something that they never imagined when first moving to Saskatoon Stonebridge. Many say to us that they've never seen it like this. Where is the peace of mind and safety that they enjoyed in the past? Where is the concrete plan to attract more doctors, nurses, and staff to our family clinics and emergency rooms? And where is the emphasis on making life more affordable for families that are struggling to make ends meet?

We know the Speech from the Throne — at least our side knows — is too general, lacking a vision to improve, and that is missing far too many details, which is common for throne speeches, I'll give you that.

This said, I will not be supporting the motion from the member from Weyburn-Bengough and I will be wholeheartedly supporting the amendment from the member from Cumberland. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I move to adjourn debate.

Speaker Goudy: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried. I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the House now adjourn.

Speaker Goudy: — It's been moved that the Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. Thank you.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:29.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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