



SECOND SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

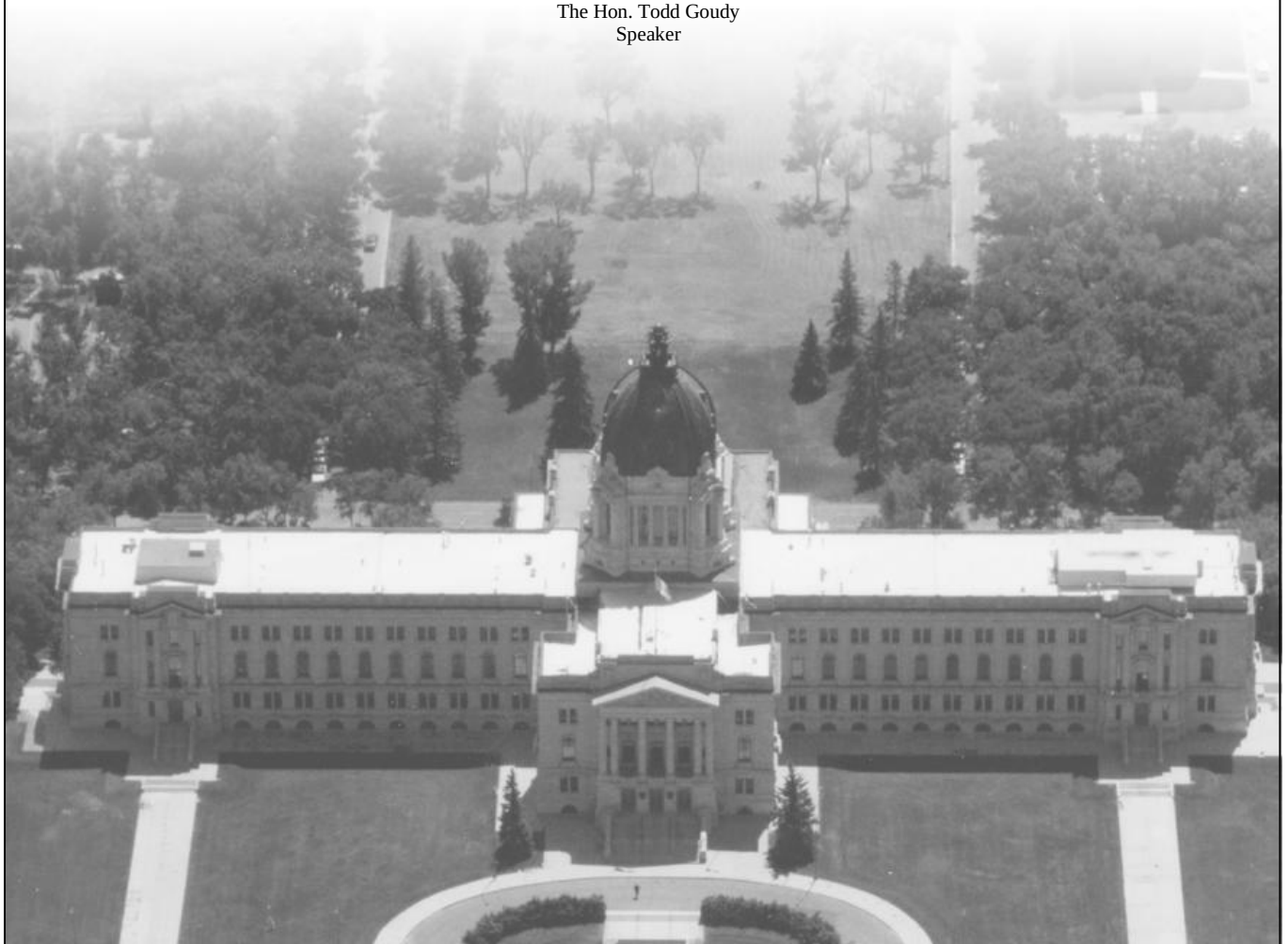
of the

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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Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

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Young, Aleana — Regina South Albert (NDP)
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Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 34; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 27

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export.

Hon. Warren Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce, seated in the west gallery, 12 grade 12, history 30 students from Langenburg Central School.

Now they are led by their teacher Laura Sveinbjornson, who is no stranger to the House as she brings students by here on a yearly basis. Laura is also a recent participant in your teachers' institute, Mr. Speaker, and is actually going to be heading to the Canadian parliamentary democracy institute in Ottawa, leaving this Saturday, as a result of a participant in the teachers' institute.

So the Langenburg students are also joined by Sarah Giles and Melissa Moore as parent supervisors. I would encourage all members to welcome the Langenburg students, Laura, Sarah, and Melissa to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Nicole Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, another school group joining us today. To you and through you, we have a group of grade 12 students from Balfour.

I'm not sure if they're actually . . . Are you guys here? Okay, give us a wave please. There's supposed to be 40 of them; I'm not quite counting 40 grade 12 students. They're seated in the east gallery today. They're joined by their teachers Katherine MacPherson and Karen Jackson.

I hope you're having a wonderful time at the legislature so far. I hope you enjoy question period. It's always an interesting experience for students. And looking forward to having my colleague actually cover for me after question period to answer your very tough questions. So make sure you give some extra difficult questions for the member for Wascana, who is going to cover while I have to deal with some matters in the Chamber.

So thank you for being here. I ask that all members join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina South Albert.

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members, I'd just like to briefly introduce, seated in your gallery, Andres Araneda to this Assembly. I will be doing a member's statement on Andres later, but to maybe scoop myself — for members who may not know — Andres is representing Saskatchewan in this season of MasterChef Canada.

Mr. Speaker, some days there's not much that unites us in this Chamber, but I think we can all agree in cheering on Saskatchewan as Andres continues to bring his talents to the national stage, showcasing the vibrant food scene that we have here in Saskatchewan as well as his skills in the kitchen.

I'll have more to say later, and I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming him to this his Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Brent Blakley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize the group from Balfour. Their teachers . . . Kathy MacPherson, I've known for over 40 years. Her and her husband, Leo, are friends of mine. Leo was my wrestling coach at U of R [University of Regina]. And I've known Karen Jackson a little less than 40 years, but both are good friends. And I know they do a great job over there at Balfour Collegiate with those wonderful students.

So again I welcome them to the Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — Presenting petitions. I recognize the member from Regina Pasqua. Oh, you're not from . . . Regina Rochdale. Sorry.

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I get mixed up all the time with him.

I would also like to introduce some special guests today. They're two directors from the Orr Centre Daycare. Their organization has been in operation for about 10 years. They have 18 staff, and they have 60 spaces. Courtney and Gagandeep do wonderful work with the children.

And I'd like everyone to join me in thanking them for the work they do and welcoming them to this their legislature.

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

Carla Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour today to rise in this House and introduce a delegation, a group of folks who have become friends, from Denare Beach.

We have with us today, Mr. Speaker, Dustin Trumbley, Joanne and James Churchill, Kathleen Churchill, Rhonda Werbicki, Tasha Young, and also she's joined by her children Spencer and Josephine.

I think we all know, Mr. Speaker, in this House the devastation that the community of Denare Beach faced this summer. This is a group of people who, despite devastating losses, have continued to advocate not only for themselves but for their entire community. When I think of this province and the people of this province, a word that comes to mind is "resilience." Another one is "tenacity."

The first opportunity I had to visit Denare Beach after the devastating wildfires, members of the community took us on a bit of a tour. And already at that point they were making plans to rebuild, and that day they were putting up the sign welcoming

people to Denare Beach.

Mr. Speaker, this is a group that are a testament to the strength of Saskatchewan people and the strength of communities. There are many that when faced with this kind of devastating loss might be discouraged, might find it hard to go forward. This is a group and a community that has become stronger. And they will continue to advocate for not only their community but for communities right across the North.

And with that I am honoured to introduce them and I invite all members to join me in welcoming them to this, their Legislative Assembly.

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

Jacqueline Roy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present Jeneane Fast and James McLean, who are seated in the gallery behind me. They are from the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking.

It was lovely to visit with them this morning, to hear about some of the excellent work that they are doing. I know this is a portfolio, for obvious reasons, that is near and dear to me in my role as the shadow minister for Status of Women, but that, of course, is also of great interest and importance to other members on our side representing justice and representing community organizations.

So I invite everybody to welcome these fine folks to their legislature and thank them for all the wonderful research and community resources they provide for so many in dear need.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Leroy Laliberte: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to implement rent control.

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that Saskatchewan tenants are currently experiencing the highest level of rent increases in the country; that rent in Saskatchewan has risen by 4 per cent in the last year alone, far outpacing wage growth and putting pressure on families, seniors, students, and low-income residents; that without rent control, landlords can implement unchecked rent hikes, making housing increasingly unaffordable and unstable.

With that, I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call on the Government of Saskatchewan to adopt fair and effective rent control legislation which limits annual rent increases, ensures housing stability, and protects tenants from being priced out of their homes.

The undersigned are from the city of Regina. I do so present.

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

Matt Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to open up vacant Saskatchewan Housing Corporation units for occupancy.

Those who've signed the petition today would like the Assembly to know that there are approximately 3,000 Sask Housing units that are currently vacant across this province, and that the Sask Party government has cut the maintenance and renovation budget by approximately 40 per cent over the last decade, and they've also failed to invest in affordable housing stock.

Folks would also like us to be aware that for every \$10 invested towards housing and support of chronically homeless individuals, this investment results in savings of 21.72 related to health care, social supports, housing, and involvement in the justice system. Investing in housing just makes sense, Mr. Speaker.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately renovate all SHC units that require renovation, make units available and affordable, and ensure that all currently vacant SHC units are made occupied.

Those who signed the petition today are from Saskatoon. I do so present.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis.

Don McBean: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise to present the petition to the Legislative Assembly to fix the crisis in health care.

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to the attention of the legislature the following: that in the past five years, health care closures across rural Saskatchewan disrupted services for a total of 8,613 days; 3,953 of those days were disruptions to Saskatchewan emergency rooms; and that recently for the first time an emergency room in one of our major cities shut down due to staff shortages. The people of Saskatchewan deserve to have adequate and accessible health care where and when they need it.

So I read the prayer as follows:

That we respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately address the short-staffing crisis in health care and work with health care workers on solutions to improve patient care.

The undersigned today come from Tompkins, Saskatchewan. I do so present.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour today to present a petition to call for the support of band education in Saskatchewan.

The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that music education, including band programs, are a critical part of a well-rounded public education that supports student achievement, mental health, and engagement; that research shows that music education improves cognitive development, literacy, numeracy, school attendance, and graduation rates; and that band programs provide unique opportunities for teamwork, discipline, leadership, and inclusivity, particularly benefiting students who may not engage in traditional academic or athletic programs.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to adequately fund public education, ensuring that all students in Regina and Saskatchewan have access to band education as prescribed by the Saskatchewan arts education curriculum.

The folks that have signed this petition are from Lumsden and Regina. I do so present.

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

Vicki Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to step up for Indigenous students in Saskatchewan. These signatories call on the Saskatchewan government to take immediate action to stand up for Indigenous children and all vulnerable students by advocating for the full restoration of funding previously supported by Jordan's principle.

[13:45]

Jordan's principle was established to ensure First Nations children have equitable access to the services they need, including supports in schools. And the recent loss of this federal funding leaves a significant gap in Saskatchewan classrooms, especially for Indigenous students who rely on inclusive education supports to thrive.

Mr. Speaker, a school in my riding lost eight EAs [educational assistant] when this cut was announced. These are vital supports that teachers need to improve student outcomes.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan stand up for Saskatchewan and advocate for the restoration of federal Jordan's principle funding to support Indigenous students in schools; commit to sustainable, predictable, and equitable provincial funding for inclusive education across Saskatchewan; and ensure education support workers have the resources and staffing they need to keep classrooms safe and support every student's learning journey.

These are signed today, Mr. Speaker, by Island Lake, Prince Albert, and La Loche residents. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

National Organization Works to End Human Trafficking

Brittney Senger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we are joined by the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking. Their work focuses on education and awareness, research, policy development, and advocacy for all types of human trafficking, including labour trafficking. They operate the human trafficking hotline, a 24-7 multilingual, trauma-informed, and confidential space to ask for help, learn about services, and report tips if you suspect someone is being trafficked.

In their first four years of operations, the hotline identified 1,500 cases of human trafficking, and nearly 40 per cent of the callers were victims. We met with the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking and learned about the urgent need for a human trafficking strategy within Saskatchewan. Their plan includes seven recommendations to provide necessary supports to victims, largely related to social programs.

I urge all members to familiarize themselves with the hotline, learn about the important work of the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking, and encourage the Minister of Social Services to meet with Jeneane Fast and James McLean. Please join me in thanking the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking for their invaluable work. Thank you.

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

Honouring Silas Campbell

James Thorsteinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in celebration of Legion Week, Unity honoured their very last World War II veteran, Silas Campbell, or Si.

Mr. Speaker, Silas was not just a member of the Legion within the community of Unity, but he was also an advocate for all local events and volunteerism. It was my absolute pleasure to join with the town of Unity to celebrate the unveiling of a green space in honour of Silas Campbell on September 20th.

Mr. Speaker, Si's Second World War service in the Royal Canadian Air Force included serving as a tail gunner on a Lancaster four-engine bomber, completing 36 flights over Nazi-occupied Europe. For his efficiency and steadiness under enemy fire, Silas was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, a high award for gallantry and courage.

Mr. Speaker, for over eight decades Silas had been an admired, compassionate war hero who had always worked for the public good. Silas had many friends of various generations and the admiration and respect of the entire community. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, Silas passed away in January of 2024 at the age of 99 years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in honouring Mr. Silas Campbell's memory and thank him for his service during the war, and in more recent years his service to his community of Unity and the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina South Albert.

Regina Teacher Competes in National Cooking Show

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure to stand here today and recognize a local celebrity. Andres Araneda is seated here in your gallery, and he's representing Saskatchewan on this season of MasterChef Canada. He's out there showing the entire country the heart, the flavour, the creativity that make our province incredible.

Andres's family came to Canada from Chile in the late 1970s, like so many fleeing the violent right wing dictatorship there. And they built a new home here, raising a son who understands that food is not just sustenance. Food is story. Food is identity. Food is love.

By day Andres is a beloved grade 6 French immersion teacher at École Wascana Plains, who's been shaping young minds for 16 years. His classroom is filled with art, passion, and culture brought to life.

His wife, Sienna, is also a teacher — pre-K [pre-kindergarten] educator — and co-owner of Boss Cheer Athletics. And together they have their son, Huxley, a basketball-loving grade 6 student who cheers louder than anyone for Andres.

Mr. Speaker, far too often our province's food scene is overlooked, and Andres is standing proudly to challenge that. Through teaching, through art, and now through his incredible cooking, he's showing Canadians that talent thrives here on the Prairies. We're cheering you on. We'll be watching tonight when the team challenge airs at 7 o'clock. And thank you for shining a spotlight on our province with every delicious dish.

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

Celebrating Disability Employment Awareness Month

Megan Patterson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to stand here today and share how our government proclaimed October as Disability Employment Awareness Month, known as DEAM. As a member of this Assembly with a disability, I can assure you DEAM is not just a month to recognize but a month to celebrate.

There are endless ways in which individuals in our province contribute to the culture and economy right here at home. They are members of teams, business owners, community leaders, and amazing volunteers.

This is the 14th year that our government has taken the time to acknowledge the contributions of those with disabilities by focusing on inclusive employment. Our government's labour market strategy outlines actions to increase and support persons with disabilities in the labour force every month of the year.

I would like to thank the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres. They run a wonderful program each year across the province in support of DEAM, while also taking time to celebrate employers who already recognize the benefits of inclusive employment. Everyone benefits from inclusion. Employers benefit from a diverse and dedicated workforce, and employees benefit from the experience. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University-Sutherland.

University of Saskatchewan Research Facility Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Tajinder Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize the University of Saskatchewan's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization, VIDO, as this fall it celebrates its 50th anniversary, a very significant milestone.

VIDO started from humble beginnings in 1975. Today it stands as Canada's centre for pandemic research, a critical national scientific facility poised to lead the fight against future pandemics. VIDO is Canada's . . . one of six major research facilities having a strong guiding vision: healthy people, healthy animals.

VIDO will be Canada's second containment level 4 facility, which is extremely important for developing vaccines for deadly pathogens. VIDO is not only a great local and national facility but also a global leader to ensure that the world is better prepared for future infectious diseases.

During the 50th anniversary gala, I had the privilege of hearing from many excellent speakers. It's an excellent example what we can accomplish when our municipal, provincial, and federal governments work together. I sincerely congratulate VIDO management, research scientists, staff, collaborators, and donors for their dedication, commitment, and leadership to make the world a better place to live.

Last but not least, VIDO is in my constituency. Once again congratulations on their 50th anniversary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Kindersley-Biggar.

First Responders Hold Successful Fundraiser for Teddy Bears Anonymous

Kim Gartner: — Mr. Speaker, Jump for Charity raises money for Teddy Bears Anonymous, a volunteer-run Saskatchewan charity that provides sterile, factory-sealed teddy bears to children in hospital and EMS [emergency medical services] services across this province.

Since the charity was founded in 2008, more than 200,000 teddy bears have been delivered to children across this province. Participants make tandem skydives from 7,500 feet with professional instructors from Skydive South Sask.

There were two pools of fundraising participants this year. Pool A was made up of representatives from Saskatchewan EMS,

Hutch Ambulance in Moosomin, and Macklin EMS. Pool B was made up of members from the Moose Jaw Police Service.

By jumping out of a perfectly good airplane, over \$27,000 was raised to support Teddy Bears Anonymous. Saskatchewan EMS won the fundraising challenge, with Macklin EMS representatives Terri Murrell and Jenn Arlitt raising \$14,000.

I would ask all members to join with me in thanking the 2025 participants for their bravery and for their dedicated service to our province.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Opposition Position on Trade Offices

Sean Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has the strongest economy in Canada because we have invested in diversifying our trade around the world. Today we export almost \$50 billion worth of goods to over 160 countries. That does not happen by accident. Policies matter. That's why we've opened nine Saskatchewan trade offices in key markets around the world.

The Leader of the Opposition has taken a different approach with reckless policies. Her policy is to cut and close Saskatchewan international trade offices. Last September when both Trump and China were threatening tariffs, the NDP [New Democratic Party] Opposition Leader released her platform that called our trade offices "waste" and "mismanagement."

Last week the NDP Opposition Leader tried to run and hide from her very public record on trade, claiming she never, ever suggested cutting international trade offices. But that leader cannot run away from her shadow. When asked by the *Leader-Post* on August 26th of this year about her position on international trade offices, that leader said, and I quote, "We looked at \$3 million in savings." What?

So which trade office is the Leader of the Opposition planning on closing? Mexico? India? London? China? Or all of them? Mr. Speaker, we are about to find about.

Speaker Goudy: — Again I want to welcome the grade 12 students to the Chamber and look forward to some good decorum. We'll be showing you how adults behave. So this is question period.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Cost of Living and Affordability Measures

Carla Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now despite the self-congratulations that we hear from members opposite, Saskatchewan people continue to face heartbreaking decisions like whether to pay for rent or feed their kids, between putting gas in their car or buying clothes for their children.

Mr. Speaker, new data from HungerCount shows that food bank usage in this province has risen 48.6 per cent under that Premier's watch. One in five of those using the food bank in this province are working and, most damning of all, 38 per cent are children.

Mr. Speaker, that is the highest number in the country.

Given all of this, will that Premier actually stand up again and tell Saskatchewan people that everything is just fine?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — I don't think anyone has stood up on any side of the House and said that everything is at any time just fine in Saskatchewan, across Canada, or in the world right now, Mr. Speaker.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would point to the Speech from the Throne that was read into the record this past week. After the introductory comments on the most tragic and severe wildfire season that we had had; after the introductory comments on international trade, largely with respect to Saskatchewan canola finding its way to United States of America and China; you will find the section on affordability, Mr. Speaker, a section most certainly speaking to what we have heard from Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, a section most certainly delivering on the campaign commitments that we had made to the people of Saskatchewan and were elected by those people exactly one year ago today, Mr. Speaker.

In that, I would point to the fact that today a family of four with an income of about \$100,000, Mr. Speaker, is going to pay \$3,000 less in income tax to the provincial government in Saskatchewan than they did in 2007, before we had the honour to become their government.

[14:00]

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

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this government's tax on groceries costs Saskatchewan families \$25 million every year alone. On top of that, he also charges Saskatchewan families \$20 million dollars when it comes to his tax on children's clothing. After 18 years of this Sask Party government, financial anxiety in this province is higher than any other province in the entire country.

The question is, why will this Premier, why will he not offer one single measure to show Saskatchewan families that he understands how much they're struggling?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Foremost, Mr. Speaker, I'll just correct the record. There is no provincial sales tax on groceries in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. In fact, in fact today . . .

Speaker Goudy: — Sorry, I'm just going to make a comment. When we're having answers, I've noticed some of our teachers on this side aren't listening very well.

So if we could ask if the Premier could continue, please.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I said, there is no provincial sales tax on groceries in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And thankfully in this province — due in no part to the Leader of the Opposition or the opposition members, but in a large part to the government members — there

is no carbon tax on groceries or anything else in the province of Saskatchewan either.

Mr. Speaker, again I would point the members opposite in their remarks with respect to the Speech from the Throne that was read into the record, which really outlines the continued effort of this government to ensure that we are securing the future of Saskatchewan residents and families by ensuring, through the measures introduced this session and last, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan remains the most affordable place in Canada to live.

In last year's budget, in this year's Speech from the Throne, the commitment from the government is to make life even more affordable than it is today for seniors, for low-income residents, for young people, for post-secondary students, for home owners, for families, for persons that may be living with a disability, and for small-business owners across the province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Government Response to Tariffs

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, no surprises from a government that had put a billboard outside a food bank that said, "Growth that works for everyone."

Mr. Speaker, on this side we understand and we hear from people every day who are working harder and harder and falling further and further behind. On top of that, we've got Donald Trump's tariffs that are hammering our steel and our lumber industry.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we all understand what that means — fewer contracts, layoffs, and more economic insecurity and uncertainty for Saskatchewan people and businesses. Yet we have a Premier that continues to downplay the impacts of this trade war at every turn, even suggesting to the people of this province that the impacts are "minimal."

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier stand behind this ridiculous claim that this trade war is not having impact on communities and people right across this province?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — The impact I think is significant, Mr. Speaker. Across Canada, including in the province of Saskatchewan, the indirect impact, the conversations, the alignment with the United States of America is very much having an impact on Saskatchewan canola, pulse, and pork producers, Mr. Speaker. As is the direct impact of what's happening in the US [United States], whether it be steel, whether it be other products, counter-tariffs, Mr. Speaker, that we had for a period of time in this province.

However, Mr. Speaker, through this the United States of America, China, India, all places where the NDP have said that we shouldn't actually do business with, Mr. Speaker, are the largest markets in the world. The largest markets in the world, Mr. Speaker, and they are our largest export markets as well. And that's how we create wealth for Saskatchewan people and create jobs for Saskatchewan people.

Case in point this morning, Mr. Speaker, an \$80 billion nuclear deal by a Saskatchewan company, Saskatchewan-based company with the United States of America. That would never happen under the members opposite because they don't believe in trading with the United States, Mr. Speaker. They don't believe in nuclear power, Mr. Speaker, and they'd close trade offices around the world.

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

Government Response to Wildfires in the North

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, a little dose of reality: this government could do more to help people with the cost of living but they're choosing not to. And they must do more, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to addressing the devastating wildfires.

The North, the people here today deserve an independent public inquiry into the entire wildfire disaster that devastated the north of this province this summer. People were left without financial supports, water bombers left grounded, federal supports left on the table as the Sask Party government got in the way of critical support getting to those fighting fires on the front line.

Mr. Speaker, saying you're sorry is meaningless unless you are prepared to change your behaviour and learn lessons. Will the Premier commit to that independent public inquiry today?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I welcome back those folks from Denare Beach, Mr. Speaker, which have unfortunately . . . Too many people, Mr. Speaker, those included with us here today, have suffered far too great a loss in what was one of the most tragic fire seasons that this province has seen. Almost 500 fires, Mr. Speaker. Well over 20,000 people evacuated, Mr. Speaker, from some 55 communities across the province. And far too many homes — and we had this discussion yesterday, Mr. Speaker — not buildings, not houses, but homes were lost, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of the Public Safety Agency has time and time again been in front of the cabinet of the Government of Saskatchewan — after talking to those folks that are with us today, as well as other leadership from the community — to come forward with a number of initiatives of how can we work alongside the community to support them in cleaning up what is left after a tragic fire like that ravages these homes in this community, Mr. Speaker, and how we can support them in rebuilding the community and provide them, as individuals, the confidence that the community of Denare Beach and every other northern community, Mr. Speaker, is going to be as safe as we can possibly make it moving forward.

That is the commitment that this government is making to the people of northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is that we're going to work to, where needed, rebuild the communities, work alongside all of those that live in northern Saskatchewan to ensure that our communities are safer tomorrow for those that live there, Mr. Speaker. And most importantly safer for that next generation, our children, so that they have the opportunity to live there as well.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that the Premier is now on day two of trying to reconcile with the people of the North, but we've been there since the very beginning.

Mr. Speaker, today I'm joined again by my constituents. This summer was the scariest moment of a lifetime for so many people in the North. So many lost their homes, their businesses, their communities. After months of devastation and families stranded without support, the Premier finally apologized for the Sask Party government's failure to show up for the people of the North this wildfire season.

To the minister responsible for the wildfire response: why did he not join the Premier yesterday in apologizing to the people of the North?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I also want to extend my warm welcome to the folks from Denare Beach who have once again joined us here today. We had an excellent conversation with these folks yesterday, together with the Premier. I've met with them in Denare Beach when I travelled there on three occasions this summer. I met with some of them; I suppose some this was the first time, but I met with the community leadership when we were there, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we all deeply sympathize with the families of Denare Beach and across Saskatchewan who have suffered losses as a result of these tragic and unprecedented forest fires, Mr. Speaker. And that's why our government has stepped in with unprecedented investments and supports to walk alongside these families and these communities to make sure that we are there every step of the way as they rebuild, and they have the confidence in their communities and in their government that moving forward we will be right there with them, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The folks here today and the folks in the North don't need their sympathy. They need this minister to be accountable for his actions this summer.

Mr. Speaker, the North was not supported. Some people still haven't seen a single dime of financial support from the government. Half of the water bomber fleet remained grounded this entire wildfire season. Help and resources from the federal government were denied until it was too late. And then the people of the North saw on Facebook that the Premier and the Sask Party government were hosting a partisan golf fundraiser near communities devastated by wildfires. The Premier had not visited the North before then.

What does the minister have to say to the people of the North for those actions?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Policing, Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate

the question because the people of the North deserve to have the facts about what happened this summer, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there was tragic and unprecedented loss, but for the member opposite to suggest that the government hasn't invested anything in those communities and not put any dollars towards that is absolutely untrue, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, \$30 million in recovery supports for the families who have lost their homes. Mr. Speaker, \$10 million allocated in financial support for evacuees, \$22 million for shelter and food insecurity and supports. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has talked a lot about grounded airplanes, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is the SPSA [Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency] repairs their planes during the off-season. They knew that some of these planes required parts that were not available, Mr. Speaker. They're waiting for parts. We can't send a twin-engine up in the air, Mr. Speaker, when it only has one propeller.

So yes, there were planes that were not available. However the SPSA knew that, so they had procured other planes from other jurisdictions through our contracts. So every plane that was accounted for on the ground was represented by another plane that was on loan from another jurisdiction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess after that answer the only thing that I can confirm for this House is that I've seen thicker spines on audiobooks.

Speaker Goudy: — I'm going to ask the member to apologize and withdraw his comments.

Jordan McPhail: — I apologize and withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that Premier and that minister failed to do their jobs. They failed the North. The people of the North are tired of being forgotten by this tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government which has failed them over and over this summer and really over the past 18 years. The North deserves answers. This must never happen again.

Will the minister support a fully transparent independent and public inquiry into this terrible wildfire season?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Policing, Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just yesterday we announced that Meyers Norris Penny was awarded the contract to do a fulsome review of the entire fire season. That includes the fire response. It includes the fire response, Mr. Speaker. It includes evacuation supports, and it includes the recovery efforts, all of which the Premier and myself have touched on in our previous answers, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it will also show the history of the fire, which my friend across the aisle is not representing to the people of Saskatchewan with fact. Mr. Speaker, he has indicated that there was no response to the Wolf fire for days, for weeks. And that's not accurate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Wolf fire was discovered on May 19th, 32 kilometres west of Denare Beach, and it was caused by a lightning strike. Mr. Speaker, the SPSA responded with two air tankers, helicopters, and ground crews the following day. That fire was attacked continually. And it's important, I think, for the people of Saskatchewan to understand, Mr. Speaker, that extremely dry conditions and sustained winds turned that fire into a rank 6 fire, which is the highest ranking fire. We're talking about a 100-foot wall of fire pushed by winds, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Health Care Staffing and Access to Health Care

Jared Clarke: — Mr. Speaker, after 18 years of the Sask Party government it's clear that they don't have a plan on public safety, and they don't have a plan for health either.

An SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] memo has been leaked, revealing that occupational therapy services at the Royal University Hospital were cut. This is due to "a temporary increase in occupational therapist vacancies." More OTs [occupational therapist] mean people getting out of the hospital sooner and in better shape.

My question to the minister is simple. How many people went without care because of these cuts?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

[14:15]

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there have been no reduction to occupational therapist positions at Royal University Hospital. Currently the Saskatchewan Health Authority is dealing with several vacancies in that category at Royal University Hospital, Mr. Speaker.

That's exactly why our government — through the health human resources action plan, the most ambitious plan in the country, Mr. Speaker — has a plan to make sure that we can get those positions filled with incentives available for occupational therapists. Those are available to new graduates, Mr. Speaker.

And speaking of that, this government has invested over \$8 million to create the master's of occupational therapy program at the University of Saskatchewan, which will be taking in students for the first time this fall. This is going to be the first time that we have trained occupational therapists right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's part of our plan to address some of these challenges.

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

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just looking for a simple answer there from the minister, but he couldn't provide it. Let's try again.

The memo also says services were cut to nine units and departments at RUH [Royal University Hospital]. Their OTs

were being redeployed to priority units because after 18 years of that Sask Party government, they don't have enough OTs to staff both oncology and the cardiology units.

We'll try another simple one. How many people in the cardiology unit went without care because of these cuts?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my last answer, there has been no reduction in the available occupational therapy positions at Royal University Hospital, Mr. Speaker.

As I also indicated, we have several vacancies within the Saskatchewan Health Authority right now. This is why the Saskatchewan Health Authority is taking the resources that are available and allocating them to the patients that are most in need of those services, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Health Authority will continue to work to fill these positions to make sure that all patients receive the proper care. Thank you.

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

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had a letter from 450 health care workers at RUH last week. No problem there, of course, from the minister. We have a leaked memo from the SHA about occupational therapists. No problem there, says the minister.

I'll ask again. After 18 years of Sask Party mismanagement, they can't even keep track of how badly their own health care system is struggling. Occupational therapists at RUH deserve better, patients at RUH deserve better, and the people of Saskatchewan deserve better.

One more simple question: what other cuts have been forced into other hospitals as a result of this Sask Party government's short-staffing?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite references the letter from front-line health care workers last week or the week before at Royal University Hospital, Mr. Speaker. As I've indicated in this House previously, I can tell you that myself and this government, we agree with much of what is in that letter, Mr. Speaker, in terms of ensuring that workplaces are safe for our front-line health care workers, ensuring that patients flow properly through the system, including virtual care to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that we can lower the pressure on our emergency rooms.

Mr. Speaker, let me just read a line from that letter: "support peripheral emergency departments and virtual care expansions to divert unnecessary transfers to urban emergency departments."

Again, Mr. Speaker, we hear from the opposition, we hear a plan to have a plan. We hear showing up at coffee break is a plan. We hear having an ombudsman is a plan, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's in contrast to a real plan that this government has through our health human resources action plan, through starting new training programs, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue on that.

Speaker Goudy: — I'm going to ask that the member from Saskatoon Meewasin would just listen to the answers better. Member from Athabasca.

Leroy Laliberte: — Mr. Speaker, the problems in health care aren't just in the Royal University Hospital, something that I've brought up before. They're happening all over the province.

This was the focus on the first-ever report by the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] health ombudsperson. Her office received more than 500 complaints from First Nations people about the health care here in Saskatchewan. Almost two-thirds of those complaints were about the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

She said, and something that I've said before, and I quote, "We see people sitting in waiting rooms for 12, 15, and sometimes 20 hours that are very sick and end up going home because they're tired of waiting."

Are those long wait times acceptable to this Health minister, Mr. Speaker?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, as part of this government's goal to put patients first right across the province, regardless of where they live or where they might attend a health care facility, Mr. Speaker, this government is working actively to reduce wait times in emergency rooms across the province.

We've seen some success already in Saskatoon. More work to go, Mr. Speaker. We've seen success in reducing rural disruptions, Mr. Speaker. There's still more work to do on that, and we're going to continue doing that work, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca also mentioned the First Nations health ombudsperson report, Mr. Speaker, and I do want to acknowledge the receipt of that report. We received that report this week. Both the Ministry of Health and the Saskatchewan Health Authority are currently reviewing that report and its recommendations, Mr. Speaker.

And I can assure all people of Saskatchewan that the Saskatchewan Health Authority — I work with them closely — they want to make sure that their health care facilities are places that are free of racism and discrimination, Mr. Speaker. This is something that the SHA takes seriously, Mr. Speaker, and continues work on each and every single day.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Leroy Laliberte: — Mr. Speaker, again you're seeing it first-hand that there is no plan in place when it comes to health care, Mr. Speaker. And you know, one of the things that I've seen here also from the Minister of Health is talking about the investments that were made towards our province. I'm actually still waiting for the balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. I haven't seen that yet.

Mr. Speaker, First Nations people deserve better access to health care in the province and are getting the runaround here after eight years under the Sask Party's watch. All Saskatchewan people deserve better health care than they're getting under the Sask

Party. Rural hospitals face closure without warning, leaving people without access to emergency room services.

Again from the ombudsperson, I quote:

Some of the complaints from rural hospitals whose doors are closed so many times that there's no access to services. From the reports that I'm receiving, they can close at any given time due to no staffing.

When will the real action from this government ensure rural ERs [emergency room] are held open and also have the staff to be able to staff them?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — You know, Mr. Speaker, ensuring that emergency department services and acute care services in rural, remote, and northern communities are open and available to people of this province is something that we take seriously as a government, Mr. Speaker. We work very closely with the Saskatchewan Health Authority and other sector partners, Mr. Speaker, ensuring that those services are available to people.

I think about some of the initiatives that we've been working on over the past year — the virtual physician program, point-of-care testing — again to ensure that these services are open and available to people.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I just would like to address part of the member's question. You know, as I said, the Saskatchewan Health Authority wants to make sure that its health care facilities are places that are free of racism and discrimination, Mr. Speaker. We're working with several First Nations and First Nations organizations around the province on partnerships around health care, Mr. Speaker.

We're excited about a number of those partnerships. I think about the Ahtahkakoop Cree Developments partnership that we have for the Saskatoon urgent care centre and how that will better impact care for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue working on partnerships just like this.

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

Addressing Homelessness

Vicki Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon Fire Department reports that homeless encampments have popped up in every Saskatoon neighbourhood. The fire department counted 1,248 encampments as of September 1st and has intervened to clear 357 of them. In all of last year they cleared 218 encampments. Homelessness in Saskatoon has tripled in the last two years. This is what communities can expect after 18 years of the Sask Party government. Why has the Sask Party government let the homelessness crisis get so bad?

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

Hon. Terry Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And when it comes to the issue of encampments, the federal government, the provincial government, and the municipalities are all partners in

this. The federal government has provided the city of Saskatoon, as well as the city of Regina, with encampment funding to address that very issue where encampments need to be dismantled, Mr. Speaker.

Our ministry works with the individuals in those encampments that have been taken down to provide them and connect them with supports, whether that be income support or otherwise, Mr. Speaker.

This is work that we'll continue to do under our provincial approach to homelessness. It's a \$40.2 million two-year program. And as we mentioned in the Throne Speech last week, that program is going to be renewed, and we're looking forward to having more on that. Again, this is a government that cares deeply about our communities. We care deeply about the safety of our communities and the individuals, regardless of their circumstances, that live in them.

Speaker Goudy: — Why is the member on her feet?

Nicole Sarauer: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — What was your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Nicole Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During question period the Minister of Justice, in responding to a question from the member for Cumberland, accused him and his statement as being untrue. It has been many times determined to be unparliamentary language to call a statement untrue, particularly under rule 51(f). I'd ask that you ask the member to apologize and withdraw.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I encourage you to review the record. The comments that I made were with regard to facts and the statements that were conveyed in those facts, Mr. Speaker. And if the sharing of that information was untrue, it had nothing to do with the integrity of the member. It was speaking to facts and whether the information being shared was accurate and true.

Speaker Goudy: — So I appreciate the point of order. But in reading through the *Rules*, there are times where when you say that someone is untrue or something was a lie or, you know, words have been ruled in order and out of order. And in this case I did listen and I did hear him debate the facts.

And in this case it's not well taken. I would agree with the member that in debate we are allowed to say that, you know, something is not true according to my perspective. So I don't see the tone of it as being accusatory.

An Hon. Member: — It is accusatory.

Speaker Goudy: — No, it is the judgment of the Speaker at this point. So let's move on to ministerial statements.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 24 — *The Saskatchewan Internal Trade Promotion Act*

Speaker Goudy: — Now I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export.

Hon. Warren Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 24, *The Saskatchewan Internal Trade Promotion Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by the Minister of Trade and Export that Bill No. 24, *The Saskatchewan Internal Trade Promotion Act* be now introduced a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

Speaker Goudy: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Warren Kaeding: — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 25 — *The Income Tax (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2025*

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 25, the income tax amendment Act, 2025 be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 25, the income tax amendment Act, 2025 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

Speaker Goudy: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — Next sitting. Why is the member on his feet?

MOTION UNDER RULE 61

Call for Inquiry into Wildfire Response

Jordan McPhail: — Before orders of the day, I seek to move a motion under rule 61.

Speaker Goudy: — Will the member briefly state the purpose of the motion and read the text of the motion.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an important motion I hope we can all be united on regarding northern Saskatchewan's need for answers about the 2025 wildfire season. If leave is granted, I would move the following motion:

That the Assembly calls upon the Sask Party government to immediately launch a public inquiry under *The Public Inquiries Act* to examine the Sask Party government's response to the 2025 wildfire season, with the ability to:

(1) hear testimony from members of the public, front-line firefighters, and service providers impacted by the wildfires, and

(2) compel testimony from members of the cabinet and senior leaders of government agencies responsible for the provincial government's wildfire response.

Speaker Goudy: — The member from Cumberland has requested leave to move without notice a motion of urgent and pressing necessity under rule 61. Is leave granted?

[14:30]

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Speaker Goudy: — Leave has not been granted. Next item of business.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by 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 Dakota-Arm River.

Barret Kropf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the reminder last week on our role to serve the people of Saskatchewan. Having Fred and TV and Chief Cote here to start us off in a good way with such powerful prayers really set the stage well. I'm thankful to the Lord today to be on my feet to be in a position to be able to come alongside the great folks of Dakota-Arm River and hear their voices and be their rep here in this mighty Chamber.

To my family: my mom, dad, Diane, Rowe, Keith, Judy, Corrina, Chris, my extended family and friends, thank you for your non-stop encouragement and prayers and sharing this journey

alongside me.

To my boys. Jacob, your deep love for the Oilers concerns me, but I'm sure that Sid and the Penguins will take care of them this year. You're smart, adventurous, and as you build your career in Vancouver, I know that you will be the leader that God created you to be.

To Josh and Katti: thank you for blessing Bridget and I with another grandchild this summer. Hazy Kay has a new baby brother to love on, and we're excited to watch you nurture young Bobby Keith in the ways that he should go.

Jalen — or should I say, Second Lieutenant Kropf — you are such a courageous young man and you do it with such poise and bravado. You're an incredibly trustworthy member of our Canadian Forces, and Canada is in good hands with you keeping us strong and free.

Bridget, wow. To watch you chase your dream and to get your post-secondary completed this summer and embark on your career, I am so incredibly proud of you. You are the glue that keeps us together, and your passion to always be all there is an inspiration to us all. I love you.

My office staff of Lavonne and Cat, what a dynamic duo. Dakota-Arm River residents have two servant leaders who manage the caseload work with such efficiency, grace, and character. Thank you for all you do in serving the constituents.

My Dakota-Arm River executive: Darren, John, Ron, Michelle, Mike, and Patrick, thank you for your leadership and vision and for equipping me with the game plan and tools needed to chase excellence each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, one year ago today I earned the opportunity to be in this position. So many things, so many great things in a great province with such humble and hard-working people making it all happen. I am inspired by you, Saskatchewan, truly inspired.

Now for some stories about those great people. In the community of Bethune in the RM [rural municipality] of Dufferin, the K+S mining company and their Bethune potash mine is doubling their size. They're expanding from 2 million tonnes per year to 4 million tonnes per year. That's a \$3 billion investment, Mr. Speaker. And to show they know how strong our future is, they have partnered shoulder to shoulder with the George Gordon First Nation to build a 32-megawatt solar energy project that will provide net zero energy for that mine's expansion.

Mr. Speaker, our government has a collaboration team, a working group of 36 entities from all of our government ministries through to all the agencies that they work alongside to tackle red tape. To date they have saved the province over \$690 million. And because they have found ways to remove that red tape and inefficiency, they've created an investment climate that is one of the best in the world, attracting billions of dollars in new investment every year.

It's that type of commitment to growth that is reflected in booming housing starts in Saskatchewan, including new builds and major renos across Dakota-Arm River, busting at the seams with new construction all across our communities. It has created

opportunities for communities to work together and build together, with new daycares in Bethune, Davidson, and Outlook to meet the growth of young families in each of these towns; projects like the RM of Rudy and the town of Outlook getting their new fire hall up and running — more great examples of collaboration and teamwork.

Speaking of fire halls, Mr. Speaker, on two separate occasions this summer, brave volunteer firefighters from the Davidson fire and rescue team headed north to battle alongside the other brave first responders. In order to do that, Mr. Speaker, the rest of the volunteers back in Davidson had to also step up and make sure they covered the shifts and made sure Davidson was safe throughout the summer too. Again another story of humble, hard-working men and women making a difference for the province that they love. A huge thanks to Cory Dean, Logan Tennent, Dylan Payne, Joni Hofer, and Kristin Sampson for their efforts up North this summer.

On the theme of safety, I was able to cut ribbons this summer at a couple of safety projects in Dakota-Arm River, one in Dundurn and one in Elbow, where those communities received almost \$84,000 in combined community safety grant money for lights on their sidewalks and traffic safety measures to make their communities safe each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, we have looked at the strong economy and we see how we're building safer communities. And now let's look at how we have a secure future in Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre, located in the heart of Dakota-Arm River, is a beacon of hope in the education pathway for so many. It provides educational excellence to students who have complex learning journeys and it gives them additional pathways to graduation. Being at their graduation ceremony in Kenaston this spring, that celebrated more than 280 full-time online graduates, and hearing their stories was so inspiring.

The Saskatchewan DLC [Distance Learning Centre] also supports hundreds more students around the province achieving graduation in their local schools by providing access to more than 150 online courses they may not have had access to locally. Many of these students are now going on to post-secondary studies and building towards their careers and will raise their family and chase their dreams here in Saskatchewan.

Speaking of dreams, Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan the Line 19 community, up and down the east side of Lake Diefenbaker, is home turf for one tough customer, Tre Archibald. Tre is one of the youngest individuals to ever be battling ALS [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis] in our province. He has been able to continue to thrive here in Saskatchewan and has the community rally around him and others battling ALS.

Again this summer, their third year in a row, the Elbow ALS walk has raised the standard once again with 330 participants raising over \$54,000 that day. Thank you to Tre, the ALS leaders, and community advocates for all you do in Saskatchewan. The Line 19 community, thank you for being so invested in this cause.

Speaking of Diefenbaker, the mighty shores of Lake Diefenbaker, I had a tour around the areas of the lake this

summer. And while it is home to the yacht club celebrating its 50th anniversary and some amazing campgrounds and golf courses, the lake itself has an incredible story.

Water security is at its genesis, being able to dam up the eternal flowing waters to protect the city of Saskatoon from non-stop flooding and bridge destruction from ice walls. It was the dream of John Diefenbaker and Tommy Douglas to make this happen, but it was first dreamt of in 1850 by the explorers Palliser and Hind. And so today, 175 years after it was spoken of, the body of water provides that security for Saskatoon while also generating hydro power for our energy security and drinking water for 60 per cent of the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, because of incredible advancements in technology and innovation, irrigation in the region also provides food security to Canada, North America, and around the world.

On the tour I saw Costco-sized warehouses stuffed to the rafters with potatoes, carrots, cabbage, cauliflower, and so much more. The next time at your local grocery store, pick up a bag of vegetables. Odds are it came from Dakota-Arm River and Lake Diefenbaker region. Even if you were to pop into a Costco, say in Arizona or in Newfoundland, I promise you those bags will be labelled from our mighty producers here in Saskatchewan. This is creating jobs in research, development, production, processing, manufacturing, sales, and so much more.

Speaking of North America and world trade, Mr. Speaker, if I could adventure off on this topic briefly, we have nine trade offices around the world with the newest in Germany. It is staffed by three dedicated Saskatchewan employees, David, Torsten, and Ishak, three hard-working young men who operate the Sask trade office right inside the Canadian embassy.

And here's the remarkable part, Mr. Speaker: Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada to achieve this in Germany. By being incredibly resourceful and prudent with their budget, they've secured the office in the Canadian embassy to represent our province to 13 other European nations.

The opposition, in their platform and in follow-up comments after the election, have made such disparaging remarks about these offices, and their election platform said they wanted to restructure the trade offices. They deemed them bloated and filled with patronage appointments, Mr. Speaker.

These three young men representing Saskatchewan to 13 European nations are not patronage appointments. They are hard-working Saskatchewan employees who push towards the edge of excellence every day to showcase to Europe what Saskatchewan has to offer. We certainly don't need the opposition to come in and restructure them. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we need more Davids and Torstens and Ishaks in Europe, Asia, South America, and around the globe because we have what the world needs, and they do a brilliant job at making sure that happens.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, these trade deals coming out the Sask trade offices are not just one-way streets. We have been able to diversify our trade around the world and lessen our dependency on other nations, but we have also been able to attract investment to add to our economy here through reciprocal trade.

I recently met the original brains behind the K+S potash project here in Saskatchewan. He was the one who convinced the German firm to get involved in Sask potash mining decades ago, and also the one who had his fingerprints on the recent \$3 billion expansion. How, Mr. Speaker? Through our trade offices.

I have a farmer near Buffalo Pound who has the largest combine tractor unit in the world on his farm this harvest. As the German engineers have brought the only three-of-a-kind machines to Saskatchewan for this harvest, and as they engineer and innovate and push the boundaries of tech in farming, how did this German engineering juggernaut land at Buffalo Pound, Mr. Speaker? Because our Saskatchewan trade office in Germany.

Just up the highway, on Highway 11 near Corman Park, is an ever-expanding business known by many as Norheim Ranching. They are the second-largest dealer in Canada for the German-made Deutz-Fahr farm machinery. They provide world-class equipment for farmers across our province. How in the world, Mr. Speaker, does that happen? Our Saskatchewan trade office in Germany.

The expansion of Saskatchewan trade offices like the one in Germany is adding to our GDP [gross domestic product], creating jobs and opportunities for families all around Dakota-Arm River and across Saskatchewan. Under an NDP government and their restructuring plans to shut down trade offices, none of that would have happened.

Not only are we seeing the benefits of investment in Saskatchewan by Germany, we also get to export onto the shores of Europe through these trade offices. EFFOP [European Fishmeal and Fish Oil Producers], the oilseed producers of Europe, they crush 10 million tonnes of canola each year for the biofuel mandates and only grow 4 million.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Germany wants to have trade certainty as well. And as they move forward, our Sask producers and our trade office can help them solve their canola problem. The German organization of engineers represents 3,000 firms across Europe, and they are in constant contact with our German office to make trade inquiries about the 27 critical minerals that we have in Saskatchewan, the research around them, and the ag products we produce, the value-add ag . . . [inaudible] . . . that we process.

How in the world would they know about such a humble, hard-working place like Saskatchewan? In a phone book, an online search? No, Mr. Speaker, our German trade office. It is so clear, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan has what the world needs, and our trade offices and their hard-working staff are showcasing what we have to offer.

Two other quick topics, Mr. Speaker. Last week while the Canadian nuclear agency was having their first-ever nuclear conference in Canada outside of Ontario, in the city of Saskatoon, with the world leaders in the nuclear space gathered, it was our government and our Minister of CIC [Crown Investments of Saskatchewan] who stood in front of the gathered world nuclear leaders and declared we have all-the-above approach in regards to our energy security, and that nuclear will be the heart of that security moving forward, with a strong blend of coal, wind, solar, gas, biomass, and hydro providing us what we need. It will be nuclear that meets the clean energy mandates for 2050 and

beyond.

Saskatchewan is fully committed to the pathway of the Sask First Energy Security Strategy and Supply Plan, a brilliant plan that involves collaboration across ministry and throughout government, as well as full partnership with Indigenous communities to make sure that shared decision making and revenue is a part of the partnership moving forward. Using nuclear for stability, renewables for growth, and fossils as a bridge, this plan will give Saskatchewan a secure future when it comes to energy security.

[14:45]

While on the topic of Indigenous partnership, Mr. Speaker, I can't help but gush about the work being done by Chief Bear and the council at Dakota Whitecap. With their economic leadership, their Nation is an inspiration to all of us. The Virtual Health Hub, the tourism expansion via their new spa, and their desire to partner and work together with others is inspiring.

I had the honour of being part of two powwows this summer, and it's a learning journey that I am on with great interest. Mr. Speaker, my daughter-in-law and our two grandkids, they are proudly Métis. And it's been my reflective journey the last year to make sure that I'm educating myself to be a grandpa who embraces their future while also working towards reconciliation.

The Truth and Reconciliation report and the 94 Calls to Action asked us to interact personally with the findings. And one of those Calls to Action is around storytelling and healing. At Whitecap powwow, Chief Bear shared an incredibly difficult personal story, and it was then that my reflection became clear.

A group of us will be working this next year on a reconciliation ride, a 630-kilometre bicycle ride from Brandon to Whitecap First Nation, which will be a repatriation ride of sorts to be able to allow stories to be told and a journey of rebuilding moving forward.

It will be a hard ride, Mr. Speaker, but it's hard things that can be accomplished when we do them together. And so I throw open the invite for others to join me as we take five days to pedal our bikes and gather stories and heal together this summer, which is the 150th anniversary of the treaty signing. Lots more details to come in the upcoming months, Mr. Speaker.

But in closing, I pray for your continued wisdom and your leadership. I pray for more servant leaders to be raised up across this province and across our country. Thank you for the opportunity to be on my feet today.

And I will be supporting the motion made by this big Toronto Blue Jays fan sitting beside me, the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Weyburn-Bengough, and seconded by the MLA from Carrot River Valley. And I will not be supporting the amendment by the opposition.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Silverspring.

Hugh Gordon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in this Assembly today to say thank you once again to the good people of Saskatoon Silverspring for their support and for the

trust and the confidence they have placed in me to be their representative in this legislature.

I'd also like to thank, of course, my wife and my family for their support in my role as an MLA. There's absolutely no way I could be doing this without them.

I'd also like to take a moment to thank my constituency assistant, Alana Wakula. I cannot thank her enough for her passion and dedication to the people of Silverspring and to the people of Saskatchewan. She is a talented, intelligent, and caring person and has helped me greatly to adjust to my new life as an MLA, and she's helped me to be as successful as I've been so far.

And finally I'd like to thank all my colleagues on this side of the aisle for their support and sage advice that have helped me to navigate through this past year. And also a huge shout-out to the entire NDP caucus team for the incredible work that they do day in and day out.

Well, Mr. Speaker, last week I sat in this Assembly alongside many of my colleagues to listen to the government's Throne Speech. And I listened with care and with interest. And it didn't take me very long to realize one of the first casualties of this government was apparently its great big, beautiful \$12 million surplus.

This was a government not many months ago that took every opportunity to boast about this \$12 million surplus. Every chance they got in this Assembly or in the press or on social media, they bragged about it. What financial magic. What an amazing feat of bean counting.

Even when it became painfully obvious to everyone that this wasn't realistic, they insisted on having a surplus this year. Yet, Mr. Speaker, there isn't a single mention of a surplus or a balanced budget in this Throne Speech. No more talk of balanced budgets or debt reduction or even responsible spending.

So I must admit I was a little confused. So just to make sure, I went over to our recycle bin and I pulled out a shredded copy of the budget just to make sure that I wasn't dreaming. And it took me a little while to piece it all back together but there it was, sure enough, in black and white: a \$12 million surplus for this year. Go figure. So you can imagine my surprise to see that this government, by virtue of its absence in the Throne Speech, is no longer committed to keeping its promise to the people of Saskatchewan to balance the books or to respect taxpayers' dollars.

And to add insult to injury, there was no mention of how this government intends to deal with the enormous shortfall in oil prices or what actions they were going to take to mitigate the loss of \$17 million dollars for every dollar for a barrel of oil that this government clumsily predicted would be the case. Once again it'll be the people of Saskatchewan who will be stuck with the bill and the loss of resources made available for all the things that they count on, like health care when they need it, or quality education for their children.

I also didn't hear how they're going to replace that some \$430 million from the Sask Party's industrial carbon tax that they were relying on to run their surplus this year. They said it's gone,

but there it was in the first quarter report, still bolstering the province's bottom line. So which is it? Are they still collecting that tax? It sure looks like they are. Tell me, does the Throne Speech say that this government is going to pay it back to all the businesses they've been collecting it from? What are their plans to pay back all the Sask Party industrial carbon tax they've taken from businesses for all these years? Again no mention in the Throne Speech.

And this wasn't the only thing missing from the Throne Speech. There wasn't a single mention of what this government intends to do to help out all those businesses and industries who've been unfairly caught up in a trade war with the United States and China.

Nowhere in the Throne Speech did this government talk about supporting made-in-Saskatchewan or made-in-Canada businesses. No commitment to ensuring that Saskatchewan businesses and industries are put before American companies and American products — never mind standing up to the US to show them that we mean business — whether it's US liquor on our shelves or US companies who have supplanted Saskatchewan companies that should be providing services to our campers, to our hunters, or to our tire recyclers. In fact, there's little reassurance given to the people of this province that this government has their back or their livelihoods at heart.

And while we're on it, there was nothing in this Throne Speech that indicated this government was committed to calling on the federal government to get rid of the Chinese EV [electric vehicle] tariffs that in turn have led to counter-tariffs that are wreaking such havoc on our canola, pork, and pea industry, putting that and all the jobs and investments in that sector and our economy at real risk of failing.

Just today APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] said that these tariffs alone are costing our canola and pea industry up to \$850 million for just this year. So this government needed to be much more forceful and much more direct. And if it was really committed to putting an end to these Chinese tariffs, they should have put that in their Throne Speech.

And again there was no mention as to how this government is going to compensate for the impact on our GDP and subsequent tax revenues. I heard how much this government likes to talk about expanding and diversifying trade around the world, but you can't do that without the matching commitment to expanding the infrastructure on which it relies, like investments in highways and rail. How are we going to access markets outside the US without investments in the infrastructure required to do that?

Outside of some vague hope that the federal government will take the lead on this, there was no mention of how this government intended to build out that new infrastructure. How about this, Mr. Speaker? Instead of hoping that the federal government will deliver this for the people of Saskatchewan, that their government, their provincial government takes on some form of leadership on this front.

There was no mention of how this government was going to help people either with the fastest rising rental rates in the country. The Finance minister said yesterday that instead of trying to provide immediate relief, he's pinning his hopes on some kind of

magical market solution that we all know won't come without either an immense profit motive — a profit that'll be on the backs of our seniors and poor, by the way — or won't be seen for several years.

Like their tax credits, that's no help for people struggling to get by today right now. This is little consolation to those folks who are staring homelessness or outright eviction in the face. You can't eat tax credits, and they certainly won't shelter you from the cold Canadian winter either.

They talk all about a great economy but they never mention how people are falling further and further behind, their paycheques unable to keep up with the rising costs of housing and groceries. No mention of how this province is leading the country in mortgage arrears, furthering the anxiety that everyone in Saskatchewan except for this government seems to feel.

There's many things this government could be doing to provide people with immediate relief, but again none in sight. They've talked about the graduate retention program, but zero supports to our post-secondary institutions to help them out with their finances today to keep them from raising tuition rates on our students tomorrow. With no plan to curb rising tuition rates, we're going to see our kids leave this province for more affordable options elsewhere. And once they leave, Mr. Speaker, they may not return.

The Throne Speech talked about fighting crime and getting drugs like fentanyl off of our streets. And then it mentioned how 70 new marshals were going to help do that. But, Mr. Speaker, that is 70 positions and tens of millions of dollars that could have gone toward the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] or to Regina and Saskatoon police services who are already doing that work but need more people and more resources to do it.

I know, because I used to work in one of those units that got shut down just a couple of years ago. So much for this government's commitment to that. We have the experience and trained officers required to do this work already. And I'll tell you something, Mr. Speaker: they aren't in the marshals service. Again more duplication and wasted resources to combat the drug crisis.

And then there's the compassionate intervention Act, and we'll see what the government puts forward in terms of legislation here. And we could debate the value or the effectiveness of this policy, but the real question is this: how on earth do they plan to do this? There are not enough beds, people, or resources for those who voluntarily want the treatment in Saskatchewan right now. Give them a safe space. Where? Provide them with treatment. By whom? These are important questions that demand serious answers, and they did not get that in this Throne Speech.

They talked about homelessness but provided no plan to get the more than 2,000 vacant government-owned homes repaired and available to those people who are facing a long, cold winter. There'll be no free market solution for them this year, I can tell you.

There's no mention of the child care deal and when exactly this government plans to get off its duff and sign an agreement that 11 other provinces have already seen fit to sign on to to provide parents and families and businesses, quite frankly, the assurance

and stability of affordable and accessible child care.

There is zero mention of the crisis at RUH or at other emergency rooms right across this province. There certainly was no mention of what they're doing to alleviate that. For example, the Throne Speech didn't mention expanding the City Hospital emergency ward in Saskatoon to provide 24-7 service. And there was no mention of providing more beds for our seniors to alleviate the pressures on our emergency rooms. Not even talk of doing a study to see how many beds were actually needed to resolve this problem either.

Why haven't these options been seriously examined? Lives are depending on this government to find solutions to this problem, and they didn't get that in this Throne Speech.

You know, Mr. Speaker, just last week I had an appointment with my family doctor, the one I've had for the past 25 years or so. And it was during that appointment he felt compelled to share with me the challenges that our general practitioners like him are facing — higher and higher caseloads, incessant prescription reviews, no time off for family.

Saskatchewan is quickly becoming a less and less attractive option for our GPs [general practitioner] and they'll be voting with their feet. It was like he said: he and other GPs are working hard to provide their patients with preventative care and to help keep our emergency wards from becoming inundated. This Throne Speech had no mention of a plan to get more family doctors or keeping them, never mind improving their work-life balance or compensation.

This Speech from the Throne also conveniently forgot to mention just how many nurses and doctors have left this province, and certainly didn't mention anything about a serious inquiry into our recruitment and retention issues.

The Throne Speech mentioned the desire to do 450,000 surgeries over the next four years. But what it didn't say is how many of those will be done out of province. Will they be done at a private clinic? Will patients have to pay for all of their expenses to get that care that they should be getting right here at home? How much will these folks be out of pocket to get their MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] or a CAT [computerized axial tomography] scan or their surgery? And most importantly, how much extra will this cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan?

And finally, there was absolutely no mention of the need in the city of Yorkton to build a new hospital. There's a reason why Saskatchewan has the lowest life expectancy in the country, and it has the Sask Party government written all over it.

Then there's *The Farm Land Security Act*, and they're planning to increase enforcement. But instead of doing their due diligence, like requiring statutory declarations before the land is even sold, this government's foreign ownership rules still leave this province susceptible to speculators, organized crime groups, or the Chinese Communist Party.

There are holes so big in this government's oversight of our farm land, you could literally drive a combine through it. When asked just last week, the ministry could not tell the Public Accounts Committee just how much Saskatchewan farm land is currently

held by foreign entities. And to compound the problem, they said there's no way for them to ever know without reviewing several decades of land transactions. Mr. Speaker, that's not protecting farm land for Saskatchewanians.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the motion in favour of the Throne Speech, and I will be supporting the amendment made by my hon. colleague, the MLA for Cumberland. Thank you.

[15:00]

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Sean Wilson: — Hey, Mr. Speaker. First off, I want to say how excited I am to be back in session. The first round, everything happened so fast I actually couldn't believe I was in here. This job is awesome.

I'm always on the camera shot when the Minister of Health takes his questions, so one of the thousands of viewers on the legislature channel is of course my mom. About halfway through last session I got a text from her. She said, "the Health minister is taking some pretty tough questions; why are you smiling so much? And quit smiling." Well the answer's pretty easy: I still can't believe I'm in here. And when I look at this little bronze nameplate on my desk, it's still so surreal that I'm in Ken Krawetz's seat.

I will bring my mom to the legislature, I promise. Not just to introduce her in the Chamber, but to physically introduce her to all of the members so she quits asking me who they are. I not only have the Saskatchewan Party website on my favourites, I also have the NDP website because she needs to know who everyone is. So at some point I'd like all the MLAs lined up outside to shake her hand and tell her a little bit about yourselves, please.

Now initially I was getting a little short with Mom about not knowing who everyone was. But earlier this summer I attended a U of S [University of Saskatchewan] convocation with the member for Saskatoon Nutana. I went to say hi to her and her reply was, aren't you the professional speaker? I thought, wow, you know, like two speeches, I'm professional.

But then I kind of thought this out a little bit and it's like, no, wait a minute. I'm not the member from Kelvington-Wadena. He's just right here. He's the professional speaker guy. I'm the construction guy. I have glasses; he does not. I'm real bald; he's just a fake bald. And finally and most importantly, just in case none of these things resonate with people, remember this: I have the hamlet of Mikado in my constituency, and he has the hamlet of Périgord. Cleared up? Also just one more thing: he will be second place at the amount of fall suppers attended. I will be first.

I just want to touch on our team here. I don't want to name-drop too many, but I'm going to anyway. I've known the Minister of Highways since 2008, and even before government he was always a good supporter and friend. I met the Minister of Finance in 2009 on a highway project. Both of these guys are pretty solid. This would be the time where I would make an old joke, but throughout the summer a few friends said I could have a long career in here. So if in fact that's true, I don't want some young

person making jokes about me then. So I think I'll just be quiet.

The rest of the group, including all of my fellow rookies, are awesome. Today is the one-year mark of being elected, so as far as I see, we aren't rookies anymore. But as the Minister of Highways said to me the other day, you guys are all rookies till 2028.

I often think about how much of the Sask Party's history I've missed not being able to serve and learn from people like Krawetz, Draude, Gantefer, and Merriman. But I'm so fortunate to be able to serve with these two. And to be within arm's length to tip either one of their chairs over is an added bonus.

I thought I had made a lot of miles before the election getting a chance to meet people, but as we say, there's always more to do and more miles to make. Over the last few weeks I've met farmers across Canora-Pelly, hearing their stories and concerns about agriculture. Byron Petruk, out in the RM of Calder, is one that stands out. I met him at an RM meeting a few years ago. He's not a quiet individual, to say the least. I could have even classified him as mean. But as I got to know the guy, he's exactly what I want and what I think everybody on this side of the House wants — someone who's honest and not afraid to tell you the truth.

At the Yorkton hospital foundation gala a few weeks ago, Byron was onstage as part of the field harvest group. They harvested canola and wheat this year and ended up netting and presenting the health foundation over \$190,000. Total since day one: \$2.6 million. That's amazing, and I definitely didn't see that coming from Petruk.

Back to ag. There were some dry conditions in the Southwest this year, but early this fall it was the opposite in my southeast corner. Seven inches of rain. Canola swaths looked like they were floating on a lake. Either way, those farmers pushed through.

Obviously all of our farmers are concerned about the canola tariffs in China. Our government will always support the ag industry. Premier Moe has made it clear that those tariffs are unfair and has been pushing the federal government to act, to defend our producers and reopen those markets. At the same time we're strengthening our safety net programs like AgriStability, so when markets turn against producers they have the support to weather the storm. And we're not stopping there.

Saskatchewan is working to expand trade into new markets so our farmers aren't held hostage by one foreign decision, because when our canola moves, our whole province moves. So to every farmer out there dealing with full bins and uncertain prices, know this — your government has your back. We'll keep fighting for open markets, fair treatment, and a level playing field because no one works harder or deserves more than Saskatchewan's farmers.

Earlier this summer I had a chance to stop in and visit the crew from Potzus Paving while they were working on the new roundabout in Weyburn. Wayne I've known for years, but I finally had a chance to see his son Morgan in action. Running the screed on the back of a paver is an art form, and for such a young individual to be so well versed at this early on in his career was very impressive. Anyone who's driven through that intersection over the years knows how overdue this project was. Traffic has

grown, industry has expanded, and the old layout just couldn't keep up. Seeing that project up close was something else. Those crews were out in the heat working long days, proud of what they were building, and they should be.

Potzus is a Saskatchewan company through and through. They've been doing work across our province for decades, these local people building local infrastructure. And they take pride in that because they'll be using the infrastructure too.

And, Mr. Speaker, it actually reminded me a bit of that old *Seinfeld* episode, "The Pothole." You might remember it. George spends an entire week trying to get the city to fix a pothole, only to have it paved over with his car keys still inside. Classic Costanza. But it also shows us something we can all relate to: how frustrating it can be when things don't get done right the first time.

That's why I'm proud that here in Saskatchewan, when it comes to infrastructure, we have companies like Potzus and other Saskatchewan-owned companies that get it right the first time. They're not paving over problems; they're fixing them properly. What really stood out to me on that job site was how well the ministry, the contractor, and the city of Weyburn worked together.

That's what we mean when we talk about investing in Saskatchewan — not just spending dollars, but building partnerships. Our record highway investments aren't just about smoother pavement. They're about safer intersections, stronger local economies, and keeping Saskatchewan people working close to home.

When you talk to those crews, they'll tell you it's not easy work but it's rewarding. They can point to something real and say, I helped build that. That's the Saskatchewan way. We build things that last. We work hard, and we take care of our own. So to the entire Potzus crew and every Saskatchewan contractor, thank you. You're making our roads safer and our communities stronger.

Throughout the summer I met with many health care providers and users. We were fortunate to have the Minister of Rural and Remote Health tour all three hospitals in the constituency and visit long-term care facilities and the Aspen ambulance service in Canora. The Monette boys were very vocal with me and provided a unique perspective on the strengths and stresses of our health care system in Canora-Pelly.

Every hospital has its own unique issues, and it was good to see them all in one day to contrast them. I want to give a shout-out to the Kamsack long-term care centre. I love the staff there. I always try to make sure Dawn is around when I deliver birthday greetings to the residents.

So I got a quick story about the resilience of our health care providers and doctors. Earlier this fall I was invited to tour the health centre in Nokomis with the members from Kelvington — my twin back here — Kelvington-Wadena, and Moosomin-Montmartre. I knew exactly where that facility was. Let me tell you why.

In 1998 I was on my very first road job. We were helping build

the highway from Nokomis to Lockwood. My grandpa and I were hooking up wobblies. And for any of you who have ever done that, you can't back them up; you have to push them together. So we had a young guy in a versatile tractor and Elden Bautz from Middle Lake in the grader.

Grandpa had the pin in his hand, ready to drop it in, when the guy on the tractor popped the clutch. It pinched his hand hard between the hitches. He slammed his hand to the side, looked me right in the eyes, and said, "Sean, this isn't good." We raced to town and the doctor stitched him up. He told Grandpa, "No more work unless you wear gloves." But Gio's hands were like sausages; no gloves were ever going to fit.

I took him home because of course I had an angry grandma waiting at home. The next morning, Grandma called me, angry again, not because of the hand but because he was gone back to Nokomis and so was her left-handed oven mitt. Turns out Grandpa found his own solution and went back to Nokomis.

But that doctor who stitched him up, Dr. Lim, still practising in Nokomis 28 years later. That's incredible dedication. And it says a lot about the people we have in Saskatchewan health care: steady, committed, and deeply rooted in their communities.

When we talk about safety in Saskatchewan, it's not just about the big cities. It's about our small towns, our farms, and our rural communities. Everyone deserves to feel safe in their home, whether that's on a quiet street in Canora or a farmyard outside Theodore. Over the last few years one of the biggest concerns I heard across rural Saskatchewan is theft: fuel being siphoned from tanks, tools disappearing from shops, and trucks being stolen from farmyards. These aren't small losses; they're livelihoods.

Our government recognizes that much of this crime is tied to addictions and drug trafficking. That's why there's a strong focus on both enforcement and recovery in this year's Throne Speech. The commitment to hire 100 new municipal police officers, 14 safer communities and neighbourhoods SCAN officers, and 70 new Saskatchewan marshals service members on top of the 180 new RCMP positions means more boots on the ground across rural Saskatchewan.

I also had the chance to recently visit Victoria School in Kamsack with Mayor Beth. We spent the morning with one of the classes, taking questions and having plenty of laughs along the way. It's always a highlight to hear directly from students and teachers. Their curiosity and honesty remind you why education matters so much.

Mayor Beth handled questions about municipal government, and I took the provincial ones. Then it was the students' turn. One student looked up to me with the most serious eyes and said, MLA Wilson, please, please promise me you will never let the NDP govern. I told her, you can count on us. I will not let that happen. Mission accomplished. Democracy in Kamsack.

And everyone needs to listen to this, everybody. Everyone needs to listen because it's really bothering me. I also explained the difference between a federal MP [Member of Parliament] and a provincial MLA, that an MP goes to Ottawa to work in the parliament and they represent a riding like Yorkton-Melville,

while an MLA works in Regina at the legislature, in my case Canora-Pelly, to represent a constituency. No more confusion in Kamsack. Those students will now know the difference and will pass it on to generations.

That visit really brought home what was outlined in the Throne Speech: giving Saskatchewan students their best start. Our government is investing in early learning, improving reading outcomes in kindergarten to grade 3, hiring more teachers, building and renovating schools right across the province. When you spend time in a classroom, you see first-hand how those investments matter — smaller class sizes, more support, and students who are genuinely curious about how their province works. It's a reminder that the decisions we make here in the legislature reach directly into classrooms in places like Kamsack, Preeceville, and every community across Saskatchewan.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, I often think about how lucky I am to do this job, to represent the people of Canora-Pelly, to be their voice in this Chamber and to share their stories, which is my favourite part if you didn't figure that out yet. Every mile I put on my truck, every visit, every conversation reminds me why this work matters. It's about keeping Saskatchewan strong, keeping families safe, and making sure opportunity reaches every corner of this province.

I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member for Weyburn-Bengough and seconded by the member for Carrot River Valley. I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University-Sutherland.

Tajinder Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the second time I'm giving my response to the Throne Speech. I was hoping, I was expecting, that things would improve in a year. Unfortunately this is not the case. Health care, affordability, crime and safety, and homelessness are worse than last year.

Before I dig deeper into the Throne Speech, I want to reflect on my role as a MLA. It has been a year since I was first elected to represent the good people of Saskatoon University-Sutherland. To commemorate this achievement, I want to thank everyone for helping me through my first year as a MLA.

First and foremost, my better two-thirds, Ravinder, who has supported me through this demanding job as a MLA. Anything I do in my life, she's always with me. Normally when she comes home from work, I make tea for her. During the session she hates it when I'm not home and I can't make tea for her, but she understands my work is important. Thank you, Ravinder. I love you.

I want to thank my son Ravtej and daughter-in-law Celina for their support and advice. I take this opportunity to thank my constituency assistant Sébastien Marchand. Sébastien's a very organized, hard-working, and ambitious individual. He's running my office flawlessly and serving the people for their needs.

I would like to thank our caucus staff for their hard work teaching me how to be the best MLA I can be, preparing and guiding me

for the different roles and responsibilities. I want to thank my local NDP executive team for the extra experience and community organization and support which they have passed on.

I also take this opportunity to thank my colleagues in the official opposition, my new family, for their company, support, laughter, and sometimes poking fun at me. They're family. Finally I want to thank the good people of Saskatoon University-Sutherland for electing me to be their MLA. It's a privilege and a honour to represent them and advocate for the issues that matter the most for them.

I carry an additional responsibility being the first person-of-colour MLA representing Saskatoon in the Legislative Assembly. I'm not only representing Saskatoon University-Sutherland, but also many other people from diverse communities, new Canadians who come to me or my office for their specific needs.

Throughout my first year I have been reflecting on what my position as a political representative is and what it demands. After spending some time considering my role and responsibility, I would say that it can be divided into four categories. First, and by far the most important, is community outreach and engagement and advocacy. Secondly, the shadow ministry work which for me is the responsibility for holding this government accountable for advanced education. Third is attending various events in support of the diverse communities and stakeholders of advanced education. And the fourth category is administrative work which is sometimes boring, but very important — somehow always seeming to pile up at the busiest time of the year for me.

Community outreach is the most important part of being an MLA. Each one of us has been elected to represent and advocate for the people of our constituency. Over the past year, I have worked very hard to keep in touch with the constituents by door knocking, hosting a community barbecue, sending out newsletters, and by sharing my day-to-day activities through social media. Through these activities, I have been able to have engaging conversations with my constituents both in person and online.

Not only that, but the strong relationship which I have fostered with constituents has kept my office incredibly busy, Mr. Speaker. During the summer we door knocked the entire constituency. Many people were surprised to see me at their doorsteps, asking me, "Why are you here? Is the election coming?" And I said, "I'm here to listen. I'm here to connect. Please share your concerns and issues." Through these experiences, I have learned a lot about the feelings of my constituents towards this government. Part of my promise to them was that I would share their concern with the legislature. That's what I'm doing right now.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, what I heard at the doorstep is not a positive perspective on this government. The major issue, the number one issue in my constituency is health care. I have had the chance of talking to many health care workers, to many patients sharing their experience with health care providers.

Health care is not an issue anymore; it's a crisis. About 450 health care workers put the Sask Party on blast in a historic open letter last week, concerning the horrible working condition at

Royal University Hospital. This hospital is in my riding, Mr. Speaker. Horrifying images and accounts that emerged from that hospital in recent weeks of people lying in hallways for weeks and receiving devastating diagnoses and invasive medical procedures without any privacy. I'm shocked to see that health care is not even one of the top five issues in the Throne Speech. Not even one of the top five.

The Minister of Health always says they have the most ambitious plan, but somehow this plan is not working. Health care is getting worse every day. We need big, bold changes to get Saskatchewan health care out of last place. Saskatchewan used to lead the nation in health care, and we need to get back to that. After 18 years, the Sask Party broke health care and they cannot be trusted to fix it.

Affordability is a prominent issue on the doorsteps. So many people in my community have been struggling to pay their bills, afford child care, or even afford rent.

The other issues I have frequently heard about are crime and safety and homelessness. People are worried that that government is not paying attention to the issues. We need to be tough on crime, but also tough on the root cause of the crime. We must invest upstream to fix these issues. Just focusing on the symptoms won't solve the problems.

Finally there is the education crisis. Whether it is for our kids or post-secondary education, people are concerned about the future of this province's workforce. Ultimately in these conversations with constituents, I always emphasize the importance of the government taking accountability. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, this old, tired, and out-of-touch Sask Party government is not taking any accountability.

The second important part of being an MLA in opposition is the shadow minister. As the shadow minister of Advanced Education, I have lots to talk about.

First I want to acknowledge that this province is home to so many things to be proud of. Our province and my constituency are home to premiere institutions such as Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization, VIDO; Canadian Light Source synchrotron; the Global Institute for Food Security; Global Institute for Water Security; Innovation Place; Western College of Veterinary Medicine — all of which are the national leaders in their sector — as well as an incredible and unique institution that are designed to support Métis and Indigenous cultures.

Government-supported rural programs such as a sonography course in Suncrest College. And after touring many of these institutions and learning about their programs, I have been very impressed, Mr. Speaker.

But let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. Many stakeholders in advanced education are struggling, even though they might not say it to you or me. I have met with the senior management from the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, Gabriel Dumont Institute, Saskatchewan institute of technology, Carlton Trail College, Suncrest College, and Briercrest, as well as the staff and student unions such as the Sask Polytechnic Faculty Association, University of Regina Faculty Association, USask [University of Saskatchewan] Faculty Association, U of S student union, and the Sask Polytechnic student association.

When meeting with these different stakeholders and talking about numbers and finance, it was pretty clear the impact that the current provincial budget is having on the majority of these institutions. There was a cut of \$6 million overall to the post-secondary schools in this year's budget. The decrease in operational funding and the massive decrease in international students' enrolment is hitting our institutions very hard.

Since 2018 tuition in Saskatchewan has gone up by nearly 36 per cent. Back in 2018 students were paying around \$7,200 a year, and now they're paying close to 10,000 annually. And that is before we even talk about rent, food, or the cost of living. It means students are being forced into debt that will take them years, even decades, to pay off. It means families are stretched thin.

Our province is already facing a shortage of health care workers, teachers . . . [inaudible] . . . and skilled tradespeople. But instead of investing in younger people we need to fill these jobs, Sask Party government is making education less accessible and less affordable. Mr. Speaker, that is short-sighted. It hurts Saskatchewan's future.

It's always good to have international students. They provide diversity and enrich the experience of other students. The majority of them stay here after their education to provide requisite work force. But our educational institutions should not be dependent on international students or their revenue, which is the case right now. This is mainly due to the chronic underfunding of the post-secondary institutions by this government.

I know that the management, faculty, staff, and students in all these institutions are resilient, smart, and hard-working. But human creativity can only go so far in making up for a lack of financial resources. As a result of the budget shortfall, there have been already massive cuts to Sask Poly staffing. About 128 people are laid off this year — many this month — resulting in subsequent program closures and less services being offered to students.

We can't have good, strong health care or a strong economy without a strong Sask Polytechnic. The students learning in these post-secondary schools are literally our future, Mr. Speaker. These institutions are building our province's future leaders. Investing in these institutions, especially in rural colleges, has proven to promote retention of our nurses and educators in these centres.

But right now it seems like this government is not interested in investing in the future of our leaders. In fact, instead of offering courses in-province, we continue to contract biggest programs to out-of-province institutions and allow our best schools to go through massive financial strain instead of stabilizing the system with temporary or permanent financial support. It makes me wonder what the plan is to support our industries with qualified professionals if we can't train them or retain them.

It's good to see that government finally agreed to sign a new multi-year funding agreement. The previous multi-year funding agreement expired in April this year, Mr. Speaker. All post-secondary institutions are looking for a new multi-year funding agreement. I'm not sure why this government took seven months

to realize it's a good thing to do. They're always slow and late doing the right things. It's hard for institutions. It's hard for our students. It's hard for Saskatchewan's future.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, I will not support the Throne Speech as there is no plan to address the health care crisis. There is no plan to make life more affordable. There is no plan to stop the layoffs at the post-secondary institutions. The Throne Speech is not focused on the future of Saskatchewan. Instead I will support the amendment moved by the member from Cumberland and seconded by the member from Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Humboldt-Watrous.

Racquel Hilbert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now for something a little different.

In my past I've attended many local events all over my constituency. I met with constituents at my office, spoke to others on the phone, met at their offices, on farms, in fields, in many places of business. I received and responded to emails of every nature. I participated in parades, ag days, mining days, fall suppers, and graduations. I heard many things, some of which include — but not limited to — the devastating effects from the wildfires this season. My constituents understand it's impossible to replace friends and family. Possessions are things that carry importance, but not the same value as people. For that we are thankful that lives were not lost.

I had a number of constituents lose cabins and properties in the North. I travelled on my own to see some of the devastated areas that we spoke about. It was horrific, and I wanted to see — not just hear them but understand what they described — things that can't be seen in a photo op.

I have family and close friends who stayed back to fight the fires and had been preparing since 2015. They've been utilizing past available grants to prepare their communities — training, clearing underbrush, limiting trees, using fire-resistant membranes and materials, fire suppression, keeping gutters clean, all while understanding and reducing points of the fire combustion triangle. Prior to the fire season I wasn't aware of a fire combustion triangle.

These communities will likely continue to receive and utilize grants and available resources provided by the provincial government to expand the scope of fire-safe plan in their communities and I'm sure others. I want to thank all those who stayed back and travelled north, put their lives and life on hold to serve the communities. And for this I offer my sincere thanks.

Things I've learned from my constituents who elected me: it's important to be available to listen, not just be seen, but understand their point of view and speak to their collective truths. They've encouraged me not to lose sight of why I accepted the honour and responsibilities to represent them, and not lose myself in the noise of this Chamber.

But more importantly, I'm honoured and I appreciate the humble

role of representing the constituency of Humboldt and Watrous. They are the best in Saskatchewan — homegrown and made up of resilient, salt-of-the-earth people. The ones that work in the potash mine are a little saltier than most, and those that work in agriculture are pragmatic and resilient and a little bit more down to earth than most. The entrepreneurs, the builders, the educators, the caregivers all are honest. The people of my constituency are straight shooters and want to keep it that way.

They understand the value of investments like highway improvements with a total cost of 49.1 million in the Humboldt and Watrous constituency in the 2025 to 2026 budget. This includes work on Highway 2, Highway 5, Highway 16, 20, 27, and 365. The highways included grade and pavement with culvert replacements, repaving for preservation as well as use for heavy traffic.

Highway 5: twinning, grade and pavement; various highway improvements west of Humboldt for repaving east of Saskatoon; passing lanes; widening improvements; access; reliability; realignments; grading; channelization; bridge — major; and culvert replacements. Highway 20 included southbound flare, a bypass lane, delineation lights, and Manor Park Road. Engineering seal on Highway 27 and micro surfacing on 365.

Every sector of this province is feeling economic headwinds, some from trade policy, others from other countries, and some from 10 years of federal policy. The constituency that has elected me understands that we have the ability to adapt while facing significant headwinds. And the challenges can't be underestimated.

What I've heard from my constituency is people want balance. They want greater provincial and personal autonomy within Canada with defined lines in the sand. They want safe, strong, and secure.

The constituents have asked me to be true to myself, as authentic as I am. I received overwhelming support from my last legislative parable. Many told me it was their favourite speech, the best they had ever heard. It was layered like an onion, and regardless of political background many of them could follow along, and it explained things in a different way.

With children and youth of all ages that come to the legislature daily, we are inclusionary and want to ensure that the different concepts can be discussed in a simple way so all can understand. Some people don't hear numbers, so sharing information in a way that keeps their attention and their ears open is the key to understanding. My past life as an educator has shaped me, and I want to introduce a new parable: the new ant and the grasshopper.

One fine day the grasshopper was hopping and singing and playing her flute in the fields. She sat there and she saw a line of ants passing by, struggling to carry grains of wheat and corn and canola to their diverse markets. "Why do you work so hard?" asked the grasshopper. "Come and relax with me for a while and enjoy the sunshine. Sunny days are ahead, I was told by a ruler of a vast land extending past this field."

The ants replied, "We're storing food for a long winter which lies ahead, and you should do the same. You don't have enough time to waste your days in such a manner."

The diligent, hard-working ants continued to toil every day in the field, carrying grains and goods, planning and preparing for the future, building private investment with a focus on expanding grain markets, for some of their produce is perishable. They cannot produce all the products that they need themselves, so they set up vast trade networks in other colonies to help facilitate trade when needed.

The field is blessed with both an abundance and diversity of natural goods, so all ant colonies can flourish together — some buying, some selling, all dependent in what is needed at the time and the microeconomic climate of their area.

The grasshopper laughed at this response. She was not pragmatic and did not understand macro- and microeconomics. The grasshopper said, “I’ll just hire another critter who happens to be a snake in the grass to plan and prepare for myself and my friends.” The grasshopper asked . . .

Speaker Goudy: — Yeah, I would just ask . . . Certainly when we’re using stories to help understand better, there are also characters in stories that bear a connotation to negative connotations and bad innuendoes. So snake in the grass, things like that, if we could give the character a new name . . . Let’s please continue without anything that would be taken in a wrong manner, please.

Racquel Hilbert: — “I will hire another critter who happens to be in the grass to plan and prepare for myself and my friends.” The grasshopper asked herself, “What could go wrong during the winter?”

The ants gave the grasshopper grains and seeds to plant, hoping that the grasshopper would continue to trade, to develop their trade network, and enhance their diversity so all could weather the economic winter together. The ants knew that after 10-plus years of orange and red — colours of fall — the cold will come. They don’t know when, but they know it will, and they’re preparing for it.

“Winter is a long way off,” said the grasshopper, “and I can’t be bothered to carry food around all day.” So she ate the grains and did not plant the seeds. “Now we have plenty of food to last me through the summer. I don’t need to worry or work for my food. I’ll enjoy these sunny days.” She went back to playing her flute and dancing.

The grasshopper went on her way, attending every celebration and event she could, skipping and dancing, clapping, making promises, and mocking the ants for their preparations. The ants worked to deliver diversified trade and global markets. Once the main market becomes strained and unsuitable, the diligent ants understood that the importance is to have reliance on other markets. So they worked to develop two, then three, then more, all the while diversifying into additional markets for the future. The ants know that their growing plan is affected by trade winds, sunshine, storms, rainy days.

The ants ignored the grasshopper’s nonsense and comments and continued to work. The grasshopper continued to sing and play and eat her fill all through summer. But soon autumn came, orange and red thick in the air, and the weather grew colder. The ants who had stored food for winter went about their work with

their usual diligence.

On one cold day the grasshopper, now weak and stiff from cold, unable to find food, stumbled on the ants’ nest. “Please, I’m so hungry,” said the grasshopper. “I have no food and I can’t stand this winter. We need more trade partners. We need faster economic growth and diversity to sustain me over this winter,” said the grasshopper, not understanding it takes years of planning and diligent work. “Will you not share some of your food with me?” asked the grasshopper.

The ants replied:

During the summer, we stored food for the winter. All the while you sang and played. Our local field is safe, strong, and secure across this fertile land. We have given you seeds so you can be safe, strong, and secure as well. If you wanted trade and diversity, why did you not plant those seeds and grains when you had a chance? Instead you laughed at us, mocked us, called us foolish. Now you may go sing for your supper.

The grasshopper had nothing to eat and was left to work for the winter. This parable has several morals, some of which include: work hard, prepare, stick to the plan, stay focused, work as a team, prepare for more difficult days, be prepared to pivot, and don’t be too sentimental.

This government has invested in Saskatchewan. It has prepared for cold winter. Cold times may be on the horizon. So work hard. Continue to plan for more difficult times. We have learned from the past to help us prepare for the future. Saskatchewan will meet those challenges and find those opportunities. In doing so we will encourage and ensure our economy is strong, our people are safe, and our future is secure.

Our government has committed to provincial revenue sharing. Humboldt receives 1.5 million and 545,000 for Watrous. The province has made investment into the Aspen power plant and power station of 594 million.

I’d like to thank my constituents for their hard work and their contributions to Saskatchewan, the diligent work and dedication to keep our province moving forward day by day. To the people who are a part of the Humboldt and Watrous constituency association, executive council, and members at large, I wish to thank them for their time in participating, sharing their hopes, truths, and fears.

I want to thank my CA [constituency assistant], Justin, and with that, Jessica, for being available for the needs of the constituents, for their support, encouragement, and the professionalism they bring to the office every day. I want to share my appreciation for my largest supporter, someone who’s often in the Speaker’s gallery, but he said public recognition is not his thing.

And with that I conclude. I support this Speech from the Throne moved by the government, and I do not support the amendments brought forward by the opposition.

[15:45]

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Churchill-Wildwood.

Keith Jorgenson: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, in the spirit of bipartisanship I wanted to try and pick a topic that would appeal to both sides of the House. And I was racking my brain — think like the Sask Party government, think like the Sask Party government, think like the Sask Party government.

So, Mr. Speaker, I went out. I racked up all my credit cards. I maxed them out. I had a French company renovate my house. I jammed all my kids into a two-seater car to simulate Sask Party class sizes, and then I bought some real estate from some nuns.

And then it suddenly came to me. It suddenly came to me — the 1990s. The members opposite love talking about the 1990s. So, Mr. Speaker, set your DeLorean for 1998. I want to talk about life in 1998 versus today. I've called my address, Mr. Speaker, "Supersize It, the Sask Party Edition." Supersize the deficit. Supersize the debt. Supersize class sizes, ER wait times, outward migration of our youth. Supersize homelessness and addiction treatment. Supersize it all, Mr. Speaker. Because when you're the Sask Party, more is always better.

So I want to compare '98 and 2017, and I think these two years will so clearly illustrate the difference between competent, prudent, and compassionate government, and reckless, incompetent, and cruel government. So I want to start by talking . . .

Speaker Goudy: — So one, it's the Sask Party government to separate if we're talking years when it was Sask Party, not government; and number two, cruel. Be careful with our descriptor words, please.

Keith Jorgenson: — My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I want to start by talking about how the Sask Party government has been reckless with our wallet. The right wing Fraser Institute in August of the year, in reference to reckless spending, said the Sask Party government should heed the lessons of the Romanow government from 1990s. So even a right wing economist thinks that this government is reckless.

So let's look at a few high-level numbers. So the NDP took over a government that was on the precipice of bankruptcy in 1991. And over 16 years they paid back approximately half the debt and ran surpluses in 9 of the 12 last years they governed. During the last decade, this Sask Party government has more than tripled the public debt, and they've only managed to run a surplus in 2 of 11 years.

So help me out, everyone. Balancing the budget 75 per cent of the time and paying down half the debt, does that sound reckless or prudent to you? And tripling the debt and balancing the budget only 10 per cent of the time approximately, does that sound reckless or prudent?

In 1998, I want to start by talking about one particular number — 11.38. Oil prices reached a record low of 11.38, and even adjusted for inflation that was still less than \$20 a barrel. And the Romanow government balanced their fourth consecutive budget, something this government has never done and will never do. Then they went on to balance another five budgets.

Then in 1998 they also paid down \$800 million in debt and lowered the PST [provincial sales tax] by two percentage points, something that this government also will never, ever do.

In 2017 the Sask Party government ran another gargantuan deficit. Six hundred and . . . I know, I know. The member from Willowgrove wants to talk, but it's not your turn. I know math is hard. I know math is hard.

The Sask Party borrowed \$685 million that year, and they also increased the PST and expanded it to hundreds of items that have never, ever been taxed in Saskatchewan's history, right. And they also made massive cuts to social supports that briefly saw people having funerals in their backyard. Nothing says "growth that works for everyone" like having a funeral in your backyard. And this was during a period of comparatively high oil prices when oil was over \$50 a barrel, two and a half times more than it was in '98.

There's a song that has a line in it that I really like, Mr. Speaker, that goes something to the effect of, "Don't put up with people that are reckless with your heart." I feel that the Sask Party has been reckless not just with our finances; they've been reckless with the heart of our beloved province, Mr. Speaker.

Like many people in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan, sometimes when I go downtown I feel like I don't recognize the province that I love. I also hear people contact me almost every day talking about unethical treatment they've received in our health care system. I know that Saskatchewan is better than this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about rural health care. This summer my office has tracked 522 hospital closures and another 384 alterations in services across rural Saskatchewan, and only one of these — one of these — was actually directly announced by the SHA.

The SHA and this government have given a number of really, truly bizarre explanations as to why they don't tell people when they close hospitals. One of these includes the idea that nobody really goes to their website and that social media is a better way to inform people. Mr. Speaker, I think this is crazy. First of all, relying on social media to notify people of life-and-death matters is not appropriate.

I visited the riding of the Minister of Rural and Remote Health this summer, and I talked to an older gentleman in Radville. And I'm going to quote him. And I apologize; I have to alter what he said because it had some colourful language. He said, "I don't blanking have Facebook. How the blank am I supposed to know if my blanking hospital is open?" This is an excellent question. It should not require membership in a specific social media platform to find out whether or not your hospital is open or closed.

Even if using Facebook was a good idea to notify people of these closures, the SHA and the government doesn't follow its own guidance. I went to the SHA website and I looked for notice of its closures. I found a post promoting berry picking in the summer, but nothing — not one word — about the 522 times that rural hospitals were closed this summer. So if social media is the best way to inform people, why are towns supposed to do it and

not the SHA?

Also the members opposite have social media accounts of their own. If social media is the best way to inform somebody of when their hospital's closed, why wouldn't you put it on your Facebook page as well? I checked. Not one member opposite posted a closure on their Facebook posts. The Minister of Rural and Remote Health has Facebook friends in Radville. Why does she not want the people in Radville to know when their hospital is closed?

This last week I went to Watrous, Saskatchewan, one of my favourite towns in Saskatchewan, and I was there to attempt to take the pulse of rural health care. It was 89 over 120 that day, and that's not blood pressure. That hospital has been closed 89 times this calendar year, affecting a total of 120 days of service in that community, and the member from Humboldt-Watrous has never posted on her Facebook page when that information in theory could save somebody's life in a crisis. Does that sound reckless to you, or does that sound prudent?

Now this government has done something incredibly dangerous this summer. They've on a number of occasions closed two rural hospitals and directed people to go from one hospital to another. This has happened at least five times, Mr. Speaker. I spoke to a municipal politician from one of the affected communities, and they said that if you actually followed the guidance on the notes that are posted on the door of those hospitals, you would have driven more than two hours to get to an actual ER that was open. And that person thought whoever was doing that likely would have died.

So I'm asking everyone, does not telling people when you close their ER sound reckless or safe? Now in '93 . . .

Speaker Goudy: — Sorry, just a reminder that you're speaking through the Speaker.

Keith Jorgenson: — Yes, my apologies. Now I know some of the members opposite have been eagerly waiting for me to talk about the hospitals that were supposedly closed by the NDP in the '90s, so your wait is over. I want to talk about Saskatchewan's Ogopogo, the myth of the closed NDP hospital. The fact is nearly every single one of these facilities is still open. In fact if you don't believe me, you can ask the member from Moosomin. He toured one of these closed facilities with me and posted on May 14th a picture of him standing in front of a facility that was supposedly closed for 32 years.

But, Mr. Speaker, it gets even weirder. So twice this summer the SHA and this government has directed people from a closed hospital to a hospital that was supposedly closed 32 years ago. It's true. So twice this government has directed people to the Oxbow health centre, which is on the list of hospitals that we supposedly closed 32 years ago.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as you can tell, I like to talk about numbers. But I find it reassuring to quantify, calculate, and plan, and in this case mathematically describe the recklessness of this government. But sadly we do not have enough sitting days for that so I will move on. I have two last numbers I want to share with you, Mr. Speaker.

My wife led the first homeless count in Saskatoon. It found just 44 people in May sleeping on the street, and likely none of these people actually slept on the street in the winter. We recently learned that there was over 100 homeless encampments in Saskatoon. This is having a cataclysmic effect on our economy and the city's sense of itself. Mr. Speaker, this is wrong.

Instead of numbers, I want to try and describe a tiny piece of the weight of this recklessness that I've experienced, as what I would describe as a trusted observer to tragedy. In the winter of 2018, a teenage girl was found frozen against our back fence at work. I did not know her directly, Mr. Speaker, but I knew of her. She was just a little older than my oldest daughter, and countless times I've imagined my daughter instead of her being there. That image haunts me still, Mr. Speaker.

Near the end of the Calvert era, if I had a pregnant girl that was addicted to drugs come to me for help, I could get her a treatment bed in an hour. The system worked and the people who worked in the system knew how important it is, so we moved heaven and earth. In 2017 I had a girl that was addicted, pregnant, and homeless come to me asking me for help. She told me that if she did not get help, she would likely have to start selling herself.

I knew the system. I had navigated it for a decade, but I couldn't find her a treatment bed. I couldn't find her a detox bed. I couldn't even find her a warm place to sleep in the winter. I've no idea what happened to her or her child, Mr. Speaker. That was the day that I decided to leave a job that I loved because I felt helpless to help those that needed it most.

About two weeks ago another young man that I cared for a lot passed away. He's something like the 45th young person I know that have passed away. His former common-law partner shared a picture on Facebook of him and eight other people, and the caption to the photo read something to the effect that she was the last one alive and that she thought that she would be next.

Respectfully to the members opposite, what you're doing is not working. The cuts that were made in 2017 and after that reasonably should have been known to create harm. The way that social assistance was being paid, and the cuts to the agencies that came after, came at the worst possible time. Meth, which should have been a comparatively uncommon street drug, was on the rise. It was like watching a giant tsunami at sea, Mr. Speaker, coming ashore.

I remember myself and other social service leaders talking to this government. We collectively and repeatedly warned them that what they were doing was dangerous. More support was needed at this critical time.

The last eight years have been really hard, Mr. Speaker, for many of us, watching our community and many people that we love slowly being destroyed. Respectfully to the members opposite, what you're doing isn't working. And respectfully to the members opposite, I don't think you understand the beast that you are trying to fight.

So the members opposite are asking me to vote for a declaration that they have made my beloved province strong, safe, and secure. I don't think so, Mr. Speaker.

Now in closing I want to leave you with two images. First of all, I want you to imagine a beautiful beach with sun and sand, and I want you to imagine each grain of sand on that beach is \$1 that was wasted by this government, Mr. Speaker. Lost opportunities of things that could have been, money that could have been spent on other things. And then you ask me if I think we're stronger.

Now I want you to imagine a tent city inside of one of our cities. Imagine a tarp, a tent, a shopping cart, and then tell me that this government is making us all more safe and secure.

I will not be voting for the motion moved by the members opposite. I'll be supporting the amendment moved by my friend from Cumberland. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Lumsden-Morse.

Blaine McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for your service here in the legislature. I appreciate your wisdom and guidance over the two years that we've been involved here.

It has been just over two years that I've had the privilege to drive up to this amazing building knowing that I have the honour and the challenge of helping to chart the course of this government. I will never, I will never tire of walking up the 30 steps to the floor of the rotunda and stopping to take in the beauty of the place, and acknowledging those that have gone before and had the vision to help make what we have today. And then I take a walk down to my office and I clean out the maple bugs that are trying to find their way in and take over the place as well.

In a lot of ways, there has been some significant transitions that have taken place in my life over the last two years. With my election in August of '23, I anticipated that I would be busy, but somehow thought I would find some time to be able to help out on our dairy farm every now and then. Those days have been few and far between, Mr. Speaker, and I think many find themselves in that same position.

But I want to say that in that transition, I need to send a very heartfelt thanks for our oldest son, Michael, for how well he has fulfilled his role in managing our farm. Now he's just close to completed his very first major infrastructure project. And our farm will soon be using a well-designed, well-built commodity shed with increased storage capacity for all the ingredients required to feed 350 hungry dairy cows. Now you might think of it, Mr. Speaker, as a very large pantry and kitchen where we process all the ingredients and mix a balanced ration for every animal on the farm.

I'm super proud of all the planning and the effort that was put in. Great effort all around. And lots of thanks to the contractors, the trades, and especially the local cement plant operator. KC, thanks for all the pictures of everything that you did, and please know that your retirement should be a little more secure as a result of what Michael did.

So my transition from day-to-day engagement in dairying is changing to day-to-day constituency events, day-to-day meetings, RM meetings, planning for session, and keeping all the

questions and concerns answered, and in the process helping people move forward in their lives. Michael, thank you for making that possible. And special thanks as well to your family, especially Chelsea, your wonderful wife, who has stood with you every step of the way.

Of course Michael has had great help from a host of dedicated people, including his brother Mark, who helps out while also managing an active and growing family of four boys, freeing up his wife, Stephanie, to focus on her demanding job as a schoolteacher. We also have a very talented and capable staff who daily keep things running. There is never a day off on the dairy farm, much like the always-on role we have as MLAs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have also had some transition in our office with the resignation of the very capable help of Brandy, one of my CAs, who has walked this political journey with me from the very beginning. With a household of four boys who are all engaged in sports, it became clear and evident that she would need to step back for a time. So this fall I was able to hire another close friend, Kathy, to pick up the hours we needed. So welcome to the team, Kathy. I hope you're listening. Kelly continues to keep our financial side in good order and continues with us in the office. And I'm grateful to both of them for stepping up and filling the void.

Brandy Mae, I express my heartfelt appreciation for the two and a half years of support and encouragement. She tells me that she has resigned, but in her own words, you know where to find me. And, Brandy, I will be calling. I have complete confidence in our office team, and I look forward to doing great things together.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my life is made complete with the gift God has given me with my lovely wife of just over 44 years, celebrated earlier this month. October is a big month for me. It's our anniversary and my wife's birthday all wrapped up within two weeks. Marlie, you are dearly loved and truly are my source of strength and completeness.

Now add to that the blessing of 10 grandchildren and I do feel that I'm blessed beyond my capacity to really fully comprehend. It's been a special treat to share this political journey with family. This summer has been full — last summer as well — full of parades and community events. And one of our grandsons continues to have a perfect track record in parade attendance.

Also a special treat this year was having our oldest granddaughter drive the parade truck with her recent learner's licence in hand. Of course grandma had to be seated with her, and they both did a great job piloting that vehicle. She had to do a good job — RCMP leading in front, community safety officer behind. You did a great job, Jordynn.

Our constituency expanded with redistribution, and many miles were put on travelling to all corners from Lumsden to Stewart Valley, Central Butte, and everywhere in between.

And now the favourite time of year for me — fall suppers in full swing. The member from Canora-Pelly, I don't know. We'll have to compare notes as to who gets to the most. If I had two clones, we still couldn't attend them all, but I will get to as many as possible. And I'm still maintaining the same weight, Mr. Speaker, but I'm not sure if that will hold true for much longer.

The next transition that happened this year is that I can really no longer call myself a rookie. Those days have passed. Although in many ways it still feels that way, I can no longer claim that role. Another crop has taken up that mantle, and now that's ended for them. Their learning curve continues and the dizziness has increased.

One thing that hasn't changed is my commitment to ensuring good governance is provided to the people of Lumsden-Morse and the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you to our Premier for continuing to provide exceptional leadership in the midst of an upside-down, ever-changing, crazy, crazy world. Premier, your steady hand on the wheel has never been more needed, and we thank you for your energy and enthusiasm that never ceases to amaze me. I am proud to serve alongside.

Now to the 2025 Throne Speech. Strong, safe, and secure — what do those words actually mean? A quick dictionary definition reveals the following regarding the first. Strong: powerful, robust, sturdy, mighty, forceful, tough, and vigorous. Now any one of those synonyms could describe the economy of Saskatchewan. Over the last year we led the country of Canada in job growth and consistently had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. Since 2020 we have seen approximately 40 billion in private capital investment in our province.

Here are just a few examples that hit home for me: the mining company of K+S Potash, already spoken about by the member from Arm River-Dakota. But I'm going to take a little different approach to it. Mr. Speaker, the backbone of the Saskatchewan economy has always been and will be agriculture. And one of the companies in the pursuit of agriculture and helping to make it better is K+S Potash, a company producing one of the big three resources that also drive our economy: potash, oil, and uranium.

This is a company that was chased out of our province by a failed system of nationalization that started in 1975 under the government of Allan Blakeney. Eventually 40 per cent of the potash industry was stolen from the rightful owners, and the economic decline was steep and rapid. The result was that it took 40 years for any greenfield investment in potash to return. Thankfully K+S did return and have made new significant investments — 4.1 billion was invested in the Bethune location, and the mine officially began producing in June of 2017. Imagine with me the economic impact of this investment.

But really, mister deputy deputy speaker, we don't have to imagine anything because these are actual stats. Boring though they may be, they reflect people's lives — 23 million hours of work building that mine that peaked at employing over 3,000 people daily. Today the company employs over 400 people, and they are continuing to reinvest.

On September 9th I attended the groundbreaking along with the Minister of Energy and Resources, the groundbreaking of the expansion of the K+S mine, a \$3 billion expansion to nearly double their production capacity. Seventy new full-time jobs will be added to their workforce, and that's not counting the construction jobs that are already under way. Again it only took 40 years to get this investment rolling. How many jobs, homes, careers, and families did we lose to out-migration during those lost-in-the-wilderness days?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, investment growth comes with setting a regulatory framework that allows companies and investors to confidently invest in their future, knowing that the secret to their success will be providing secure jobs to a motivated workforce that will be able to buy or build homes; raise families; contribute to their communities, their schools, and their hospitals; and know the future is secure.

We can never go back. The lesson has been learned and the people of Saskatchewan remember it well. That is why when there is new talk of nationalizing our oil and gas industry, the people of Saskatchewan take notice and they collectively say, never again.

Just a couple more examples of private capital investment into the province in the last few years. Foran Mining, phase 1 capital cost to bring the McIlvenna Bay copper mine to commercial production is estimated at 826 million. The mine is expected to produce 34 and a half million pounds of copper and 58.6 million pounds of zinc annually. More than 50 per cent complete, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is with significant engagement with the First Nations people as part of the workforce, including residents of Denare Beach.

North American Helium, a very large drilling program that has built nine helium purification facilities in southwest Saskatchewan, to date an investment of 500 million.

And then value-added ag investments, just really quickly: Cargill, 350 million canola crush plant, 50 full-time positions when complete; Donald's Fine Foods and North 49 Foods, a \$60 million new cull sow processing plant in Moose Jaw, capacity to process 225,000 sows and employ as many as 200 people. Great to see employee vehicles now filling the once-empty parking lot in Moose Jaw.

O&T Farms' \$10 million expansion of an existing facility specializing in flax processing. I just spoke to the owner-entrepreneur last night at the STEP [Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership] reception, Tim Wiens. He's bullish and excited to see what the future holds.

It's with a strong and robust economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are able to provide the second element of our Throne Speech. You need a base to work from. Safe. Now here's the dictionary definition again: free from harm or risk, unhurt, secure from threat of danger, harm, or loss — and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not making this up; it was in the dictionary — successful at getting to a base in baseball without being put out. If only that would have been the case for Davis Schneider at the top of the ninth last night.

Everyone in Saskatchewan deserves to feel safe and secure in their own homes and communities. That is why our government is committed to hire 100 — this is important — 100 additional municipal officers, hire and pay the salaries in perpetuity; 14 new SCAN personnel, that's safer communities and neighbourhoods; and standing up the Saskatchewan marshals service with 70 officers hired. And that is all in addition to our commitment to fund 180 new RCMP positions.

Along with these new officers, what's needed is providing the necessary tools to keep families safe. Initiatives are under way to

help our police forces keep drugs out of the criminals' hands and then getting the criminals where they belong — off our streets and in jail.

[16:15]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we totally recognize that some people do become ensnared in a life of addiction, so we will continue to deliver on our commitment of 500 new addictions treatment beds. Three hundred are already in place, and we are aggressively working to fulfill that commitment and more. When treatment is asked for, the space needs to be available, space that allows the necessary time required for healing and wholeness to take root.

These are not just numbers that we're talking about. They are individual human lives that are loved and appreciated by the families that grieve their illness, their addiction, and their sickness. And so we commit to delivering for all the people of Saskatchewan, where they are and the needs that they have.

Secure. Strong, safe, secure. What does it mean to be secure? Back to the dictionary: fixed or fastened so as not to give way, become loose, or be lost. For me the concept is, no one left behind. So how do we provide security to our citizens? This to me is the essence of what good government is to do: to provide the essentials of health, education for the future, and the ability to not only survive but thrive in your personal life, always, always with the mindset that personal responsibility is essential to become all that you are meant to be.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in regards to health care, we're ensuring the right care is available when needed. We're making progress and totally recognize that much more needs to be done. It will not end. The recruitment strategy, increased training spaces, retention of health care workers, and the program of incentivizing have all worked together to show solid improvements.

I'd like to talk about two quick examples in my closing time. The hiring of 11 pediatric specialists this past summer gives parents confidence that their children will receive the specialized care and expertise that they need close to home. And on the opposite end of the continuum scale, the personal care home supplement has been a game changer in many, many incidents.

Mr. Speaker, the regionally owned and operated care home in Central Butte, called Iver Main, is a great example of government and private initiative working together. Just a few years back Iver Main was considering closing, with just eight residents remaining in place. Now with the personal care home supplement in place, they have 20 residents and are looking to fill the remaining four beds. More people are being cared for in their own community. And equally important — equally important — former part-time work has turned into full-time hours for the staff.

That is an all-around win. And my congratulations to the leadership in Central Butte for having the vision to move forward and repurpose what was once a hospital into a beautiful care home. Partnerships can and do work to deliver care in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I took a look back at my very first speech

in this House. I talked about the strength and determination of my grandpa, who moved to what must have seemed to be a desolate and unforgiving country at the turn of the century. He was determined to carve out a new life despite the seeming insurmountable challenges that he and his brothers faced. They saw opportunity. And it is our responsibility to continue to move forward with confidence, knowing that the future is bright and the opportunities are inviting and endless in scope.

So 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 from members opposite.

May God richly bless the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Brent Blakley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise in these Chambers to join in the debate of the government's Throne Speech.

Well it's been quite a year — a year to the day that I was elected to represent the fine people in the riding of Wascana Plains here in the Saskatchewan legislature. I still pinch myself to see if this is real. I'm still somewhat awestruck as I walk up those steps outside each day looking at the impressive structure and thinking, this is where I get to work.

It's been quite an adjustment from my previous job, 35 years as a teacher. But after sitting through question period in these Chambers, I realize it's really not that much different than a high school classroom.

It has been a huge learning curve figuring out how everything operates, how things get done, the dos and don'ts. I've characterized it many times to people saying it's like drinking from the firehose. I sometimes wonder if I'm meant to be here, wondering what do I have to contribute to the grand scheme of things.

It's been a year on the job, carrying out various tasks, sitting here in these Chambers, door knocking in the riding of Wascana Plains, touching base with constituents, listening to their questions and concerns, going around the province listening to people and organizations and hearing the challenges they face, advocating for people who are struggling on income assistance trying to make ends meet. I've met many folks that are just getting through life day by day, not knowing where they're going to sleep at night or where their next meal is going to come from.

All these experiences have been so rewarding and have made me realize I'm just where I'm supposed to be: working to make daily life fair, just, and equitable for every single person in this province regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, gender identity, ability, age, or socio-economic status. Removing the barriers they encounter so that they can thrive and prosper.

Through the last year I've received support and encouragement from many people. First I'd like to thank my MLA colleagues here in the opposition for their patience, their collaboration, their

understanding, and providing help whenever needed. I'd especially like to thank our leader, Carla Beck, for her drive, her hard work, dedication, and of course her leadership. This is truly a team effort.

I'd like to give a big thank you to our staff in the NDP caucus office and in the provincial office. They work long hours tirelessly for the people of Saskatchewan. My constituency assistant Stephanie Logan does great work in my office to keep me organized, attending events, and managing the abundance of casework that comes our way. The people of Regina Wascana Plains and our constituency executive deserve recognition as well for their input and support.

I don't think I would've been able to do this job without the unwavering support of my family: our four adult children and my wife doing her thing out in Ontario. So I thank them wholeheartedly for that. Pause. Drink.

So now response to the Throne Speech. Wondering where I start. I was going to start with the fable of Geppetto and his little wooden boy, Pinocchio, but I think one children's story is enough for today.

The first thing that jumped out at me on the Throne Speech was the government's response to the fires in the North this past spring and summer. In the speech they said that this year's fire season was challenging for the residents of the North. Challenging? Mr. Speaker, chess is challenging. What the people of the North experienced dealing with these fires was more like a nightmare.

So it's an understatement to say that I was extremely disappointed to hear the government downplay the fiasco that was their response to fighting the fires, how they completely mismanaged accommodating the people of the North that were affected by the fires. To categorize it as challenging disrespects the people of northern Saskatchewan and what they went through.

We heard nothing in the Speech from the Throne about how the government is going to address the issues in education that continue despite their new deal with the province's teachers. Addressing reading outcomes in primary grades is certainly important, but it does nothing to deal with the bulging classrooms at every level.

This year, this semester, my niece is a student at a Regina high school. She has 42 students in her grade 11 biology class. And there's countless examples like this across the province. Having that many students in one class is not conducive to learning, which is an understatement. The four elementary schools in my constituency — it's easier to say riding; constituency, man — constituency of Regina Wascana Plains continue to deal with severe overcrowding. Some schools have been forced to bus students to surrounding schools — they cannot accommodate them — having to attend outside their community. Again not conducive to proper learning.

A year ago the Sask Party government made an election pitch to the people of Wascana Plains of a new school in their area. No mention of this in the Throne Speech as a priority or that it's even on the government's radar. To date I don't think there's even a

sign identifying the site. I guess what I'm saying is talk is cheap. Perhaps the government thinks the people there will forget about the promise for a few years until the next election cycle when they can trot out their unfulfilled promises yet again.

Throughout the last year doing this job and as shadow minister for Social Services, I have developed a deeper sense of empathy for people in this province who struggle. I realize that not everyone is allowed to play on an even playing field. Indigenous people of Saskatchewan do not play on an even playing field. I've seen the struggles that they've endured and continue to endure from colonization and intergenerational trauma from Indian residential schools. I've seen how resilient they are despite this and how they strive to preserve their culture and their language despite the roadblocks they encounter.

Seniors in this province do not play on an even playing field. Despite their contributions and a life given to this province, they're often ignored and disrespected. People with disabilities are not allowed to play on an even playing field. Their day-to-day life is filled with obstacles both physically and financially. Many have to struggle just for a living income. Those people who are in care are faced with issues due to staff shortages from lack of government funding.

Some of the most vulnerable people in the province — the underemployed or working poor, people needing income assistance, or those who find themselves homeless — are not allowed to play on an even playing field. These people have to scratch and claw, working harder than ever but falling further behind. And when they do manage to make a little bit, get a little bit ahead, the government finds a way to take it back.

All these examples shed light on a social services system that is not working for all people of this province that it is supposed to serve. And that needs to be addressed so that people aren't continually falling through the cracks.

Despite this, the Throne Speech contained no new measures to make life more affordable for the people of Saskatchewan. They like to trot out the same old talking points, but nothing new. I'm not sure how much more mileage they can get from repeating the same old, tired ideas when there's people in this province that continue to struggle. What the government refers to as affordability measures does not make life more affordable for everyone, as they like to claim. The food bank report that came out yesterday is evidence that the government's affordability measures are not working for everyone.

Well here's some ideas, some things that we on this side have been advocating for for a while now. Eliminate the provincial sales tax on groceries and children's clothing. The latest statistics show that Saskatchewan had the highest increase in grocery costs. Cutting these taxes would save the taxpayers of the province \$25 million in groceries and \$20 million for children's clothes. That's an affordability measure.

Bring back direct payment to landlords and utilities for those receiving income assistance benefits. When people are evicted and find themselves on the streets, it's often that they have to decide between paying their rent and putting food on the table or paying the day-to-day bills.

Implement rent control for tenants. Currently there's no limit on how much rent can be increased at one time. Prior to this month, Saskatchewan had the highest rent increases across the country seven months in a row. Rent control would protect tenants from excessive and unreasonable rent increases. British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and PEI [Prince Edward Island] have all implemented rent control. That's an affordability measure.

[16:30]

In the Speech from the Throne, the government also talked about keeping our streets safe. They made it sound like crime is rampant on the streets of Saskatchewan, that more boots on the ground and tougher sentences are what's needed. That's all well and good, but they fall short in addressing the issue at hand: the root causes of crime. They said nothing about addressing why folks may be committing these crimes. The structural causes of crime are quite simple. People are experiencing poverty, housing insecurity, food insecurity, and a cost of living that just is not affordable for everyone.

People find themselves in a form of institutional poverty. Here's a definition. While we're giving definitions, here's a definition of institutional poverty. It's the condition where inadequate or dysfunctional governmental, economic, and legal structures trap people in poverty by limiting their access to resources and opportunities. These institutions, whether through corruption, ineffective governance, or pro-rich policies, can create a cycle of poverty by preventing equity and hindering social mobility. Sounds familiar.

This government needs to remove barriers that exist that keep people in the province in this institutional poverty. People on Saskatchewan income support and Saskatchewan assured income for disability assistance — SAID — have an earned income exemption limit. This limit is imposed by withholding benefits if the client earns too much money in a given month or year. So again, once these folks get a little ahead, they get dragged back down.

Many of these folks on income assistance live below the poverty level. Benefit increases we've seen don't even come close to keeping up with the inflation rate. These people exist in a cycle of poverty that is impossible to escape under the current government's policies.

An important part of our job and our role as the official opposition, I believe, is to keep the government accountable for the decisions they make and for the decisions they don't make. The people's government cannot govern without checks and balances. The fact that there's 27 of us sitting on the opposition . . . What I'm hearing at the events I attend, what I hear on the doorsteps as I go out door knocking tells me the people of Saskatchewan indeed want checks and balances on this government.

My priority in my work in the legislature continues to be to work tirelessly for the people of Regina Wascana Plains and Saskatchewan to ensure that they are all afforded equal human rights, freedoms, and opportunities so that everyone can experience success and thrive.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment

made by the member from Cumberland. Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the government's motion. Thank you.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Regina Pasqua.

Bhajan Brar: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is an honour to rise today to address this Throne Speech. I want to begin by reflecting on the past year as an MLA.

One year ago the people of Regina Pasqua put their trust in me and elected me to represent them in this Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, representing Regina Pasqua this year has been an honour of a lifetime, and I am deeply grateful for the support of my constituents.

I am proud to have spent this year being out in the community, knocking on doors, attending community events, and getting to know the people who call Harbour Landing and Albert Park home. Mr. Speaker, I promised to always be of service to the people of Regina Pasqua by bringing forward their concerns and being there to help them through my office.

I want to also thank all those who have helped me in my first year as an MLA. First my family. I want to thank them for their constant support. I could not do this work without them.

I am especially proud of my grandchildren and all that they have accomplished this year. My granddaughter Navreet graduated Luther High School and received three scholarships to the University of Regina. My younger granddaughter is in grade 8 and my two grandsons just started preschool this year.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my friends Lahora Singh, Bahadar Singh, Harbans Singh, Gurmail Singh, Balder Singh, and Pritam Singh who are always there when I call. Whether it is door knocking, helping with my MLA barbecue, or attending a town hall meeting, they stand beside me every step of the way.

This summer our office worked hard and knocked the doors of our entire constituency. I want to thank our casual constituency assistant who assisted with that effort. Thank you to Syed Hamza Asim, who has been a great help in our office covering vacation, assisting with constituency outreach, and helping with our barbecue.

Mr. Speaker, Ameen Grewal, who assisted our office with our first newsletter, door knocking, and sorting donations for wildfire evacuees. Any time we needed help, Ameen was available to ensure we could better serve our constituents. I want to thank her for all of her work this summer, and I wish her the best with her continued studies at the University of Toronto.

Mr. Speaker, I especially want to thank my constituency assistant Andrea. Over the past nine months, Andrea has managed my office. She helps me with social media, door knocking, and even speech writing. Together as a team we are proud to serve the people of Regina Pasqua.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the Regina Pasqua constituency executive who always guide and encourage me. Their passion and vision for our community inspires me every day. One writer well said that "dreams are not who come while sleeping, but

dreams are those who don't allow you to sleep." So of course I work so hard, but my executive is so aggressive. They always push me to work harder for our constituents and to do more to ensure our province is a better place to live.

And I want to express my heartfelt thanks to my colleague, to our Leader of the Official Opposition, and to the dedicated staff in our caucus office.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, during this summer my office had been busy with outreach. I had been out in the constituency every possible moment and have knocked on the door of every home in Regina Pasqua. It was great to take the moment to thank each and every constituent for helping me reach this Assembly and to listen to their concerns.

Through this past year of listening to my constituents, I have heard their priority and it is through that lens that I respond to this Throne Speech. Mr. Speaker, in Punjabi I will say:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Punjabi.]

Means the Throne Speech is nothing more than old wine in a bottle with a new label. It was the same as last year.

It does not address many of the concerns that I have heard from Regina Pasqua constituents. Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech starts by discussing the wildfires this summer. During the crisis, while people were struggling and needed food, the Sask Party government was busy playing golf. It's hard not to be reminded of Emperor Nero who famously watched as Rome burned. Mr. Speaker, despite all of the warning it seems that this government were not properly prepared.

I want to thank my colleague, the member from Cumberland, for sharing his story. When so many of his constituents had to evacuate to communities across Saskatchewan and even to Regina, I knew that I had to help.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud Sikh:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Punjabi.]

Means the well-being of all and selfless service led me to act to help my community. With help from the Sikh Society, my team and I put out a call for donations to support evacuees.

Mr. Speaker, my office, shared with the member from Mount Royal, collected the bulk of the donations in Regina. Mr. Speaker, donations were also collected at the joint office for the members from Regina Wascana Plains, Regina University, and Regina Northeast, and at the gurdwara too. The generosity of the community was incredible. Our entire office was full of clothes, baby supplies, and other essential items. We received so many donations that we could not walk through our office.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I met the evacuees from the North in their hotels. Many of them were not able to get all of the necessities that they needed. Our team was able to meet with the people and ask what their specific need was, and we helped to fill in gaps that were not being met by the government. After delivering all the items to the people, I delivered additional supplies to the Salvation Army, to help people here in Regina as

well, that was surplus.

Mr. Speaker, another major concern my office has been hearing are the changes to the SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program]. Changes to the SINP has caused instability for business in Regina Pasqua and across Saskatchewan. In a time of great instability with tariffs and Donald Trump, businesses want stability. And yet certain changes have left many people stuck not knowing what is coming next. Mr. Speaker, we need a fair deal on SINP from Ottawa. This Throne Speech does not address that.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech also had no measures for affordability. The Throne Speech states that Saskatchewan is incredibly affordable. Mr. Speaker, if things are so good in Saskatchewan, then why was affordability one of the major concerns on the doorsteps of Regina Pasqua?

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech mentioned that Saskatchewan has the lowest rental costs of all of the provinces; however it failed to mention that we have some of the fastest increasing rent rates. Rent is increasingly becoming out of reach for so many in our province, especially seniors and young people.

Mr. Speaker, grocery costs are also unaffordable. My constituents are finding it harder and harder to feed their families. Mr. Speaker, the people of Regina Pasqua want a real cost-of-living measure to make life more affordable. This Throne Speech does not have that.

One thing only I am glad to see in the Throne Speech is the mention of the new Harbour Landing school that is finally under construction. However I do have concerns about how long this project has been taking. This school was first announced in 2020 and was scheduled to be completed in 2026. But with the construction only starting this fall, it is now expected to be completed in 2027. I don't know, four and a half years, where the Sask Party government was.

Mr. Speaker, when I met the constituents in Harbour Landing, so many of them explained that this new school is their top priority. I have heard stories of families who live only a few minutes away from the current school in Harbour Landing — in fact, they moved there because of the school — but unfortunately due to overcrowding, they're being bused across Lewvan Drive to a school out of their community.

In the meantime, current students at Harbour Landing School are still missing out essential learning opportunities due to overcrowding and increasing classroom complexity and the loss of spaces like the library. These issue are not addressed in this Throne Speech.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about health care. The Throne Speech has nothing new on health care. All across Saskatchewan our health care workers are being asked to do more and more with less money and fewer supports.

[16:45]

Hallway medicine has become the standard, not the exception. Mr. Speaker, too many people, especially young people and students, cannot find a family doctor. This needs to be changed.

Front-line workers are calling for changes. They're calling for supports. They're looking for help. Instead this Throne Speech has zero new measures to address the health care.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech does not have solutions for my constituents. It does not address health care concerns. It does not address affordability concerns. And still the people of Regina Pasqua are waiting for a new Harbour Landing school.

Mr. Speaker, from the ruling bench, every member is talking about economy, affordability, health, and education. But I will say some words in Punjabi:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Punjabi.]

By saying “sugar” time and again, our tongue will not taste sweet. Tongue will only become sweet if we . . . [inaudible] . . . sugar.

We need practical solutions for the people of Saskatchewan, not just talk from the opposition bench.

Therefore I will not be supporting the Throne Speech, and I will instead be supporting the amendment moved by the member for Cumberland and seconded by the member from Saskatoon.

Love to Saskatchewan. Love to Saskatchewan people. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for recognizing me. And it's a pleasure to enter into debate here or make my comments in response to the Speech from the Throne from last week.

Before I get into, I guess, my more substantive comments on the speech itself and where we're going as a government to better serve the people of this province, I should thank a few people because they're important to me and they allow me to do this work that I get to do each and every single day.

First of all my family. My wife, Meagan; my little guy, Bennett. I think they're probably, maybe, hopefully watching at home. Hopefully Bennett's having supper and doing a puzzle. So I miss them every week when I'm down here in Regina. It was a pleasure to have them down here in Regina at the Throne Speech last week. And Bennett loves visiting daddy's office, he calls this building. So it's a pleasure to be able to include them at times here in the work that we get to do.

You know, and beyond that, I can't thank our extended families enough — I know I have done that before — that allow Meagan and I to be a part of this work. Meagan has her own successful career in the accounting world in The Battlefords. But you know, both incredibly supported by our respective families and very loved by them.

I also want to thank my constituency assistants. They might also be watching, but you know, maybe not. But both Gail and Claudette do incredible work. I've talked about them before here at different opportunities, and you know, really I can't thank them enough for how they serve our constituents in The

Battlefords very, very well.

And you know, both of them come with unique skill sets and experiences dealing in high-pressure situations, and sometimes a constituency office can be a high-pressure situation. And certainly we've seen that in our time in The Battlefords, and sure appreciate Gail and Claudette and their service to the people of The Battlefords and the people of Saskatchewan writ large.

I'd also just like to thank, you know, the staff that work in this building. Obviously my staff down the hall in the Minister of Health's office. The Minister of Rural and Remote Health's office also supports us, but certainly all the staff in caucus, and I think really in all the ministerial offices as they work to answer questions that you might have as an MLA as you're serving constituents. And as well, all the folks in executive council as we work to move this government, to move this province forward each and every single day.

I really do want to thank my caucus colleagues. And you know, I have . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Even the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood, you know. But you know, there's 61 people in this Chamber, and we don't all agree on things. So I'll just talk about my team, but even on our team we've got unique people, unique sets of experiences and talents.

And obviously with today being the one-year anniversary of the 2024 election, we've gotten to know some new MLA. And great to have them aboard on the team, and great to see them develop. Hearing many of them talk in their Throne Speech replies this year, you can see the growth and development.

But you know, most importantly where I've been able to observe the growth and development of many of these new members is out touring health care facilities all across the province. And I'll probably talk more about that later in my speech, but just it gives me great joy to see because I remember being a new MLA and learning how to engage well in my own constituency.

But it's so neat to see that happening with new MLAs. It kind of revs you back up, you know, in another term and gets you excited to do the job in your own community. And iron sharpens iron, Mr. Speaker. So when you see other MLAs doing a great job in their community, it calls you to a higher standard in terms of service in terms of responsiveness and in terms of how you're trying to move your community forward. And so I really want to thank my caucus colleagues for that.

And most importantly, I really want to thank the community of The Battlefords. You know, I have the privilege . . . I always said I represented the town of Battleford, the city of North Battleford, and a little bit of RM 437. But then actually I was looking at a map the other day, and I realize I actually represent a bit of the RM 438, the RM of Battle River. There's no people that live in that part of RM 438, but now I'm going to start saying I also represent just a sliver of the RM of Battle River that's right along the North Saskatchewan River. So I'm going to add a fourth community to my cap here.

But you know, I've said it before; I didn't grow up in The Battlefords. I didn't grow up in Saskatchewan. I married into The Battlefords, really. I married into Saskatchewan, but Battlefords are home for me. And I so love the community that I get to call

home, the uniquenesses, the tough stuff, the good stuff. But you know, I love living in my community. I love serving my community, and I love talking about my community. I'm going to do a little bit of that here this afternoon and likely into this evening as well.

But I just can't say enough about the potential that we have in our community. Our community has often been panned with negative connotations, with issues around public safety, and I'll certainly address that later. But you know, when I think about the relationships that are forming between the municipalities in our community and how us as a provincial government are working with those municipalities, I think about the Indigenous leaders.

We have eight nations within about a 30, 40 minute drive of our community, several urban reserves now right within city limits. There are some really exciting, unifying partnerships coming together in our area and really starting to get the region speaking with one voice. And I think that's such a positive thing as we start to address the challenges that we do have, but also build on the strengths that we have in The Battlefords as well.

So I'll talk a little bit . . . You know, the Speech from the Throne is all about building a strong, safe, secure Saskatchewan. You know, when I reflect on that first piece, a strong Saskatchewan, you know, I think about sometimes we spend a lot of time, especially during budget debate or Throne Speech replies, we talk a lot about — more so the government members — talk a lot about the economic strength of the province and the good things happening here.

And you know, I'll go back. A few members have mentioned it, but the Midwestern Legislative Conference, Mr. Speaker, that you had a hand in hosting in Saskatoon, bringing legislators from Alberta, and our own province obviously, Manitoba, Ontario, as well as many midwestern states. You know, it's interesting to see your province through somebody else's eyes sometimes. And sometimes I think when we talk about private investment, we talk about the mining sector, and we talk about the agriculture sector and some of the things that are happening in those respective sectors, sometimes you can start to almost take that for granted. It becomes, you know, it's happening.

You know, the member from Lumsden-Morse talked about the investments that K+S has made into this part of southern Saskatchewan. I think sometimes we almost take that for granted in the province. You know, you wake up this morning to the news finally becoming public of Cameco signing an \$80 billion nuclear deal. That's incredible. And that says nothing about what's happening with the Denison Mines project up in northern Saskatchewan, the Foran Mining project. Like all of this is happening in a province in the middle of Canada with 1.25 million people, soon to be 1.4 million people. But I don't think we should take that for granted, you know.

And you're reminded every time I talk to somebody from BHP as well, in terms of what they're building at the Jansen project further east of Humboldt — just the sheer size of that project. You know that well, Mr. Speaker, being close to or maybe even in your constituency. You know, the size of that project in terms of the labour requirements, certainly during construction. But what that is going to do to that area in terms of just providing a massive economic boost — obviously to our whole province, but

certainly that part of the province — sometimes we forget the strength that we have in this province.

It reminded me as well . . . I saw a recent post from a gentleman by the name of Brad West. He's the mayor of Port Coquitlam and he was talking about — this is in British Columbia — and he was talking about, he was kind of saying Port Coquitlam's actually a resource town because of all the resources that come through.

And you know, I appreciate that perspective because in terms of improving our port infrastructure and moving our agricultural goods and certainly our potash quickly through the port of Vancouver to customers all over the world it made me think, boy, a lot of those resources passing through Port Coquitlam, coming from right here in Saskatchewan, coming from our agricultural producers, coming from our mining companies. Just really exciting.

You know, and it's interesting how the strength really translates into what government can activate for folks. And we've talked a lot about affordability. Certainly in the Throne Speech that features very heavily in terms of what government has been really working on since 2007 but continues to work on, and recognizing that this is a real pressure for people.

You know, the cost of living for everything, it has gone up. There's no doubt about that. You feel that when you rent a place or you buy a house or you go to the grocery store. We all feel that. You look at a vehicle right now. The price of a vehicle seems to be up significantly since I last bought one as well.

And as the government can continue to really, through the strength of the economy, ensure that life stays affordable for people is really important in terms of lowering the provincial tax that a family pays. You know, the Premier shared it in question period today, but you know, compared to 2007, a family, a household of four making \$100,000 is paying \$3,000 less a year in income tax.

We talk about, you know, indexing the provincial tax threshold every single year to make sure that there isn't that creep on affordability for families. Those are significant measures that we can't forget about in terms of how these tax changes, you know, affect folks on the lower end of the income spectrum in terms of taking them off the provincial tax roll completely. That makes a real difference for people in our community. I meet people like that in my constituency often who, you know, might be struggling with affordability but have been the recipient of many of these initiatives over the years.

You know, whenever we talk about affordability it's important not to look at Saskatchewan in a vacuum. And I know that's tough because oftentimes each 61 of us, we're focused on our constituency, our community. And then a little bit bigger, maybe our region of the province. And then Saskatchewan and our nice straight borders.

But you know, the reality is, when we think about affordability we have to always keep in mind what the alternatives are. What does it cost to live in Alberta? What does it cost to live in British Columbia? What does it cost to live in Ontario or the Maritimes or Quebec? And I think it's really important that as we debate affordability in this place and out in our communities, it's

important to remember what it costs to live in those places.

And you know, I'd like to talk a little bit more about some of the decisions made recently around coal-fired power in this province. But I think that decision that we've made recently as a government to refurbish those coal plants, that has a significant impact on affordability in terms of making sure that our SaskPower bills don't, you know, do a 2x, 3x, 4x.

And you know, other jurisdictions have gone down that road. They've shut down coal. They've seen the cost of power go up. And at the end of the day it might feel good to say that, that we got rid of coal-fired power. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? I care about the power bill that shows up in the mail, and I care about how that affects what I'm able to do with my income to support my family. And I know my neighbours and friends do as well.

Speaker Goudy: — It now being 5 o'clock, this Assembly stands recessed until 7 p.m. tonight. Thank you.

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

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

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

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
Seniors and Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Advanced Education

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Health

Hon. Daryl Harrison
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
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Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
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Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
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