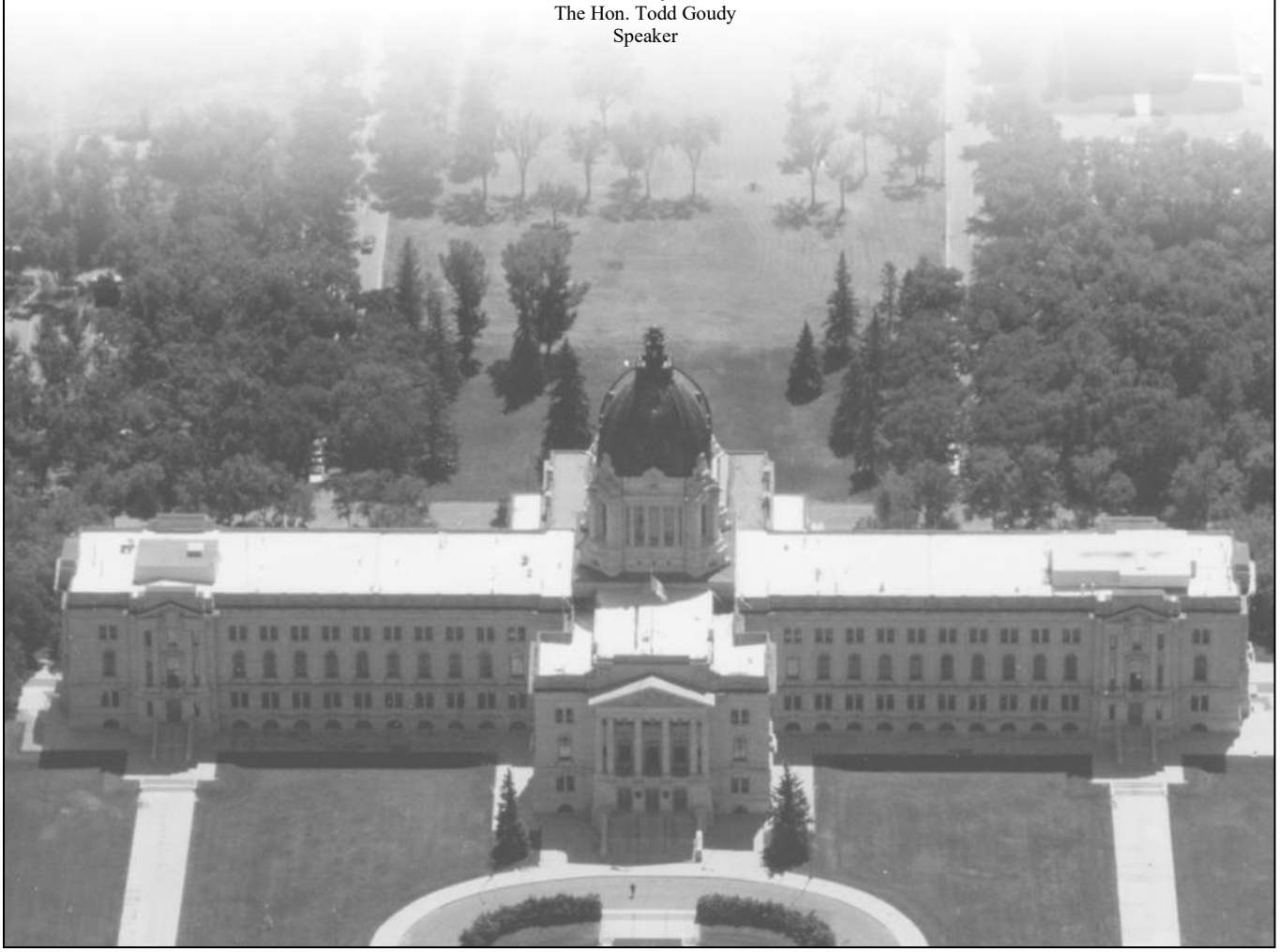
THIRD SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)
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authority of
The Hon. Todd Goudy
Speaker



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
3rd Session — 30th Legislature

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

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

Beaudry, Hon. Chris — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
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Blakley, Brent — Regina Wascana Plains (NDP)
Brar, Bhajan — Regina Pasqua (NDP)
Breckner, Kim — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)
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Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP)
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Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)
Crassweller, Brad — White City-Qu'Appelle (SP)
Gartner, Hon. Kim — Kindersley-Biggar (SP)
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Goudy, Hon. Todd — Melfort (SP)
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Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)
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Housser, Sally — Regina University (NDP)
Jenson, Hon. Terry — Warman (SP)
Jorgenson, Keith — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (NDP)
Kaeding, Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)
Kasun, Kevin — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)
Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)
Kropf, Barret — Dakota-Arm River (SP)
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Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)
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Martens, Hon. Jamie — Martensville-Blairmore (SP)
McBean, Don — Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis (NDP)
McLeod, Blaine — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)
McPhail, Jordan — Cumberland (NDP)
Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (Ind)
Patterson, Megan — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)
Pratchler, Joan — Regina Rochdale (NDP)
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Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
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Roy, Jacqueline — Regina Northeast (NDP)
Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Schmalz, Hon. Eric — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
Senger, Brittney — Saskatoon Southeast (NDP)
Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Thorsteinson, James — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)
Warrington, Darcy — Saskatoon Stonebridge (NDP)
Weedmark, Kevin — Moosomin-Montmartre (SP)
Weger, Hon. Michael — Weyburn-Bengough (SP)
Wilson, Hon. Sean — Canora-Pelly (SP)
Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Mount Royal (NDP)
Young, Aleana — Regina South Albert (NDP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Standings
Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 34; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 26; Independent (Ind) — 1

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Brad Crassweller, seconded by Travis Keisig, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Vicki Mowat.]

Speaker Goudy: — It now being 7 o'clock, I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Kim Gartner: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for that short break to give my voice a bit of a rest. But we're going to keep this going, Mr. Speaker.

The Kindersley-Biggar constituency is full of strong, steady rural communities with affordable living, affordable recreation, great career opportunities, and a great quality of life. In my constituency communities and businesses have their doors open. The opportunities are there to explore. This is what rural Saskatchewan has to offer: a strong quality of life and a steady commitment to family and community.

Mr. Speaker, our agriculture producers provide food for our families and the entire world. Protecting Saskatchewan farm land and farm landownership are priorities for our government. I know my own family farm is planning to transfer to the next generation. It is important that we ensure *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act* continues to meet the needs of the ag sector. A comprehensive review is being undertaken to hear from producers and the public as we look to secure the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, it is through a strong economy and strong partnerships that we foster strong communities. As a rural constituency, we recognize there are challenges with providing services into rural and remote communities. The attraction of health care professionals is one such challenge. Through partnerships, community join the Ministry of Health to discuss and enhance recruitment efforts that address specific local needs.

The continued expansion of the nurse practitioner program has been a lifeline for many rural and remote communities. Under the nurse practitioner primary care program, no less than 54 contracts have been signed, providing primary care access to more than 43,000 patients.

The expansion of more than 1,000 training seats for health professionals at our provincial universities will provide more homegrown care providers. We are supporting our Saskatchewan students with 88 per cent of the medical training seats coming from Saskatchewan. More than 7,500 doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals have been hired since 2022.

Under construction right now is the Virtual Health Hub, Canada's first Indigenous-led health care organization. This health hub will have the ability to provide real-time remote medical exams, robotic ultrasounds, remote X-rays, and diagnostic imaging, saving rural and remote residents travel and delays to immediate care. We have released our government's patients-first health care plan, a detailed plan with 50 action items towards improving access and better outcomes for Saskatchewan patients.

Mr. Speaker, I am so thankful for being appointed as Minister of Highways. It has allowed me the ability to connect to so many individuals in so many communities. Every highway is important. Every discussion is important. And I appreciate each and every one of them.

Growing up, we had two channels on our black-and-white TV. Limited television, to be sure, but quality programming like *The Littlest Hobo*, based on a dog that wandered about helping those in need. I've adopted a line from that theme song: "Every stop I take, I make a new friend." That's how I look at the Ministry of Highways.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is a province built by hard-working people. I am proud of each and every MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for their commitment to their constituency and for welcoming my team to their communities. I also have a new appreciation for the commitment and dedication that government ministers make as they meet and discuss sometimes very difficult issues.

I was travelling back from one such meeting. It just so happened to be my birthday. I was away from home and maybe feeling a bit melancholy after a long 10-hour day on the road. My phone rang, and over the Bluetooth connection was my two-year-old granddaughter, Clover. She proceeded to sing "Happy Birthday" to poppa for the benefit of everyone in the car. Mr. Speaker, the melancholy lifted, and I was reminded of why we give up time away from our family and from home and press forward in making our province the very best place to live, work, and raise a family.

From every corner of the province, Mr. Speaker, from the rural municipalities of Birch Hills, Buckland, Rosthern, and Claydon to the communities of Nipawin, Melfort, North Battleford, Swift Current, Kerrobert, La Loche, Creighton, Oxbow, Maple Creek, from every corner of the province, Mr. Speaker. I have travelled across the province, listening to local leaders, understanding their challenges, and discussing the infrastructure their communities need to succeed.

I've met with First Nations leadership, municipal councils, business leaders, and transportation professionals, engaging with industry providers like the Saskatchewan Trucking Association, the Western Canadian Shippers' Coalition, the Prince Rupert and Vancouver Fraser port authorities, and the industries that depend on their services. Each and every conversation has strengthened my understanding of what it takes to keep Saskatchewan moving.

But, Mr. Speaker, perhaps my most eye-opening experience did not happen in a boardroom or at a conference. It happened in the cab of a semi truck. I was able to travel Saskatchewan's northern transportation corridor with Northern Resource Trucking, hauling approximately 65,000 kilograms of diesel fuel. For two

days I saw our northern highways through the eyes of a truck driver. I experienced the long distances, the demanding conditions, and the responsibility of transporting essential supplies to northern communities and industries.

Mr. Speaker, you can read reports about highway conditions. You can study maps and review engineering assessments. But there is nothing quite like spending two days in a semi-truck to understand what our drivers experience every day. The journey gave me an even greater appreciation for the men and women who keep Saskatchewan supplied and connected. It reinforced why investments in highway infrastructure are so important to the people and the industries that depend on it.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to make significant investments in Saskatchewan's highway infrastructure to improve safety, strengthen trade corridors, and support our growing economy. Since 2008 we have invested more than $14.6 billion, improving more than 22 700 kilometres across Saskatchewan. These investments improve road safety, reduce travel delays, and ensure Saskatchewan's agricultural, energy, and resource sectors can move their products efficiently to markets. Mr. Speaker, we recognize there is more work to do, and we will continue investing in the infrastructure our communities and our industries depend on.

Mr. Speaker, engagement takes place every day. Whether that conversation is with the federal departments, municipal and community partners, with corporate executives, or just around the kitchen table, every conversation is important. My commitment is simple. I will continue to engage in conversation, listening and working to deliver results because, Mr. Speaker, you cannot build a strong and steady Saskatchewan by standing still. You build it by getting out there, understanding the challenges, making investments, and keeping Saskatchewan moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support policies that promote a strong, steady Saskatchewan. The opposition can mock the title of our Throne Speech, but reality bites hard because we are strong, steady Saskatchewan. I will be supporting the motion as moved by the member from White City-Qu'Appelle and seconded by the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood. I will not be supporting the amendment.

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

[Applause]

Don McBean: — Arrête, arrête. [Translation: Stop, stop.]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I started working on this response, and as always I'm kind of looking for a framework, something to hang it on — a patchwork quilt, a braid, you know, maybe. I have a favourite metaphor of an f-stop where, you know, you sort of close the lens and then open it up to the wider because it's always really important to have a different point of view on things. Zooming in; zooming out.

And it's hard for me to get done, so I'm glad that I'm standing up and getting done this evening because somebody stands up and says something else and I went, oh yeah, I want to respond to that or I want to make a point that . . . what they've said. At one point to help myself feel a little better about it all I took a look at my previous four 15-minute uninterrupted discourse and I was somewhat reassured that this stew — if not stream of consciousness — serves as a palatable pastiche of previous efforts worthy of print in the *Hansard*. And besides, GBAT [getting better all the time].

I'm relatively well prepared with some important points to be made, and just not to disappoint my fan club, rest assured there will be a few or more random tangents, song lyric references, stories from the '60s and '70s, and who knows, once I get started. And for everyone's reference, "GBAT" is the first song that I'm referencing. You'll ask if you want to know.

There are always a number of seemingly mandatory parts of our speeches, but as the title of this is the response to the Throne Speech, let's start with the Throne Speech. Well almost.

Before we came down last week lots of people were asking if I was excited for the Throne Speech. And I had to honestly say, not really. Actually not at all. This is the third Throne Speech that I get to listen to up close in person. The first one was okay, I guess this is what a Throne Speech sounds like. The second one confirmed my incredulity. Really? This is it? And now after two years up close to this process, I have pretty low expectation as to what a Throne Speech, or most messaging bills and budgets from the government, is going to deliver.

However I have learned that a catchy title is very important, and I've seen the billboards up for quite a while now. Strong and steady Saskatchewan was the message. I was curious how it had a certain similar ring to last year's strong, safe, and secure, which leads me to another song reference, two years running, s-s-s, and Kaa's song from *The Jungle Book* takes over, you know: "trust in me, just in me."

So maybe the repeated alliterative acronym is even on purpose. But the rest of it, 60 responses. Twenty-six of them pretty interesting. Thirty-four of them are broken records. And we do know what records are, right? A hundred billion of . . . a hundred billion of . . . a hundred billion of . . . But back to the matter at hand. Short answer: even with a low bar, this is disappointing.

An Hon. Member: — Right on, Don.

Don McBean: — Glad you like it.

Any messaging, any solution, problem solving, is just as much . . . includes what is said. Though in my experience what is not said, who is not at the table is just, and often more, loudly heard. But in fairness, I'll start with what is said. Okay. We say and we repeat, we're the best place to live anywhere in the world. And by the way that's due to the amazing work being done by the government. We have the biggest this and the best numbers on that.

And I'm not going to do a deep dive into the psychological profile that fosters this need to be the biggest. I mean I'm not saying that size matters or doesn't matter, but often what I witness all around me reminds me of the playground. And just saying, the kids who were the best, the strongest, the most beautiful, well often that behaviour was more problematic

than helpful.

And before I get smeared with accusations that I'm saying Saskatchewan isn't a great place to live, Saskatchewan is a great place to live. Bolded and underlined in larger font. Not because it's the biggest, the brightest — saying so might be pumping our tires, and at the same time when you do that, you're putting down everyone else, and everyone else believes that where they are is a good place to be — because Saskatchewan is a fantastic place because we live here.

And there's a great book, or at least a book with a great title: Jon Kabat-Zinn's *Wherever You Go, There You Are*. And here's where we are. And we're proud, and we're going to keep doing everything possible to know that all the stakeholders of the province — not just the corporate stakeholders of maybe Saskatchewan, maybe Canadian, very likely global entities — that every citizen of Saskatchewan that lives here, because they live here, benefits from the richness of this land and the honest effort of our work. And we'll keep working as hard as we're able to make this the best place possible and better every day.

[19:15]

And right along with the province, we have the best plan for the health care crisis which — to not point out something that I think must be pretty obvious — has to be accredited to the result of 20 years of government mismanagement. And how did they get away with blaming things on the '90s, ignore the debacle of the '80s, and then even go back so far as the '70s to hang more blame? Are we really so gullible? I don't think so.

There are 50 — count them — 50 points in the most ambitious plan ever. It happens to be the same number as Paul sang about in "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover," another song. Maybe we can turn that into 50 ways to leave the government. You know the first line of that song, no doubt:

"The problem is all inside your head," she said to me.

Whoops. I'm coming back on track, except to say that a version of health care reform, this time called patient first, is another shining example of putting shiny lipstick on a less-than-beautiful plan. And the name being so important kind of reminds me of the build schools faster legislation that we passed in the spring.

But you know, if one says something often enough, it becomes the truth. And the Sask Party government opposite went out of their way to send the words "patients first" to every household in the province and on billboards east to west, north to south. I'm not doing the numbers, but the cost of this self-promotion, this important promotion, you have to wonder how many LPNs [licensed practical nurse] or shifts of emergency rooms in rural locations that that could have kept open. I wonder if it's as many as 1,000, the number of interrupted services recorded since patients first was first announced. I have a hunch after question period today that if we asked for that number, it'll be buried behind a few levels deep of organization and others taking the responsibility.

Education. There is something in the Throne Speech about education. I don't really want to spend a lot of time on this because you know where I'm coming from — a retired principal, retired teacher. I'm still a teacher. I still want to introduce myself always as a teacher. And Bill 137, budget cutbacks, bad-faith negotiations . . . If you want to know what the Throne Speech does for education, read the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] response that came out that day or maybe the next day.

But I will however, given this opportunity, like to point out something that I've been waiting to say for a little while. This kindergarten-to-grade-3 literacy idea, ensuring that our children learn to read in early grades so that they can read to learn later on. Not sure I need to, but I'll point it out: this language, this program, this line of thinking, this catchy slogan was common language in teaching experience in the mid-double-oughts. It's been around a long time, and I guess it's encouraging — but not really — to see that an Education minister caught up with that enough to poach a catchy phrase and spin it like it's something new.

And we — well you know, I'm meaning the Sask Party government — are the captains of business, maybe the greatest masters of economic development ever known, certainly the best east to west in Canada. One hundred billion, did we mention this? One hundred billion. That is the promise of Saskatchewan. We are a rich province. We have resources. We have the manpower. We have bright people.

In this regard I might just stay with . . . Speaking at the port of Vancouver reception last week, I made a point of going out of my way to speak to two different board members and a couple of others, and asked them pretty directly, how do you feel about an NDP [New Democratic Party] government taking over in 2028? And they sort of looked and said, well what do you mean? I said, like would that be a worry to you? And they're like, no. Saskatchewan is still Saskatchewan. You still have all the resources. You still have all the things that we would like to be exporting that build a great Canada and the port of Vancouver, and, and, and.

And it was curious, very curious to me that in spite of that, we have members opposite today talking about us like we don't know . . . I don't know. I'm just going to stop there. Yeah, it's ridiculous and it's tarred on us, and they have the opportunity to put up posters everywhere, to put out mailing and talk about it like we don't know how to run an economy. And it just absolutely befuddles me how they can ignore that coming out of the last two long-term NDP governments there were balanced budgets. And we've always adopted . . .

[Applause]

Don McBean: — Thank you. Chance to drink.

So that's some of what is said, as leaky as it is. And what is not said? I didn't look at what time I started, so someone's going to tell me. I couldn't be that far along already. What is not said? The treaty land acknowledgement. It is amazing to me that at any public gathering, let alone the provincial legislature on the first day of a session, that there's not a land acknowledgement.

So I thank the MLA from Saskatoon Westview, who made a point of giving the acknowledgement that day, others who have followed up. With speaking of that I make special mention of the

member from Saskatoon Centre, who gave a very complete and thorough overview of what the treaties were and need to continue to be.

Last time I did this exercise; I did it again. I did a little control-F searching inside the Throne Speech. This time we find three examples of the combination of words "First Nation." Three of them. Count them. One of them is for increased policing with consultation of First Nations, one for consultation on the report on the wildfire debacle of 2025, and the third time was the title of the hon. member for Sask Rivers, who's also Minister Responsible for First Nations. Three times in the whole Throne Speech.

You know, I'm going to give myself the time to say I grew up in Swift Current, and I often say it's the whitest place in Saskatchewan. I didn't know any First Nations growing up. I grew up; I had a bit of an idea. I moved away for 13 years. When I came back in 2000 I said, if I'm going to live in Saskatchewan, I've got to understand what's going on with First Nations.

And right off the hop when I got my job with Saskatoon Public Schools and the treaty kits were coming out from the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, I took every opportunity, advanced through it. I did my master's with as much Indigenous, anti-racist, anti-oppressive education that I could. I was involved in that training of teachers, treaty education, and then beyond that. And it's just who Saskatchewan is. And to not acknowledge that is disturbing at the least.

There's a lot more, but it's hard to talk about what's not there because it's just not there. And even what is there is so thin and hung together with repeated slogans. I guess I could point out that the word "environment" doesn't arrive. Alternative energy development doesn't arrive. Yeah, we're the sunniest and windiest province in Canada, but you know, that's about something else.

Bit of a change of pace. A bit of family. You've heard a few times about Valérie, the love of my life, her health — 17 months in surgery, continued recovery. Continued. It's long and it's continuing. But I do thank members from both sides that ask frequently about it. Most of the rest of the family I've gone over. You know about various grandpas and grandchildren.

I will make a special point of Liam, three years old, in Saskatoon. So he's getting a little extra attention from his mamie and grandpa, especially Mamie. It's absolutely heart-filling to watch Valérie — Mamie — with Liam. It's her best time of every week, is when she's with him.

Big news: Dr. Sophie McBean and Dr. Reed Gillanders, both practising at Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert, got married this August at a lovely spot in the riding of Rosthern-Shellbrook at the Ness Creek Site. Fun, friends, family from coast to coast. You want to see a great family photo, check out our riding executive's fall newsletter. A good-looking bunch if I say so myself.

If we zoom in on the riding, a lot of time door knocking, as unglamourous as it is, it's honestly the best part of what we get to do. You know, people, they answer the door and they're like, "Whoa, no," and I'm like, "No, I'm your MLA." "What?" "I'm your MLA." And then you get to explain that. And people have a better tendency to listen. Not all of them. I'm just saying. And it just connects us to what's actually going on. It's affordability, over and over. There's the odd this or that, but it's affordability.

And there are those things that many members on this side have already eloquently and particularly well articulated. It's minimum wage, no relief at the pumps. And a repeated interesting observation to me is how regular middle class are slipping back. Because even if they have good contracts, they're not waiting four years for a contract. They have a contract, but their cost-of-living allowance or their cost-of-living adjustment doesn't match the actual cost of living. There is a large number of Crown corporation and public servants who are facing back-to-work legislation at 2, 2, 2. You can imagine what 2, 2, 2 does in terms of keeping ourselves at our living.

How much are we doing?

An Hon. Member: — One minute.

Don McBean: — Two.

An Hon. Member: — Two minutes.

Don McBean: — Two, because I've got to go way big. I've got to go way big and just acknowledge that we're Saskatchewan — we're Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis — but we live in this big world.

And the global geopolitics of the American reality and what happened as a high school protest starting in France, which spun into a multi-faceted protest all across and that has spread across all of Europe. The cockroach movement in India — if you don't know what I'm talking about, look it up. It's amazing. Someone makes a pejorative comment about unemployed, calling them cockroaches, and three months later ministers are resigning from the cabinet. There is movement out there.

We go there. We go there. Oh, I guess I have to skip that. I'm skipping this too. I did sort of time it. A bunch of things that I got to do because I do want to talk a bit about myself.

Ya' thi Néné Lands and Resources. Spent five summers up in northern Saskatchewan. Got to spend three days. First time since 1987 north of Waskesiu.

Un événement très spécial serait la soirée à Régina quand j'ai pu assister au Conseil économique et coopératif de la Saskatchewan. On est nombreux dans le caucus de Sask NDP qui se débrouillent en français. Que j'ai pu apporter un message de Carla Beck était bien sûr un honneur. Une soirée très agréable avec les leaders de business fransaskois.

[Translation: A very special event would be the evening in Regina when I was able to attend the Conseil économique et coopératif de la Saskatchewan. There are a number of us in the Sask NDP caucus that can get by in French. That I was able to bring a message from Carla Beck was indeed an honour. A very pleasant evening with the Fransaskois business leaders.]

[19:30]

Lots of travelling . . . Okay, I have a closer, so I better go to the

closer. I'm going to wrap.

If you were paying attention, and it seems like most of you are — this is important — did you notice that I made it all the way to the end without saying "tired and out of touch"? Rats. Another good intention missed. But you know, those five words just flow so well with the Sask Party government.

So I will not be supporting the government motion to adopt this predictable, repeated, and oh-so-disappointing Throne Speech, and I will support the motion from the member from Saskatoon Fairview, seconded by the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

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

Hon. Warren Kaeding: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes there's value in having AI [artificial intelligence] write your speech I guess. But anyway, Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank you for the opportunity really to be able to reply on the reply to the Throne Speech on behalf of my constituents of Melville-Saltcoats and for those that I represent as the Minister of Trade, Minister of Innovation, and certainly the Minister of Sask Liquor and Gaming.

Certainly I do want to show my appreciation for my very patient and tolerant wife, Carla, who has spent a lot of time alone, I think like so many other spouses here, maybe handling family vacations on her own or certainly at family gatherings on her own. But I think after 42 years she's still there, as supportive as she was on the first day that I met her, Mr. Speaker.

So I do want to thank you as well for your leadership and your guidance in navigating us through another interesting session, Mr. Speaker. I don't think many realize the work that you put in and your officials put in in what goes on kind of during and also between sessions, so I do want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and officials for the work that you do.

I also would like to thank our Premier for being that strong, steady leader that he is. Our Premier is recognized for his significant contributions across the country and literally around the world. You know, it doesn't matter if I'm with stakeholders or in our province or with federal ministers or officials halfway around the world, or whether I'm in China or in India, our Premier is held in very high regard for his very practical approach to getting things done.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to express my condolences to our Canadian Armed Forces members who were lost in that tragic incident in Wainwright. I'd also like to extend certainly our best wishes for the recovery of members. Mr. Speaker, my cousin's son was a military officer in Wainwright during that time. He's physically uninjured, but certainly has a number of friends that he is very, very concerned for at this time. So our thoughts and prayers certainly go out to all members of the Canadian Armed Forces certainly in Wainwright.

Mr. Speaker, I also need to thank our incredibly dedicated and very committed ministry staff, both in our office and certainly in the ministry. From our MAs [ministerial assistant] to our DM [deputy minister], you know, everyone is committed to this being more than just a nine-to-five job.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank the very good constituents of Melville-Saltcoats for their continued support of myself, our office, our government in their actions and policies that really help shape our province and makes our province better for them. Many thanks to my constituency assistants, Tim Ziola, and our newest addition, Lachlan Fisher, for supporting our constituents in such a positive way.

Mr. Speaker, ag producers once again brought in the harvest, whether it was grain or livestock or both. This was probably one of the most prolonged, agonizing harvests in recent memory. And I know in our constituency the spring certainly forced patience on our producers as they literally went through the too cold, too hot, too dry, too wet cycle, sometimes within the same week. And not everyone actually even finished planting in our constituency. Rains came really around the time that they were trying to finish planting and continued literally well into harvest with not many dry kernels — well really no dry kernels — harvested until October 1st.

I believe our area is 97.5 per cent completed harvest. Not sure if that last two and a half per cent is going to come in. But you know, on top of that, fuel prices, fertilizer, equipment, and parts escalating in prices which is definitely going to pressure margins. And as well we've got some pretty tough headwinds that they're looking at due to uncertainty around trade and tariff issues that are always going to be on their minds as they are planning already next year's crop. But if there's one thing that we know about our ag producers, Mr. Speaker, is that they are a very resilient bunch. And they will do it all again with optimism next spring.

I tell you if there was any positive that came about from such a challenging year is that we had many successful entrepreneurs start up some new businesses, the drone crop protection business. In fact I talked to one last night that sprayed over 12,000 acres with drones in the custom spraying business. Mr. Speaker, I had another young entrepreneur that seeded over hundreds of acres with drones in our constituency this year. So you know, I tell you we've come a long way from me emptying paper bags of fertilizer into a press drill, Mr. Speaker, and now we've got drones spraying and seeding crops.

Strong, steady economy, Mr. Speaker. You know, as I looked around the Assembly during the Throne Speech, I tell you, on our government benches, at the various receptions after I saw a group of business leaders, I saw executives, I saw entrepreneurs, and I saw community builders. And I was reminded of something really important, and that's economic growth simply does not happen because a government announces a strategy. It happens because people decide to invest. They decide to expand, to hire, to innovate, to take risks, and really build something for the long term.

And government has the responsibility to help make those decisions easier. We need a competitive business environment really to access markets, to have reliable infrastructure. We need sensible regulations. And we also need to make sure that Saskatchewan's voice is heard when decisions are made outside of our borders that affects the jobs and investments here at home.

And that is the work that we do at the Ministry of Trade and Export Development. And tonight I want to discuss really three things that helps build and contribute to that strong, steady

economy that was referred to in the Throne Speech, and that is: what does Saskatchewan really bring to the world, how are we going to navigate a more uncertain trading environment, and really where is that next set of opportunities that lies within our province.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot say it often enough: Saskatchewan has really what the world needs. But having those valuable resources is really only part of the equation. We must also be trusted partners, we must be competitive suppliers, and we need to be effective advocates for free and fair trade.

This is not always the case, Mr. Speaker. During the dark days of the NDP there was no growth, there was no investment, and the largest employer in the province was the government. Yes, you balanced budgets, but you forgot to invest in infrastructure, you forgot to stimulate the economy, and really you forgot to keep people to stay in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we start from a position of real strength here. Saskatchewan exported more than $43.7 billion of goods in 2025, reaching more than 160 countries. Skill-testing question for a couple of members that really are chirping from their seats, Mr. Speaker: how many countries are actually represented? How many countries does the United Nations recognize in the country, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

Speaker Goudy: — Member from Saskatoon Meewasin, would you please come to order.

Hon. Warren Kaeding: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we currently trade with over 160 countries in the world. The United Nations recognizes 190 countries. So we currently have 30 countries we currently don't do business with, so we have a bit of work ahead of us, Mr. Speaker. So we rank second among Canadian provinces for exports on a per capita basis, and that is a significant achievement for a province our size, Mr. Speaker. We're punching well above our weight.

So let's think about what's behind those numbers. Our farmers grow the food that families rely on around the world. Our potash helps producers around the world grow their crops. Our uranium contributes to energy security in so many countries outside of ours. Our energy industry supplies markets that continue to need dependable resources and are begging for more. And our manufacturers, our researchers, our tech companies create sophisticated products and solutions that travel well beyond our provincial boundaries.

And that strength in Saskatchewan does not stop at the farm gate or that mine site. It includes the manufacturing and supply equipment, the trucking companies that move products, the engineers who solve problems, the lenders who finance expansion, and the service farms that make the whole economy work.

At the same time, we must be clear about those challenges. Export value is affected by commodity prices, by demand, by trade policy, and transportation costs. The fact that we have a strong export economy does not mean every sector or every business is having an easy year. In fact our 2025 merchandise export value was lower than the previous year, and we can acknowledge that plainly that while recognizing that Saskatchewan businesses remain competitive and they remain resilient.

Our job is not to pretend that uncertainty does not exist. It is to reduce the uncertainty that we can influence, that we can help business manage what remains, and continue to make a very compelling case for investment in Saskatchewan.

The United States is our largest export customer. In 2025 Saskatchewan sold approximately 23.7 billion dollars' worth of goods to the US [United States], accounting for just over 50 per cent — 54 per cent of our international merchandise exports. That relationship is really far more than a number on a spreadsheet. For many businesses, the border is part of their daily operating model. Their suppliers, their customers, their employers, and production schedules really depend on goods moving efficiently. And an unpredictable tariff or a delay at the border really can interrupt decisions made months or even years earlier. And that is why we have consistently advocated for open and for fair and predictable trade.

Tariffs are not a growth strategy, Mr. Speaker. They add costs, they create uncertainty, and they certainly make it harder for companies on both sides of the border to plan and to certainly invest. And we understand that the United States will pursue what it sees as its national interests, but Saskatchewan must be equally clear about ours. CUSMA [Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement] remains in force while the countries continue the review process and address outstanding issues.

And that is what members on this side do in every conversation with our stakeholders, with other Canadian and American colleagues, when we're at MLC [Midwestern Legislative Conference], or at PNWER [Pacific NorthWest Economic Region], or at NASCO [North American Strategy for Competitiveness] or the many other engagements that this side does with the elected and business colleagues across the planet.

For Saskatchewan the goal is not to win a headline for one week like we quite often see with our opposition members as they're doing with almost all of their policies, Mr. Speaker. The goal is to preserve durable market access and an integrated North American economy. Businesses need a rules-based framework that lasts long enough to make decisions about equipment, facilities, contracts, and people.

And we're going to continue to communicate our interest to the federal government, our provincial colleagues, American decision makers, businesses that understand, really, the value of our relationship. And the best argument that we have for Saskatchewan is often a practical one. Our exports contribute to food security, energy security, and the productivity of our trading partners. And we're not selling a commodity. We are helping customers meet essential needs.

So at the same time, really that strong relationship we have with the United States cannot be our only strategy. Diversification is a practical way to manage risk and certainly to create new demand. It's not about turning our backs on our closest trading partner. It's about ensuring that Saskatchewan firms have more doors open to them.

So we saw encouraging evidence of this in 2025. Exports to markets outside of Saskatchewan's three largest destinations grew by over 27 per cent. Brazil, Japan, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Mexico, Bangladesh were among the markets that showed significant gains. And these markets are not interchangeable, Mr. Speaker. Each has different customers. Each has different trade rules. They have infrastructure requirements. Certainly they all have different opportunities.

So in Brazil, potash is really part of the story. Japan, demand for our agri-food products really demonstrates the value of very long-standing commercial relationships. Mexico offers opportunities within our North American supply chains. And other regions really offer potential for machinery, advanced manufacturing, ag tech, and certainly value-added products.

Our nine international trade and investment offices, along with partners such as the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership really helped build those connections, and they also identify opportunities. A trade mission or a meeting alone is not a measure of success. We certainly cannot do this by a Zoom or a Teams call, a method often suggested by our opposition members. No, what matters is whether an exporter finds a customer, finds an investor who chooses Saskatchewan, or a relationship that becomes a contract, Mr. Speaker.

But that time is certainly here for Saskatchewan with over $100 billion being invested in over 60 capital projects. I know they hate that when we say that, Mr. Speaker, but that is where we're at right now in our province — $100 billion of private sector investment here that's happening, that's ongoing.

[19:45]

I tell you right now our province is hitting its investment stride, Mr. Speaker. And when we get investment like that, that brings in tax revenue both directly and indirectly, that certainly provides those resources that we need to build things like hospitals, like care homes, and certainly schools. That revenue brings in resources to add more health professionals and more teachers, Mr. Speaker. And this is what is going to be contributing to building a new integrated care facility in Esterhazy or doing a major capital upgrade at the Esterhazy High School or building daycares like Away We Grow in Melville or the Little Miners in Esterhazy.

Unfortunately we have an opposition that wants a moratorium in economic growth, Mr. Speaker. And that's shades of the '90s all over again, Mr. Speaker.

We also need to recognize that diversification takes time. It takes time. It requires market intelligence. It requires an understanding of local conditions, logistics, financing, and trusted relationships, Mr. Speaker. So for smaller companies those hurdles can be quite significant, and that's why a coordinated approach to this support really matters, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why our incredibly talented and motivated team of officials, they do that every day in the Ministry of Trade and Export Development day in, day out, and actually often through the nights and on the weekends, Mr. Speaker. So thank you to Richelle Bourgoin, to Tiffany Stephenson, Ryan Cossitt, Aaron Wirth, our entire team, their entire team. Our entire team for helping build a strong Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Agriculture, it's always going to be central to our story, Mr. Speaker. Our producers are globally competitive. Our pulse groups, our grains, canola, food ingredients — they reach customers every day around the world.

But we also want to capture a lot more of that value by creating those products through processing close to home, through innovation, related manufacturing here at home, Mr. Speaker. So we built a huge, value-added industry all through the province, including this Yorkton-Melville area, Mr. Speaker, I tell you, where we've got canola crushing. We've got state-of-the-art oat processing. We have flax milling. We have pea fractionation and we have wheat milling. There's a huge meat processing facility, packaging farm. There's shortline equipment manufacturing, Mr. Speaker.

All these are great, tremendous examples of how we're supporting that ag value-added industry by providing incentives and programs that lead to an ever-increasing GDP [gross domestic product] in our province, Mr. Speaker.

There's that similar opportunity in critical minerals. Potash, uranium, certainly are established strengths right now, but we're seeing that in rare earth elements now, critical minerals like helium, lithium, copper — all increasingly tied to supply chain security, advanced technology, and industrial policy.

Saskatchewan has a chance to participate, not just in resource extraction — which we're very good at, Mr. Speaker — but in processing and in the research in the higher value parts of the supply chain. And that work is being done at our research facilities, our state-of-the-art, really world-class research facilities like the Sask Research Council, VIDO [Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization], Sylvia Fedoruk centre, PTRC [Petroleum Technology Research Centre], Canadian Light Source, Crop Development Centre, the Food Industry Development Centre, quanTA Centre, PAMI [Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute], and so many more facilities that we have throughout our province, Mr. Speaker. And we cannot forget our universities and our Sask Polytech who are being recognized around the globe for their abilities to problem solve and create solutions.

The same applies to really sectors such as our nuclear technology, Mr. Speaker, ag technology, our advanced manufacturing, digital innovation. We should not think of these as separate from our traditional strengths. In many cases they grow out of the expertise that we already have, Mr. Speaker. An ag machinery business right now can become an exporter of advanced equipment. A resource sector challenge can create new technology companies, Mr. Speaker. An investment in processing can create demand for construction, for engineering, for power, logistics, and local suppliers.

And certainly the defence and aerospace sector is building momentum in our province, Mr. Speaker. Our Indigenous companies are extraordinarily successful in that space, with companies like Des Nedhe Group Defence, Pro Metal Industries, Xtended Hydraulics, just to name a few of those Indigenous companies currently building components for countries that we support around the world in the defence and aerospace sector.

But we also have companies in this sector that are operating in small centres, like PWM in Yorkton, or Vale Industries in Indian Head, or Capital I Industries in Tisdale, just to name a few of the many that are involved in this new sector.

And this is how an export economy becomes broader and more resilient, Mr. Speaker. Success is not simply by more volume leaving the province. It is more opportunity, more highly skilled work, and certainly more value being created here, Mr. Speaker.

And that is the role that Innovation Saskatchewan provides. They are dedicated, dedicated to empowering innovators and certainly supporting our very vibrant tech sector and research community. They are stimulating innovation. They are stimulating innovation and enhancing the opportunities that are new and that our start-up companies are really looking for when they are establishing here.

And we are attracting them in droves, Mr. Speaker. They could easily be a small business that may be found in Saltcoats and maybe supports our building trades. Or maybe it's in Langenburg supporting health care and health services. Or it could be a very small innovative business in Esterhazy or Lemberg that supports our ag and mining sector, Mr. Speaker.

We also have a lot of unfinished business here in Canada. At a time when companies face more uncertainty internationally it makes sense to maintain . . . to reduce these unnecessary barriers that we have between our provinces and our territories, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has worked and done significant work with our provincial and territorial governments to reduce internal trade obstacles and support mutual recognition. And this basic principle is simple: where a product or a service already meets an appropriate standard in one part of Canada, businesses should not automatically have to repeat an unnecessary approval process somewhere else.

So of course, we need to have those safeguards for health, safety, and public interest. They remain important, Mr. Speaker. But those duplications really serve no useful purpose. They cost time and money. And for a small business deciding whether they want to expand beyond Saskatchewan, even the slightest regulatory friction can be a real obstacle, Mr. Speaker.

Competitiveness is also about fundamentals: access to talent, transportation infrastructure, affordable and reliable energy, and certainly a reasonable regulatory environment and confidence in the government that is going to be there to be that constructive partner. And that is what builds a strong and steady Saskatchewan. These issues are really not as dramatic as an international tariff announcement, but they are often important where capital is deployed and whether a company can grow. And we should never underestimate their importance.

It took well over a decade in this province once the NDP opposition finally left the seats of government before industry felt secure enough, Mr. Speaker, to invest here once again. Investment that eventually came back to the Melville-Saltcoats area with multi-billion dollar investments in our potash industry, Mr. Speaker.

We've been leading this country in breaking down interprovincial trade barriers. We've reduced that time to accept out-of-province accreditation to under 30 days now, Mr. Speaker. And that is significant. We're an early adopter of direct-to-consumer alcohol sales, working with British Columbia as early as 2015, allowing wine and spirits to be delivered direct to consumers here in Saskatchewan. And right now, we're continuing to work with other provinces now that are very like-minded in that same thought process.

But Mr. Speaker, I introduced legislation in 2025 called *The Saskatchewan Internal Trade Promotion Act* that is developed to reduce domestic trade barriers and enable mutual recognition of goods, services, and regulatory standards from other Canadian provinces and territories. And that work is ongoing, and it's going to expedite the movement of trades and goods into this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many items that I could ultimately be referring to in our Throne Speech that I could reflect on, discuss the relevance to my constituency and our province, but I do know that my time is running out.

But I do want to highlight one of the amendments that we are making to *The Traffic Safety Act*, which is ultimately to enhance the existing administrative penalties for impaired driving through enhanced enforcement and stronger penalties, Mr. Speaker.

I have travelled with both detachments that currently serve the constituency of Melville-Saltcoats. And this change is certainly being looked at very favourably with our RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers and law enforcement. It is going to significantly reduce the amount of time that is needed for administration enforcing the law and ultimately gets these officers back in the field to continue the great work that they're doing making our streets and our roads safer, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has always succeeded by producing things that people need and by building relationships with people who need them. And that is still our advantage. The world needs dependable food. It needs fertilizer. It needs energy, critical minerals, and innovative solutions, Mr. Speaker. And Saskatchewan can deliver each and every one of those.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we saw in the Throne Speech, if we protect our existing relationships, if we develop new ones, if we remove unnecessary barriers and ultimately continue to create the right conditions for investment, I am confident — I am extremely confident — that we can blow the roof off of this province, Mr. Speaker, where we are going to continue to build a stronger, more diversified economy that is going to make our province so much better for our kids and our grandkids and our friends and our neighbours. We can confidently answer that question when we leave here — yes, we left this province in much better condition than when we found it, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd certainly like to conclude my remarks here tonight. I want to be on record as supporting the Throne Speech certainly moved by the MLA for White City-Qu'Appelle, seconded by the MLA from Last Mountain-Touchwood. And I will not support any proposed amendments being proposed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Sally Housser: — Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to be up once again in the coveted evening slot, although I think this year we're not also in the bottom of the eighth inning of a World Series game. So I'm sure there's thousands more people watching this evening than were last year.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'm rising today with the extreme honour and privilege of responding to the Speech from the Throne on behalf of the great constituents of Regina University. Whenever I stand in this house, I'm reminded of the awe I feel at the responsibility of representing so many wonderful people. I'd like to recognize right from the beginning the work of my incredible constituency assistant, Daisy Bowman. She is such a star. In addition to the tremendous work she does for the constituents of Regina University, she is also such a passionate community volunteer and gives so much to helping some of the city's most vulnerable people.

I would like to also shout-out our very hardworking caucus staff who keep the MLAs hopping morning, noon, and night. And of course send much love to my family both here in Regina and further away. We all know that we don't do this alone.

Mr. Speaker, much of my previous connection to politics has been on the strategic or communication or the electioneering side, some might say the more cynical side of the political process. So it has been such a joy, since being elected, to get to experience so many genuine community connections.

Since we last spoke, I was able to attend both the University of Regina's spring convocation and this year's orientation week. And, Mr. Speaker, I will have to confess that speaking in front of about 1,000 first-year university students remains one of the most nerve-racking things that I've ever experienced in my life.

But I have such tremendous pride, and I have often thought that the name of my constituency should be Regina universities because not only do I have the privilege of representing the great institution of Regina university but also First Nations University and the Sask Polytechnic Regina campus, Mr. Speaker.

I got to attend the most wonderful time of the year in Regina: Mosaic festival, where we get to truly experience our province's motto come to life: "from many peoples, strength." Mr. Speaker, at Riders games, the newly reinvigorated Regina Folk Festival, the dragon boat festival, Regina Pride, and — perhaps my favourite as it takes place in my constituency at the Victoria Square mall — the Taste of the Philippines festival. Once again I was treated to so much great food, great music, and so many wonderful conversations with folks in the Filipino community, who contribute so much to this city and this province.

All these great community events were of course in addition to knocking on hundreds of doors across Regina University. I heard many concerns about our crumbling health care system, the chaos the government has created in child care, the very real struggle with affordability, and people who have worked hard their whole lives falling further and further behind.

And of course I've increasingly heard issues with the Sherwood data centre that is just on the border with the constituency. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that just this afternoon after it emerged in the news that the Trump family has significant interests in the two data centre tenants, I've already been contacted by people who are very concerned about that troubling new development.

But I also just wanted to say a genuine thank you to the people of Regina University, who are almost universally lovely when I knock on their door. One of my favourite things about door knocking, Mr. Speaker, is talking with somebody who says, you know what, I didn't vote for you last time, but I sure appreciate you stopping by. Because regardless of how somebody voted, it is my privilege to represent them, and I'm going to continue to work hard each and every day to ensure that I earn their vote next time around.

Mr. Speaker, it's another great privilege of mine to hold the Energy and Resources and SaskEnergy portfolio for the official opposition. In the past months, I was able to attend both the Weyburn oil and gas show and the Lloydminster Heavy Oil Show. In addition to the pride and excitement you hear from that industry, I'm always blown away with how rapidly new technologies are being developed. It's wild because I did some work with Enbridge and Imperial Oil, you know, just about a decade ago, and the innovation, the pace of advancement in that industry is really something that is incredible to see.

[20:00]

I also got to participate in all of the great events of Saskatchewan Mining Week. And I'd like to thank the Saskatchewan Mining Association and in particular a thank you to outgoing president of the SMA [Saskatchewan Mining Association], Pam Schwann, now thankfully a member of the board of directors for the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority. I'd love to thank Pam for all the tremendous work she's done to champion our mining industry.

And I was particularly impressed with the mining rescue competition that took place in Saskatoon. If you haven't had a chance to attend, I highly recommend. You have people from all the different mine sites in the province competing to show off their skills and, you know, to witness that technical expertise, the commitment and passion for safety of so many workers. And to see their pride in the evening at the awards ceremony was really something else.

You know, to get on to the Throne Speech itself, I always think that the best way to talk about it is to talk about what I hear across those hundreds of households that I speak to over the course of the break. You know, a Throne Speech rarely comes with a lot of detail, but what we do hope to see is something with vision, priorities, or at the very least a base understanding of what the people of this province are facing.

It's obvious from the government's Throne Speech that they're living in a totally different province than the one that the average Saskatchewan person is. The absolute disconnect of the government continuing to insist that life in Saskatchewan couldn't be rosier when the economic anxiety, the crumbling health care system, our high rates of crime, and the increasing number of people struggling to make ends meet tells the real story.

Mr. Speaker, it was not lost on me that at the very moment the Throne Speech was being delivered, that some of our most

vulnerable people were being displaced from a park. They were moved with nowhere to go. No one wants to be there, Mr. Speaker, and the moving of those people only serves to decrease the level of safety in our downtown core.

Mr. Speaker, it's rare that you can point to one single policy decision that has such an immediate effect, but in the case of the government changing the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] payments direct to landlords, they directly took what was already a problem in this province and made it a crisis. That's something that they could reverse tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, do you know how wrong you have to be about a policy decision to have both landlords, mental health and addictions advocates, and homelessness advocates telling you that you made a mistake and you should reverse that? Mr. Speaker, I would urge them to listen to all those people telling them. There is no harm in saying, "We made a mistake; this is not going well," and make the change tomorrow, reverse that policy decision. It would make an immediate difference in the crisis we are facing now in the cores of our cities, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the things I hear most about on the doorstep is of course the state of our health care system. And to hear this government try to rehash their patients-first plan for the fifth time is frankly insulting to the people who have seen health care continue to decline at an alarming rate. Mr. Speaker, there was 1,000 health care workers on the step of this legislature last week. And in order to even begin addressing the problems that we see in our health care system, those workers need a fair deal now.

Mr. Speaker, 6 out of 10 people in this province don't have a family doctor. We have the worst surgical wait times. And to hear the Throne Speech brag about the urgent care centre that was supposed to be open 24 hours a day to relieve pressures off our emergency rooms that are now sometimes not even open on the weekend or close at 4, Mr. Speaker, to hear them brag about that is laughable.

Mr. Speaker, on to my passion of course and my portfolio, which is our energy and resource sector. And again I've had such a privilege to be down a kilometre underground in Esterhazy and up in Cigar Lake in the uranium mine and solution mine. And I was up in the Athabasca Basin in August. But I want to give a particular shout-out to the potash industry, as they've weathered some of the more insane comments from south of the border, most recently that somehow we are going to manage to replace Saskatchewan's great potash all from Belarus. Just an absolute ridiculous statement.

But to the potash industry and really our entire resource industry, their ability to have weathered these tremendously tumultuous times of the past couple years is really something quite impressive, you know.

And across our resource sector there is so much excitement about what we can achieve here in Saskatchewan. But I've also heard increasing concerns that the government is lagging on some of the basic logistics required to reach our full potential.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know this government has never met an MOU [memorandum of understanding] that it didn't want to sign, but in order to get some of these big things done, we have to take care of the details. There are growing concerns at our northern mining operations that the lack of investment in road and highway infrastructure puts both supply chain logistics as well as the safety of workers and the environment at risk. Mr. Speaker, this is the most critical trade-enabling infrastructure that we need, and cutting 23 million from the northern roads in the last budget is just one example of the lack of foresight from this government.

And I'd also like to give a quick shout-out to Shantel Lipp and Brian Morsky, who I had a chance to talk to at the Sask Heavy Construction Association. Brian's actually a constituent of mine. He said he'd be watching this evening. I don't know if I believe him, but if he is: hello, Brian. But give them a shout-out for the tremendous work that they continue to do in this province to advocate for that investment in that critical trade-enabling infrastructure — namely, our roads and highways.

You know, we also know that we're going to need a lot more power. Our resource industries are forward-looking. They're looking to the future, and they know there's tremendous potential and excitement around our nuclear industry to meet that demand. We also know that we're going to need more natural gas, but people are worried about how we're going to meet that demand. How do we afford to build nuclear, build more natural gas, and also maintain our increasingly old and crumbling current natural gas infrastructure? How are we going to do that when we're shovelling $26 billion into end-of-life coal plants, Mr. Speaker?

We also know that we need many more workers in the building trades in years to come. It's been referred to as a looming labour force gap. But you know, I actually talked to one First Nations leader at George Gordon. He said, "We don't actually have a labour gap. What we have is a skills gap, and our building trades are the best people to be able to fill that gap. They're ready, willing, and able to do the training. They just need a partner in the government to make that happen."

But really, the best thing to do to ensure that we have a homegrown Saskatchewan labour force for generations into the future is to make sure that on all these major projects, it is a Saskatchewan ironworker, sheet metal worker, or our other building trades that are first in line for the jobs, and we're not seeing these contracts go out of province when we have workers right here at home that are ready, willing, and more than able to get the job done. We have to show the young people of this province that if they learn a trade, they are first in line for that job, and not somebody coming in from BC [British Columbia] or Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we're so blessed in this province to have the tremendous resources that we do, and the people of this province have genuine pride in the bounty that they own. But there's a problem. People see that we have all these riches, but they also see that the math isn't adding up.

We have the uranium, potash, oil and gas, critical minerals, and rare earth elements, and so much more. So how is it possible, Mr. Speaker, that what we have to show for all of that is an extra $20 billion in debt in just eight short years? Mr. Speaker, how is it possible with all those resources that we have one of the lowest minimum wages in the country, the highest rates of child poverty and hunger, one of the lowest rates of literacy? How is it possible

that 6 out of 10 people don't have a family doctor, that we have the highest rate five years running — or six years running now — of people defaulting on their mortgages? How is it possible that we have the highest rates of financial anxiety in this country?

What's the answer, Mr. Speaker? This government's shocking fiscal mismanagement and waste, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the government frequently talks about GDP and private investment and our credit rating, and those are of course very important metrics when we talk about our economy. But those metrics don't mean a thing when the average person in Saskatchewan does not see the benefit. You cannot eat GDP, and Moody's credit rating is not going to pay your bills, Mr. Speaker.

They've forgotten about the economy that truly matters, and that's the economy that is built at the thousands of kitchen tables across this province every single day, Mr. Speaker. The audacity to stand up in this legislature and say we have the best economy ever but at that very moment hundreds of our city's most vulnerable are being displaced. The entitlement to tell people that they've never had it so good when we have the highest rates of child poverty and hunger in the country. The disconnect, Mr. Speaker.

This is a government that is out of touch. This is a government that has lost its way. But they will continue to tell people that they shouldn't expect more. They will continue to tell people that they should not see the value of our resources in their pockets.

The Saskatchewan NDP is here to tell you that you can expect better, better is possible, and that you should be demanding more. That we can do big things and also see the people of this province benefit, Mr. Speaker.

This is not a government that is strong, Mr. Speaker. This is not a government that is steady. And what this province is really ready for is an NDP premier come 2028, Mr. Speaker. It's time for change and change is a-coming.

And with that, I will not be supporting the Throne Speech motion from the government, and instead I will be supporting the amendment motion from my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview, seconded by my colleague from Regina Walsh Acres. Thank you very much.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

David Chan: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be on my feet in this Chamber once more and grateful to be on Treaty 4 territory.

When I first started in this role, one of the things that was said to me by Premier and other colleagues is there's no other job like this. It's a unique and humbling privilege and one which we ought never to take for granted. Those words have stuck with me, and I have found that to be true.

And I just want to take a moment to say how thankful I am to my team, to my supporters who've been with me heart and soul, and to my family. Without them I wouldn't be able to do what I'm doing now. And also grateful for my constituents, who've trusted me with this amazing privilege to serve them here in the Chamber to represent them.

Well what incredible times we're living in — exciting times and challenging times, both. We have never seen such global uncertainty and destabilization, and at the same time such unprecedented opportunity for investment, growth, and prosperity.

I want to start by quoting from Ecclesiastes 3. Here's what it says:

> For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant, a time to harvest; a time [it says here in verse 3] to kill and a time to heal; a time to tear down, a time to build up; a time to cry and a time to laugh; a time to grieve and a time to dance; a time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace and a time to turn away; a time to search and a time to quit searching; a time to keep and a time to throw away; a time to tear and a time to mend; a time to be quiet and a time to speak; a time to love and a time to hate; a time for war and a time for peace.

Mr. Speaker, for everything there is a time. As this passage describes, there is a season for every activity. How foolish it would be to plant during winter. And I would submit to you and through you to this Chamber that every season requires a response. But right now it is the time to come together, work together, and get things done for the people we serve; to focus on what unites us, not what divides us; to look forward and be positioned for what comes next.

Mr. Speaker, what you have seen, what I have seen, what we all have seen from this government is consistency — consistency in recognizing the times we are in and doing what those times call for. For example, Mr. Speaker, when our Premier stood up for the people of Saskatchewan against the Trudeau Liberal-NDP carbon tax, it was for those times the right thing to do. And now when our Premier works across the aisle, in a manner of speaking, with the Carney Liberal government to get nation-building projects moving forward, projects that will bring investment into Saskatchewan and Canada, Mr. Speaker, it is for these times the right thing to do.

And when the president of the United States put tariffs on our exports, and our Premier, despite mounting pressure, refused to engage in a battle of words and ego, instead focused on diplomacy, influence, and working toward a solution, choosing to prioritize our workers and their jobs over political ego, Mr. Speaker, that was the right thing to do.

And yet later when that same US president signalled the shift to buying potash from Belarus instead of Saskatchewan and our Premier called it out for what it is — ludicrous — Mr. Speaker, that was also the right thing to do.

[20:15]

There is a time for everything and we are living in extraordinary times. Who could have predicted all the events we've seen unfolding around the world these past two years? Wars involving Ukraine, Russia, countries across the Middle East. Disruption and uncertainty around shipping routes, like the Suez Canal and

the Strait of Hormuz, squeezing our supply chains. The threat of a China-Taiwan conflict and what that would mean for the rest of the world caught between two global superpowers, China and the US. And who could have foreseen tariffs from our closest ally and most important trading partner?

The world is uncertain, Mr. Speaker, but here's the good news: Saskatchewan is not. While the world is unravelling, we are building. While the world is in turmoil, we are investing. While the world is fracturing, we are coming together. Mr. Speaker, in these times, for this province, that is exactly the right thing to do — come together, work together, get things done, and build for our future. That's strong and steady.

Another perfect example, Mr. Speaker: our government recently signed an MOU with our neighbours Alberta, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories to better integrate our power grids to secure reliable, affordable electricity and move steadily toward a nuclear-powered future. I want to speak to that for a moment.

Here's why that matters. In my younger days, my father was involved in exporting Brown, Boveri generators to the Philippines. At that time the country was coming out of a severe economic recession and entering an upward trajectory, hungry and ready for growth. And what was the number one input that they needed to turn that opportunity into economic activity on the ground? You may have already guessed it, Mr. Speaker — power.

Mr. Speaker, that connection matters here too. Opportunity requires the infrastructure to support it. Our world is in a time of great chaos, but that chaos is also creating tremendous opportunity and Saskatchewan is ready for it. We have what the world needs. The world will always need food, and food production will always need fertilizer. But there's another F-word in what we offer — fuel. Not just any fuel. We have the fuel of the future, uranium, and lots of it.

No matter what happens around the globe or across international relations, as long as there are people who need to eat and buy things and go places, markets around the world will need food, fertilizer, and fuel. And as the demand for power continues to increase, as it is now by orders of magnitude, the world will not just need any fuel; it will need our fuel. Mr. Speaker, if we are using corporate speak we might say the future is ours. Saskatchewan is strong, steady, and ready to claim the prosperity our people need and deserve. And this didn't just happen by accident. If you sow in a time of sowing, you can better expect a harvest in the time of harvest.

Strong, stable economic policy. Investment in infrastructure. Intentional reduction of red tape. Opening trade offices and expanding our export markets. A growth and affordability-minded tax structure. These are deliberate actions by this government over the past 18 years that have positioned our province to weather today's storms. Strong and steady. And yes, Mr. Speaker, our province, our businesses, our industries, our workers, we are ready to capitalize on the opportunities that are abundant in this province, our province.

But don't take my word for it. Take the word of the LDC's [Louis Dreyfus Company] CEO [chief executive officer]. Earlier this year I attended the grand opening of LDC's expansion in Yorkton. During the tenure of this government, our Saskatchewan Party government, this company has invested $750 million into its production facilities in Yorkton, placing its largest capacity canola crushing facility right here in Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

Their most recent expansion was a $250 million investment. Well, Mr. Speaker, I asked him, why Yorkton? Why Saskatchewan? LDC operates all around the world. They could choose any jurisdiction in which to invest. Why choose here? Why choose us? His answer: confidence. Because they have confidence in Saskatchewan farmers. They know they can rely on our ag producers to deliver consistently, reliably, and at scale.

They have confidence in their partnership with our provincial government and our approach to creating a stable economic and regulatory environment for the long term, confidence in our provincial and regional highways and in our stable, reliable, affordable, provincially owned and operated SaskPower, all supporting the economic ecosystem that this kind of investment requires. And because, Mr. Speaker, in his words, trust has been earned.

He explained that a major capital investment like this is a commitment to a long-term partnership. And they would not have made that commitment if they didn't have trust in our government, in our producers, and in our province. Mr. Speaker, trust has been earned. That's what I call strong, steady Saskatchewan.

And LDC is not alone in that confidence. You've heard the saying, put your money where your mouth is. Well more than 60 major private capital projects worth over $100 billion are doing just that — yes, Mr. Speaker, 100 billion with a B. This is the scale of investment that is happening in our province. That is confidence in Saskatchewan, confidence in our people, and confidence in our future.

Mr. Speaker, part of that confidence comes because people see us working together with other levels of government despite political differences, despite past strains, to get things done for the people of this province, the people we serve.

One of my first experiences as an MLA was attending the AGM [annual general meeting] of the Yorkton Brick Mill Heritage Society. Mr. Speaker, at first I wasn't quite sure why I was invited, but I soon learned that a small, dedicated group had rallied to preserve the last standing brick flour mill in Western Canada.

I heard their passion for telling the story of agriculture in Saskatchewan and the personal connections many of their families had to the mill. They needed funding to bring the project across the finish line. And being at the AGM I saw their financials. I did the calculation and it amounted to roughly 50 years' worth of annual supper fundraisers. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure everyone in that room wanted to wait that long.

So that night, early in my time as an MLA, I learned that when a group of seniors with deep roots and deep ties to your community impress upon you what you're to advocate for in no uncertain terms, well, Mr. Speaker, need I say, you listen. I listened, and so did our government. And today that interpretive centre's open

and already doing great work in our community. Yes.

And what I love about this project is that it was built through partnerships: Yorkton Tribal Council, local businesses, corporate and private donors, and sponsors all working toward something that would benefit future generations, benefit our province, and benefit our community. The federal, provincial, and municipal governments also saw the vision, and each provided funding and support. Mr. Speaker, that's how things need to get done.

This is a time to come together. We saw it happen again in Yorkton just recently with the renewal of our wastewater treatment plant. With so much investment coming into our region through value-added agricultural industries, our wastewater treatment plant was operating over capacity and becoming a bottleneck to future growth in our city and region. But just weeks ago the federal government, our provincial government, and the city of Yorkton came together to provide the largest capital infrastructure investment in Yorkton's history — nearly 50 million, including 16.6 million from our provincial government.

This is what strong and steady looks like: coming together and making a difference for our community. And I'm looking forward to this happening again for our hospital. Mr. Speaker, the Yorkton regional hospital matters deeply to my constituents and to families across east central Saskatchewan. It matters to me personally as well. Two of my children were born there. And like so many families in our community, we have depended on the people who work there.

Since being elected I've worked with my colleagues to keep Yorkton's health care needs front and centre. And I'm grateful that our government continues to invest in our community. I want to thank our physicians, nurses, technologists, therapists, support staff, maintenance crews, and everyone who keeps that hospital running. And I also want to thank Ross Fisher from the health foundation; the health foundation, its donors and volunteers; as well as my predecessor Greg Ottenbreit and his wife, Leone. Their work, including through the Brayden Ottenbreit Close Cuts For Cancer, has made a real difference for patients and families.

Mr. Speaker, Yorkton is a community that gives generously and sees what needs to be done and gets to work. And together, with the support of this government, we are seeing some exciting improvements. Our chemotherapy and infusion unit has moved into a larger space, increasing its treatment capacity by approximately 50 per cent. A new heart function clinic is bringing specialized cardiac care closer to home. Renovations to the endoscopy suite are expected to allow approximately 600 additional procedures each year.

For someone going through cancer treatment, receiving care in Yorkton means being closer to their family, closer to their own bed and people, who help them through some of the hardest days of their life. Mr. Speaker, that matters.

Our government has also invested more than 4 million over 3 years in improvements to Yorkton health facilities, including expanding the ICU [intensive care unit] from six beds to seven and upgrading the central building systems. We have seen upgrades to the CT [computerized tomography] scanner and the replacement of the hospital's ceiling-mounted digital X-ray machine.

We are strengthening primary care as well. Our government supported the opening of the Broadway Primary Health Care Clinic, approved two additional full-time nurse practitioner positions, and added a family medicine residency training seat in Yorkton. And since my election, I'm proud to say we've seen at least four new physicians begin practising in Yorkton, and more on the way.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a moment on nurse practitioners, because what we are doing here is a tremendous win for patients and for our health care system. I remember shortly after getting elected and I was very eager, I was constantly reaching out to the Minister of Health. And I brought forward this idea that I thought was just so brilliant, you know, about going all in on nurse practitioners. And little did I know that the minister was already working with the nurse practitioner association in doing just that. So I'm excited to see not only that this idea has been implemented, how well it's been implemented, that it's been implemented quickly.

Our government has removed the cap on publicly funded nurse practitioner contracts, opening more opportunities for them to provide primary care across Saskatchewan. We have also worked with the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] to remove practice restrictions through changes to more than 240 clinical policies affecting nurse practitioners as well as licensed practical nurses and registered psychiatric nurses.

Mr. Speaker, enabling nurse practitioners to do more of the work they are trained to do creates more options for patients and helps take pressure off other parts of the system. That is better use of the incredible skills we already have. It supports our physicians, strengthens our teams, and helps more people get the care they need. It's a tremendous opportunity for Yorkton and for the communities across Saskatchewan.

We have also expanded access to addictions care in my community. Our government recently provided 753,000 in annual funding to Medavie for 15 mobile withdrawal management spaces in Yorkton. This brings supported detox into the home for people assessed as being at low risk of complicated withdrawal. Mr. Speaker, from my work in mental health, I know how important it is to connect people with help when they are ready to take that step. And I'm grateful to see this additional option available in Yorkton. These investments are strengthening care today while we continue to advance the Yorkton hospital for our region.

I also want to highlight something significant. Yorkton was the only health project in planning specifically mentioned in the entire Throne Speech, and that's great news. Since 2019 the project has moved steadily forward, with millions invested in planning. A request for proposals for technical assessments and advisory services is already out. And that is the key step before design and construction.

I know my constituents want to see this project move forward and I share those priorities, and I will continue working with my colleagues to see this happen. Suffice to say, Mr. Speaker, we have reason for confidence. Our government is investing. Our community is stepping up, services are expanding, and we are

making better use of the skills and training of our health care professionals.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, there is one more area where we are doing the right thing at the right time, and that is in the area of medical assistance in dying. I'm very pleased that our government is proposing additional safeguards to prohibit MAID [medical assistance in dying] for minors and for those whose sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness.

Mr. Speaker, as a former counsellor I've sat with young people battling depression who told me they couldn't wait to turn 18 so they could access MAID. The fact that there are minors, there are people struggling with mental health who do see MAID as something to look forward to or something to explore, that should give us pause. What a tragedy it would be for a young person to lose their life when with treatment, support, and time, their future could look very different from what they can or cannot see in their darkest moment.

In mental health we work to prevent suicide. We intervene, especially when young people are at risk. We help people find a way through. We must not lose sight of that goal or that responsibility. Mr. Speaker, every life matters and these safeguards matter.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, being strong and steady means knowing when to take a stand, when to draw the line, and when to come together for the common good. It's not just a slogan. It's a summary of our government's approach, our track record, and our strategic positioning. It's our résumé. Our government has a proven track record of recognizing what the moment calls for, making the right decisions at the right time, and preparing our province for what comes next. Strong, steady, and ready for the future.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is also a tribute to our province and its people. There is a confluence of factors converging on our province. We cannot take credit for Saskatchewan's natural riches — that's God's gift to us. But what we do with what we're given, well that's on us.

And let me just say, our families, our producers, our workers, our business owners, our industry partners, our community organizations — our province is strong, is steady, and we are ready. Our government is doing what the times call for, coming together focusing on what unites us and working for a Saskatchewan that is safe, affordable, prosperous, and on course in uncertain times. That's our province. That's our government — strong, steady, and ready for the future.

Mr. Speaker, this is our time. I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member from White City-Qu'Appelle, seconded by the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood. I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[20:30]

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

Tajinder Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is my third response to a Throne Speech. The Throne Speech is an opportunity for the government to share its priorities for Saskatchewan but, Mr. Speaker, we should not judge a government by announcements, good-sounding numbers, or promises alone. We should judge it by how its actions affect the daily lives of Saskatchewan people — plans on paper and slogans on billboards are not enough.

The Sask Party government has had many plans. It has a plan to build a hospital in Yorkton. It has a plan to build a school in Brighton and Willowgrove. It has a plan to put patients first. But where are the results? People are still waiting. Our health care system remains in crisis, families are struggling with the cost of living, and unhoused people are not getting the support they need. The Throne Speech offers no convincing new approach to these challenges. It feels like another recycled set of promises much like the government's patient-first plan. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve actions, not more announcements.

I want to turn to an issue that deeply concerns me — the growing anti-immigrant hatred we are seeing in Saskatchewan. For years, the Premier and the Sask Party government bragged about population growth. They welcomed immigrants from around the world and told people Saskatchewan was open to immigration. But over the past year, that message has become much quieter. Why? We are seeing growing anti-immigrant sentiments, misinformation about newcomers, and hatred directed particularly at people from visible minorities.

Social media has become a platform for this hostility. Mr. Speaker, I have experienced this personally. Whenever I post on my Facebook page, comments start coming right away. "Go back." "Deport him." "Who elected him?" "He should not be allowed to run." And some comments are even worse; I cannot repeat them in the House. These comments were not nearly as common a year ago.

Let me remind the House and the people of my journey. The University of Saskatchewan brought me to Saskatoon 27 years ago. I worked as a plant scientist and a crop researcher. I spent twelve and a half years in academia at the University of Saskatchewan, spent four and a half years at Saskatchewan Research Council, and eight years working in the private sector for a multinational company called SGS [Société Générale de Surveillance SA]. I spent more than 25 years contributing to Saskatchewan's agriculture, research, and economy. And now people on social media are telling me, leave the province. Leave the country. Mr. Speaker, this is not just my story. There are thousands of people who have a similar story in Saskatchewan.

I'll give you one more example. A few months ago, I went to see my family doctor. He's a family physician and a heart specialist. He came to Saskatchewan from Africa more than 40 years ago and cared for thousands of patients. He is 75 years old and could retire any time. If he retires, many of us, hundreds of us, will lose access to a family doctor. But during my visit, before even we discussed my health, he shared his frustration about the anti-immigrant hectoring he has been facing. After a lifetime of serving this community, he told me that he no longer feels welcome. People are telling him to go back. Mr. Speaker, I ask the question: where should he go? This is a person who has spent decades caring for people in Saskatchewan. He has contributed to our community, our province, and our country, and now he is being told that he doesn't belong. This is unacceptable.

The same is true for thousands of hard-working people from diverse backgrounds who have helped build Saskatchewan. They are our neighbours, colleagues, doctors, researchers, teachers, business owners, and community leaders. They belong here. Diversity is our strength. Hatred and discrimination have no place in Saskatchewan.

Political leaders have a responsibility to challenge hatred and misinformation. Silence is not leadership. Staying quiet while upsetting a political base is not leadership. People expect their government to stand up for everyone in this province. I'm very proud that our leader and the entire Saskatchewan NDP caucus have spoken against this hatred. And we will continue to stand up for dignity, equality, and belonging.

The Manitoba NDP government has recently passed a bill to address hatred against visible minorities. I ask the Sask Party government, will you take meaningful action to address this problem in Saskatchewan?

Before I did deeper into the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a couple of thanks to the people who really helped me to serve as an MLA. Two years ago I was elected MLA for Saskatoon University-Sutherland. I sincerely thank everyone in my constituency for their trust and support. It's an honour and privilege to serve as your MLA.

I especially want to thank my better two-thirds, my wife, Ravinder. It's a demanding job and she has supported me through every challenge. She has made significant sacrifices of her . She was offered, several times, very good scientific positions outside Saskatoon and outside Saskatchewan, but she chose to stay close to her family. Thank you, Ravinder, for your love, support, and patience. I love you. I also want to thank my son Ravtej and daughter-in-law Celina for their love, support, and advice. Both are corporate lawyers and my go-to people if I need any legal advice.

I welcome my new constituency assistant, Brock Neufeldt, who joined my office in August. Brock has made the transition very smooth and doing an excellent job serving our constituents. I take this opportunity to thank all the casual CAs [constituency assistant] who are a great help to run my office very smoothly.

I thank our local NDP executive team for outstanding work on fundraising, policy development, and campaigns. I am fortunate to work with such a dedicated team. I thank our caucus staff for their guidance and support, and my colleagues in the official opposition for their friendship and encouragement.

And finally I thank our leader for her commitment, her commitment to listening to people of Saskatchewan and offering them hope for a better future. Mr. Speaker, public service is a team effort. I'm grateful to everyone who has helped me along the way.

As the shadow minister of Advanced Education, I regularly consult with students, faculty, staff, and all secondary institutions across Saskatchewan. I hear their concerns. I hear their questions about whether this government is doing enough.

Our universities, colleges, and polytechnic institutions are essential to our economy and our future. They educate our nurses, teachers, tradespeople, researchers, and other professionals. They support entrepreneurs, drive innovation, and help young people build meaningful careers at home.

Yet our post-secondary institutions have faced growing financial pressure for years. They face inflation, rising operating costs, changes in international student and increasing domestic student enrolment. At the same time, students are struggling with housing costs, food insecurity, and inadequate financial support.

Let me give you one example, Mr. Speaker. The University of Saskatchewan published its financial report recently. It showed a substantial decline in the real operating grant per student. In 2016-17 the grant was more than 21,000 per student. And today it's less than $11,000 per student. It's almost 50 per cent less than 10 years ago. And it is forecast to decline further. These are not my numbers, Mr. Speaker. This is from the University of Saskatchewan's financial report. Check page no. 5.

This is a serious concern, Mr. Speaker. Our institutions cannot be expected to do more with less year after year. Students should not have to choose between paying for their education and paying for their basic necessities. We need sustainable funding for our institutions, better support for students. We need to make post-secondary education more accessible and affordable. Investing in advanced education is an investment in our workforce, our economy, and our future.

Mr. Speaker, I really believe in listening to and connecting with my constituents. One of the most important responsibilities of an MLA is listening to their people. This past summer my team and I door knocked the entire Saskatoon University constituency. We did so for the second year in a row. Many residents were surprised to see us at their doors and some asked, "Is an election coming?"

My answer is simple: listening doesn't stop between elections. Democracy doesn't happen only during a campaign. Advocacy must continue throughout our term in office. When we knock on the door we ask a very simple, straightforward question: is there an issue or concern you would like to share with us? The answers tell us what matters to people. They also tell us where government policies are falling short. Mr. Speaker, the feedback I heard was deeply concerned.

The number one issue in my constituency is health care. I have spoken with health care workers who are under tremendous pressure. I have spoken with patients who have faced long waits and difficulty accessing care. For many people health care is just not an issue; it is a crisis.

The cost of living is another major concern. Families are struggling to make ends meet. They're worried about housing, groceries, and the rising cost of everyday necessities.

The Premier and the Sask Party MLAs, they talk about strong and steady Saskatchewan in the House, on TV, on radio, or on billboards. But people are telling us a different story at their doorsteps. That matters, Mr. Speaker. They're feeling the pressure in their household budgets. Homelessness, mental health, addiction, crime, and community safety are also becoming an increasingly prominent concern.

In Saskatoon four years ago we had about 500 homeless people, and now the number is more than 2,000. This is a fourfold increase in less than four years. The story is very similar in Regina, P.A. [Prince Albert], and Yorkton. Mr. Speaker, this should alarm every member of this Assembly. Behind every number is a person, a family, someone who needs a safe place to live, access to health care, or support for mental health and addictions. These challenges are connected.

The affordability crisis, housing insecurity, gaps in health care, and inadequate mental health and addiction services all affect people's lives. We cannot solve these problems by ignoring them. We cannot solve them with slogans. We need a government that listens, understands the problems, and acts. We cannot expect this from an old, tired, and out-of-touch Sask Party government.

And the Saskatchewan NDP believes in a different approach. Before developing policy, we want to hear directly from the people affected by policy. That's why our NDP caucus is undertaking several projects such as creating a growth plan; your future, your care; and Your Future, Your Say. Through town halls, stakeholder meetings, online discussions, and detailed surveys we are asking people to share their experiences, concerns, and ideas. We want to hear from our communities, workers, families, students, and experts.

We don't claim to have every answer. We believe good policy begins with listening. Consultations help understand the challenges people face. It helps us identify practical solutions and develop policy that responds to the real needs of Saskatchewan people. That's how we believe the government should work.

[20:45]

I want to speak specifically about the Your Future, Your Say project. This is led by our leader, the member from Regina Coronation Park, and me. We are concerned about the number of young people leaving Saskatchewan. Too many young people feel they must leave the province to find the opportunity they need. That should concern all of us.

Young people are not just our future; they are part of our economy, our communities, and our province today. We need their skills, ideas, energy, and vision. Through Your Future, Your Say we have been speaking with students, young professionals, and newcomers. We want to understand their experiences and learn what they need to change for them to build a future here. We asked them directly: what barriers are you facing? What opportunities are missing? What would make you want to stay in Saskatchewan?

The answers matter. The cost of living matters. Access to affordable post-secondary education matters. Good-paying jobs matter. So do our arts and culture, quality infrastructure, reliable public services, and opportunity to build a meaningful life here in Saskatchewan.

Young people need to know that if they work hard, get an education, and continue to build communities, they can afford a home and build a secure future here. Many young people want to stay in Saskatchewan, but wanting to stay is not always enough. We must create the conditions that make staying possible.

That means investing in education, supporting good jobs, addressing housing affordability, ensuring access to health care and other essential public services. It also means listening to young people before making a decision that affects their future. Saskatchewan has tremendous potential. We have strong communities, excellent educational institutions, natural resources, agricultural exports, and talented people.

But we cannot take our future for granted. Our goal should be a province where young people do not have to leave to succeed. They should have the opportunity to learn, work, raise a family, and thrive right here at home. This is the kind of Saskatchewan we should be working toward.

And let me turn to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. The government should be judged by its results, not its promises. People need better health care. They need relief from the rising cost of living. They need affordable housing, better mental health and addictions services, and safer communities. Students need more support. Immigrants deserve dignity and respect. Young people need good opportunities and a future in Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan NDP is listening. We are consulting with people and developing solutions. Saskatchewan deserves a government that delivers results, not recycled promises.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will not support the Throne Speech. I will support the amendment moved by the member from Saskatoon Fairview and seconded by the member from Regina Walsh Acres. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement.

Hon. Sean Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise in this Assembly and respond to the Speech from the Throne delivered Tuesday by Her Honour.

I want to start where everybody should start, with the people who make it possible for us to be here. Yeah, I know. I learned my lesson last year. My wife, Renee, carries more than her share so I can do this job, and I can't do this without her. So, Mr. Speaker, October 1st, 2016 was our wedding, and we're at 10 years, one month. But I'd like to tell the members a quick story about the October 1st wedding, 2016. It's a good story.

So when we first decided on when we were going to have our wedding, Renee asked me what a good time of year was. And I had told her that the perfect time was the fall because of the beautiful leaves and the fall weather and I was going to be off the road, not the 10 and 4 — I'd be closer to home.

This is something nobody can tell her. This is an absolute secret and if she finds out about this I'm in big trouble. The truth was I wanted it on October 1st because the church we were getting married in, the Buchanan Ukrainian Catholic Church, had no air conditioning, and I wanted it to be relatively cool in there so I wasn't sweating in the summertime, right. Well it turned out that day it was plus 32 on October 1st, so I suffered anyway and I learned my lesson. But it was a good wedding. So I'm really lucky to have her as a wife.

I want to thank the people that work in my constituency office in

Canora-Pelly. Clarissa and Liz, they answer the phone on the bad days and they answer it on the busy days. And the people of our constituency are better served because of them.

I want to thank the team at SaskBuilds and Procurement. People do not see most of what this ministry does. They see hospitals open. They do not see the procurement officer who got the tender right. They don't see the project manager on site at 7 in the morning or the maintenance crew that keeps more than 700 government buildings running across this province. I see it, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud of every one of them.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech opened with two short lines, "The world is uncertain. Saskatchewan isn't." A few paragraphs later it said something I have believed my whole working life: " . . . [Saskatchewan] is a nation of builders."

I keep a photo of my Grandpa George in my office. He was a contractor. I put it there so that every morning before I open a briefing note, I remember what building Saskatchewan means. It means a crew, a schedule, a budget, and a promise to your community.

I spent 30 years in heavy construction and in highway building before I came to this Assembly. I've stood on a lot of sites. Mr. Speaker, there's something you learn about being on a construction site very quickly: you cannot talk a bridge into standing, you cannot argue a hospital into opening, and you cannot hold up a roof with a press release.

When the Throne Speech says there are more than 60 major projects under way in this province worth more than $100 billion, I do not hear a talking point. I hear jobs, I hear crews, and I hear concrete trucks and cranes. Bell Canada will quadruple its data centre outside of Regina to more than 50 billion, the largest private capital investment in Canadian history. I think about the trades who will build it and the Saskatchewan suppliers who will complete and support it.

Private investment builds our economy, but the government has its own job to do, Mr. Speaker. We build the hospitals, the schools, the care homes, and the public buildings that make a growing province a place worth living. That's the work of SaskBuilds and Procurement, and I want to spend my time today showing this Assembly what that work has looked like since spring budget.

The Throne Speech said that while we expand our export markets abroad, we continue to build here at home. Mr. Speaker, those numbers back that up. This year's budget delivered a $4.3 billion capital plan, one of the largest in Saskatchewan's history. Nearly 1.8 billion of that is executive government. More than two and a half billion is our Crown corporations building power, telecommunications, and natural gas infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I've seen the opposition look at a capital budget and act as though every dollar is just a number in a speech. Those numbers become steel, concrete, asphalt, and Saskatchewan jobs. That's the difference between reading a budget and building one.

The NDP seem to want three things at once: build everything immediately, never have a delay, and never have a bill. I've been in construction a long time, Mr. Speaker, and I have yet to meet the contractor that can deliver all three of those.

Inside that plan is a $637 million for health infrastructure. There's 123.8 million for kindergarten to grade 12 schools. And there's 417 million for transportation, improving more than 850 kilometres of highway this year, bringing us 7900 kilometres in year seven of our $10,000 commitment. As an old highway guy, I will say that number never gets old.

All of it moves toward the growth plan target of 30 billion in infrastructure investment by 2030.

I believe that the people of Saskatchewan deserve to see what their money is building. So in March, we launched the *Saskatchewan Monthly Construction Update*. On October 28th, we released the 8th edition. Every month it puts real projects in front of the people. What's going up, who's building it, and how far along it is. That's the accountability that you can drive past.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech talks about putting patients first. Here's what has been built and advanced since budget. And if the members opposite want to tell us that the fastest way to build a hospital is to skip the planning, I would invite them to explain that theory to engineers, nurses, infection control professionals, and the families who will depend on it.

Weyburn. The Throne Speech said that the Weyburn General Hospital would open in the coming days. Construction was finished in April. We cut the ribbon and yesterday it opened to the patients. That's more than 134 million from this government. It adds 25 private acute care homes, 10 in-patient mental health beds, and one of the largest operating theatres in this province. Saskatchewan will be served by this building for generations.

The opposition call that an announcement — they can call it that if they like — but on November 1st, patients are calling that a hospital. There's a difference, Mr. Speaker, and that's a fairly important one.

In P.A. the Throne Speech said that the Victoria Hospital tower is more than half done. In June we marked that milestone with PCL. The crews have now passed 1 million worker hours on that site. When it opens in 2028, in-patient beds go from 174 to 242. It brings the region's first MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] and rooftop heliport, and the neonatal unit grows from 11 to 13. This budget puts 238 million into that project this year alone. The North waited a long time for the hospital, Mr. Speaker. This government is building it.

The Saskatoon cancer patient lodge: the Throne Speech confirmed construction has started, and two weeks ago we broke ground. The old lodge dated back to 1928. The new one will have 33 private patient rooms including suites for stem cell transplant patients and 14 spaces for companions. The province and the federal government are each putting in more than 7 million, and the cancer foundation is putting in 10. And Westridge Construction is building this. Families that come from rural Saskatchewan for treatment will have a home close to care.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech names one hospital project in my part of the province and I want to give it the attention that it deserves. It's said that we are seeing continued progress on the Yorkton hospital. I can tell this Assembly what progress looks

like because my ministry is the one delivering it. This is the same path that a major hospital takes from promise to ribbon. Weyburn walked that path, and it opened to patients yesterday. P.A. walked that path, and the tower is more than half built.

I have seen contractors make mistakes. The good ones fix them. The smart ones plan them so they don't make them in the first place. Our taxpayers deserve the smart approach. Mr. Speaker, I've spent my entire career on job sites. The most expensive mistakes are made before anybody puts the shovel in the ground. The members opposite promised shovels in the ground in their first year with nothing behind the promise. We're going to plan it right so this hospital is built once and built to serve the region for generations.

And while that work goes on, we have not left the current building standing still. More than $4 million has gone into the Yorkton health facility in recent years. The intensive care unit grew from six beds to seven. The hospital got a new roof, two new chillers, new sewer and exhaust systems, new flooring, upgraded wireless internet for patients and families. Here's the part that I don't want to lose in the noise: we're planning the next hospital while improving the one people use today. You can't ignore the roof, chillers, or the ICU just because the new one is on the drawing board.

And inside the Yorkton hospital, it keeps growing. Family medicine residents training in Yorkton — two today, with plans to grow to four so new doctors can learn in our region and stay. A second primary care clinic, the Broadway Primary Health Clinic, backed by 559,000 for new positions. Fifteen health professionals recruited to Yorkton through the rural recruitment incentive. Patient medical homes in Yorkton in this budget, and this month a new heart function clinic serving patients across central Saskatchewan.

One more, Mr. Speaker, because it matters to a lot of families in my constituency. The chemotherapy and infusion unit in Yorkton hospital has been expanded and moved into a bigger, brighter space on the main floor. It can now deliver about 50 per cent more treatments — chemotherapy, immunotherapy, and infusions for people living with Crohn's disease, lupus, multiple sclerosis, and other conditions. Outside of Regina and Saskatoon, Yorkton is now one of the largest providers of cancer treatment in the province.

And it doesn't stop at cancer care. Ophthalmology is back in Yorkton with more than 1,000 procedures a year that people no longer have to leave the region for. Dialysis care in Yorkton has grown. And right now the endoscopy suite is under renovation, which will add about 600 more procedures every year on top of the 2,500 it does today. Every one of those is a family that does not have to make a drive to Regina or Saskatoon.

[21:00]

Mr. Speaker, none of this is separate from the new hospital. Every one of these services adds to what people can get in Yorkton today, and every one of them will roll into the new building. They are helping us plan what the hospital will offer because we already know the demand is there and the teams are already in place.

I want to thank The Health Foundation of East Central Saskatchewan, its executive director Ross Fisher, and its donors. I want to thank Greg Ottenbreit, former member for Yorkton, who with his wife, Leone, started the Brayden Ottenbreit Close Cuts for Cancer and has never stopped raising money for patients in our region.

Together they raised much of the money for that chemotherapy expansion, and the foundation has also paid for the endoscopy renovation, brought ophthalmology back, funded virtually all of the lab equipment in that hospital, and paid for health care workers to train through the partnership within the college. The people of Yorkton and the people of Canora-Pelly will get their new hospital, Mr. Speaker, and I will be there when it happens.

The Throne Speech said that our schools are often the heart of communities. I agree, and everybody from a small town knows it. The school gym is where the concerts happen, where the fundraisers happen, and sometimes where a funeral happens. Right now there are 24 new schools and four major renovations under way across the province. This budget puts over 82 million into new and ongoing school projects, 20 million into relocatable classrooms, and 18 and a half million into minor capital renewal.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition has discovered that a school is a popular place to hold a press conference. But they are right about one thing: families want schools. But schools do not open because someone stands in a field and demands a date. It opens when the design, tender, construction, and inspections are finished.

Since the budget we have opened the doors. In March we celebrated the new francophone elementary school in Regina. In May we opened the St. Raphael School in Regina. Work continues on the new francophone elementary school in Saskatoon Kensington. We have moved the next ones forward. In July the Greenall High School project finished design and moved into procurement. In August the Swift Current Comprehensive High School renovation went to tender for its first phase. That means new heating, ventilation, and electrical systems; fire suppression; code upgrades; and asbestos removal, done in phases so students can keep learning while the work goes on.

The members opposite can call the design stage nothing if they want, but I would not recommend saying that to an architect, an engineer, or a school division that has to make that building work for children for the next 50 years.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech talks about standing with workers and employers when tariffs and global uncertainty threaten jobs. It names construction among the sectors that will get support through the $15.6 million workforce tariff response. One of the most direct ways government stands with Saskatchewan workers is simple: we buy from Saskatchewan companies. I've spent enough years bidding on work to know that contractors don't need a medal. They ask for fair opportunities, clear specifications, and a process that doesn't waste their time. That's what we're delivering.

We are not standing still on how we buy either. Since budget, this ministry has kept the construction round table meeting throughout the year so contractors, suppliers, and trades tell us

directly what is working and what isn't. Started releasing our bid bonds early, which frees up capital so a contractor can go after the next job. We've relaunched the quarterly tender plan so industry can see what's coming and how to plan their crews. We've hosted the Business Expo and Procurement Forum in Regina last week, putting suppliers in the same room as the people who buy from government, Crowns, health, schools, and municipalities.

Denise Gamble of Merit Saskatchewan put it plainly in September. She said this is not just talk, and the relationship keeps getting stronger year after year. That's the industry talking, Mr. Speaker, not me.

The members opposite said that this government is tired and worn out of ideas. I would invite them to go to Weyburn and tell the first patients through the door that that building is tired. I'd invite them to stand on the deck of the Victoria Hospital tower with a crew that has just put in a million worker hours. This government doesn't just talk about building; we are building.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend the rest of my time on home. This Throne Speech talks about the right care in the right place at the right time. In our corner it's not a slogan; it's the drive. In August people in Kamsack, Preeceville, and Canora got online booking for lab appointments at their own hospitals and health centres. That sounds small until you're the one taking a morning off of harvest to sit in a waiting room. As I said earlier, the new Yorkton hospital is our hospital too. I take that project personally, and I will keep pushing it forward.

The ice went in at the Canora Civic Centre this month. A few days later Logan Foster, who grew up in Kamsack and was the top scorer for the Canora Cobras last season, ran a skills class camp for 36 kids in Canora, Kamsack, Norquay, and Preeceville. He told the local paper his parents used to drive him all the way to Regina for that kind of coaching. Now he's doing that right at home.

Preeceville Minor Hockey has a full slate of teams this year with kids from Preeceville, Sturgis, Norquay, and Kamsack playing together. The Throne Speech confirmed that the community rinks affordability grant doubled — $5,000 per each ice surface — and it opens again this winter. I want every rink board in Canora-Pelly to apply. Those rinks are what keep our towns strong.

Our area knows what a wet year can do, and some families and communities, including Togo, are still dealing with the aftermath. The Throne Speech confirms the PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] program has been expanded for individuals and small businesses with support for mitigation and resiliency. I will keep working with every one of those files until they are closed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell this Assembly about Norquay. This summer a storm stalled over the town and dropped six to eight inches of rain in about two days. The drainage system could not keep up. Norquay didn't wait for anybody. The council did not declare a state of emergency because they said they did not need special powers to look after their town. They got to work. Volunteers from Norquay and the surrounding communities showed up with high-capacity pumps and stood in that water, pumping out the town. Council kept everything pumping, brought in portable toilets, and kept drinking water safe the whole way through. Then they applied for PDAP. That's Canora-Pelly, Mr. Speaker. That's what strong and steady looks like.

Mr. Speaker, our constituency lost — oh boy, this is going to be tough — lost someone this year who meant a great deal to me and a lot of people in Canora-Pelly. I'm not going to talk too much about him today because I would never be able to get through it. But I'll rise in the spring and I'll do my best then.

So when I was the mayor of Buchanan, I learned that people do not judge government by speeches. They judge it by whether the road gets fixed, whether the clinic is open, and whether somebody calls them back. That's the standard I try to hold myself to, and that's the standard that people of Canora-Pelly deserve. There's no opposition research package that changes the fact that a pothole is a pothole. Somebody has to fill it. That's the kind of politics that I understand.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech ended with three lines: Saskatchewan is strong, Saskatchewan is steady, and Saskatchewan is ready. Mr. Speaker, I would like to add one thing from where I sit: Saskatchewan is building. Hospitals in Weyburn and P.A.; care homes in Regina, Grenfell, and La Ronge; a lodge for cancer patients in Saskatoon; schools in Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current, and beyond; and in Canora-Pelly, rinks full of kids, clinics a little closer to home, and a new hospital in Yorkton on the way.

Grandpa George would have understood all of this. You take your job, you build it right, and you leave something for the next generation. So for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion moved by the member for White City-Qu'Appelle and seconded by the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

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

Brittney Senger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I delve into my response I'm going to do the same thing that everybody else in the Chamber has done and thank those who matter most to me. Even though my family, my friends, and the people who matter most to me are never actually going to listen to this, I want to take a moment to thank them for their ongoing support. In my family, particularly my mom, my grandparents, and my siblings who provide me with words of encouragement, are always available and take care of my cat while I'm away.

Mr. Speaker, I'm privileged to have friends across Canada and right here in Saskatchewan who not only provide me with words of affirmation and encouragement, but also provide me with advice as I try to navigate a very complex file.

And it's not just my friends and family that support me, Mr. Speaker. The staff in my office, John and Natalia and all the staff that work in our caucus office, provide us with the resources and insight that we need to do our job.

But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of Saskatoon Southeast. I want to thank them for the opportunity to

represent them here in the legislature and for their ongoing trust. It means the world to me. This is the opportunity of a lifetime, and I will always do my best to act in their best interest.

Mr. Speaker, the work that we do here matters. It matters because people across Saskatchewan are struggling. I've heard this message from thousands of people this summer I canvassed, and on the doorsteps or at community events or even just out and about in Saskatoon Southeast. The message that I received was clear. People are paying the price for this government's mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, I grew up just a block outside of my constituency, and in my 32 years of life I have never heard of so many people struggling: physicians, nurses, teachers, people that are highly educated, retired, or working in areas that are of high demand. They are feeling the effects of the cost-of-living crisis. The cost of gas, the cost of power bills, of insurance — they're affecting everyone's quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan ranks among the highest of all of the provinces when it comes to the cost of groceries, yet we're the second lowest when it comes to minimum wage. We have the highest rates of child poverty in Canada.

The government has been boasting about how affordable Saskatchewan is. But when was the last time anyone on that side of the room had to live off of less than $16 an hour? A single person working 40 hours a week at minimum wage is walking away with $2,500 a month, and then they're stuck paying nearly $1,400 in rent. Even a penny-pincher that's paying for groceries, utilities, internet, phone, and insurance is barely walking away with $200 at the end of the month. And that's assuming they have no car payment and they have no debt.

The cost of living in Saskatchewan might be lower than in other parts of Canada, but income nearly everywhere else in Canada is higher. And, Mr. Speaker, the people in Saskatoon Southeast know that. What I heard this summer when I was canvassing my constituency is that people recognize their privilege. They acknowledge that they are able to cover their costs. But they also acknowledge that, despite a good income, they expected a different quality of life. Countless people told me how they can't imagine how families or individuals on a lower income would be able to survive, people like those on Saskatchewan assured income for disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, this past year the Minister for Social Services has pushed through orders in council that have had a detrimental impact on people living with disabilities. An individual living on SAID is earning less than $1,300 a month, yet the average one-bedroom apartment in Saskatoon goes for over $1,300. And if you can't afford to rent and you need a roommate, well your name better be the first one on the lease. Because if your name is not on the lease agreement, you no longer qualify for benefits.

And it gets worse. The government's pitch on SAID has been that they are encouraging people with disabilities to enter the workforce. But if you're accessing SAID and you want to pursue an education to help advance employment opportunities, you lose your benefits. The Sask Party government is forcing people with disabilities to take on student loans, to take on debt, just to go to school so that they can get a job. It's no wonder why we're seeing an increase in homelessness, Mr. Speaker.

[21:15]

Mr. Speaker, my mom owns a flower shop just a couple of blocks away from St. Paul's Hospital. On Thursday when I was driving back to Saskatoon from Regina, I called my mom. She's seen the neighbourhood change drastically over the years. When I was on the phone with her on Thursday, I heard her start yelling out of the blue. Someone had entered her shop, and she was demanding that that person leave because they were trashing the place. I listened to her on the phone with 911. I was terrified for her. Thankfully she was okay. She will save herself. She's a tough cookie. But these incidents occur too often. It affects her. It affects her business. It affects her customers. It affects her staff, and it affects her safety.

If you ever ask her about homelessness in the area, without a doubt she will tell you that things got drastically worse when the government changed the way SAID and SIS [Saskatchewan income support] payments were distributed. Yet the government will not own up to their mistakes. They will not change the way these payments are distributed and send them back to landlords.

It's not just my mom's business that's affected though. The burden of addressing the increase in mental health, in addictions, in crime, in houselessness is falling on municipalities. It's falling on community-based organizations, and it's falling on the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing that I heard when I canvassed my entire constituency again this summer is the dire state of our health care system. I heard from countless people who don't have access to a family physician. They faced delays accessing treatment or even spent days in hospital hallways.

Mr. Speaker, last week the family of Kirsten Hanke joined us in the legislature. Kirsten was 30 years old and died from a broken ankle. This is unacceptable. Saskatchewan is the home of medicare. People expect better and they deserve better.

And it's not just patients that are firing off alarm bells, Mr. Speaker. We're hearing it from health care workers too. Nearly 1,000 workers rallied outside the legislature less than a week ago because they've been without a contract for years. They care about their patients and they're doing their best, but their patience with this government is being tested. Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the Sask Party government no longer knows how to lead the province, and the people of Saskatchewan are paying the price.

Saskatchewan is rich in resources. We support investment, we support industry, and we're proud of development that's happening right here. We've seen investments in potash, in oil, in uranium, in gas, but our most valuable resource is our people. We have brilliant people that are working to address challenges through innovation, through technology; young people that are keen on exploring research in life sciences, in agriculture, in mining. But we have a government that's jeopardizing it all.

Mr. Speaker, the hyperscale AI data centre that's being built in Sherwood is not at all what the government says it is. The government has been talking about storing Saskatchewan data in Saskatchewan, keeping our information sovereign. But that's

simply not the case. An AI data centre isn't storing data, it's using data to train AI. And it's not even training Saskatchewan AI. It's training American AI on Saskatchewan soil. And, Mr. Speaker, it just gets worse.

We know that two American companies are leasing the space in the Sherwood data centre: CoreWeave and Cerebras. We know that these companies are tied to Donald Trump. Mr. Speaker, just this year Donald Trump invested in CoreWeave to help pay off their debt. Donald Trump Jr. is on the board of a hedge fund that invested heavily in Cerebras. Mr. Speaker, clearly these companies are struggling financially, so what does that mean for the Sherwood data centre? What happens if these companies fail, and what happens when the AI bubble bursts, Mr. Speaker?

We don't know because this government has not been transparent. They dodge questions and they haven't even consulted the public. Let me be clear: this is not a sovereign data centre. In fact, it's subject to American law. That means that any data that the Saskatchewan government stores in the Sherwood data centre or that the people of Saskatchewan store in this data centre can be accessed by the US government.

Mr. Speaker, I don't understand how the Premier, the minister, the Sask Party government claim that Saskatchewan's information is secure when the companies that are leasing the space are not only American companies but are supporting Donald Trump and are supported by Donald Trump.

Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] said that he has no idea what the ownership structure of these companies is. The government approved a project without knowing who owns the companies that the project is being built for. They don't understand the project, and they don't understand what's at stake. So I'll explain it.

Mr. Speaker, CoreWeave and Cerebras both have clients. Their clients are the ones that are using the space in the Sherwood data centre. Who are those clients, you might be wondering: OpenAI, Anthropic, and the US federal government. How on earth is that sovereign? How is that protecting Saskatchewan and protecting our data? It's not. The government has been talking about the investment from Bell Canada. But, Mr. Speaker, the math doesn't math, unless of course the investment isn't actually coming from Bell but coming from the US tenants and their US clients.

Now let's talk about jobs. I come from a family of construction workers, and I know that landing a big project means a lot to families, to companies, and to employees. But what about the technology that's being used in the data centres? Because it's not Saskatchewan technology. It's not Saskatchewan companies that are being used in the construction, software, and operations of this data centre.

The government can talk all they want about how this data centre is doing incredible things for tech and AI here in Saskatchewan, but contracts for a project that's supposed to support innovation in Saskatchewan aren't even going to Saskatchewan start-ups. It is a shame, Mr. Speaker.

Just a year ago Saskatchewan was setting the bar for digital sovereignty, and now the government is risking it. We were using SaskTel, a Crown corporation owned by the people of Saskatchewan with workers from Saskatchewan; technology purchased by people in Saskatchewan, headquartered in Saskatchewan, and housing Saskatchewan data. That is as close to digital sovereignty as it gets in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we own our data. We own our Crown corporation. Let's use our Crowns to store our data. Let's use our Crowns for innovation. Mr. Speaker, not long ago the Sask Party had a procurement proposal for a SaskTel AI data centre, a project that would have been as close to a sovereign AI data centre in Canada as sovereign gets. But it was cancelled just days before shovels hit the ground in Sherwood.

Mr. Speaker, a major telecommunications company is building the biggest data centre in Canada in the only province that has a telecommunications Crown corporation. We know that Bell and SaskTel have an agreement. We know that CIC has an agreement with Bell, but they won't disclose any details. So the government has a history of selling off our Crown corporations. What does this deal mean for SaskTel? What does this deal mean for Saskatchewan?

With 30 data centre proposals under review, the government can't be trusted not to sell off our Crowns or further risk our sovereignty. Mr. Speaker, this investment might look good on paper, but at what cost? Because when you dig a little deeper, it seems there's far more on the line than what the government is claiming.

Mr. Speaker, this government can't be trusted to act in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan. People are choosing between rent and groceries. One in four children are living in poverty. People are waiting for care in hospital hallways. They're dying of preventable causes because our health care system is so under-resourced.

And now the government has taken it a step further and is risking our security and our sovereignty in what they claim to be the biggest investment in Canada. But at what cost? Mr. Speaker, I believe in Saskatchewan. I believe in our sovereignty, in our rights, our security, and our safety.

Saskatchewan founded medicare. We should have the best health care system here in Saskatchewan. I want our province to thrive, and the message that we're receiving from this government is that the people of the province are paying the price for their mismanagement. They will be paying the price now and well into the future.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I cannot support the Throne Speech as moved by the government. I will support the amendment as moved by the member from Saskatoon Fairview and seconded by the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

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

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to rise today to respond to the Speech from the Throne and to speak in support of our government's vision for Saskatchewan.

The Throne Speech sets out an ambitious and positive framework

for our province. It recognizes the opportunities before us, the challenges facing Saskatchewan's families, and the responsibility we have to build a stronger future for the people we represent.

As the MLA for Saskatchewan Rivers I see those opportunities and challenges every day. I see them in our urban centres; in our rural communities across northern Saskatchewan; and in the families, businesses, and community organizations that make this province such a special place to live. I see the people who work hard, who care about their neighbours, who want to provide opportunities for their children, and who expect their government to focus on practical solutions.

That is what I believe this Throne Speech is about: creating opportunities, strengthening essential services, improving safety, and ensuring Saskatchewan remains a place where people can build a good life.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has a great deal to be optimistic about. The province has the people, the resources, the entrepreneurial spirit, and the determination to continue growing. We have strong agricultural producers, skilled tradespeople, resource workers, small-business owners, and public servants who contribute to our economy and to our communities.

[21:30]

But we also recognize that economic growth does not happen automatically. Policy matters. It takes responsible decisions, a competitive environment for investment, reliable infrastructure, and a government that understands the people doing the work.

Our farmers and agricultural producers have always been the backbone of Saskatchewan's prosperity. Their work supports rural communities, creates jobs, and feeds people around the world. They face challenges from changing markets, input costs, weather, and uncertainty that comes with operating a business tied to conditions beyond their control. We must continue supporting an environment where agriculture can thrive, where value-added processing can create jobs here at home, and where young people can see a future for themselves in rural Saskatchewan.

We also have significant opportunities in our natural resources, manufacturing, construction, and service sectors. Responsible development can generate employment, support local businesses, and provide revenue that helps fund the public services Saskatchewan people rely on. The goal should be to ensure that the benefits of growth are felt throughout the province, not just in our largest cities but in our smaller communities and in northern Saskatchewan as well.

For Saskatchewan Rivers that means continuing to recognize the important role of our regional centres. In my constituency, for example, people come to Prince Albert for health care, education, shopping, employment, and other essential services. A strong regional hub helps support the surrounding rural municipalities and northern communities. When businesses invest and we find meaningful work, and when communities have the infrastructure they need, the benefits extend well beyond municipal boundaries.

Mr. Speaker, affordability remains a real concern for many families. People are working hard but they are still having to make difficult choices about grocery, housing, transportation, utilities, and other necessities. We should never lose sight of the fact that behind every discussion about the cost of living is a family trying to make ends meet.

Our responsibility is to pursue policies that support employment and economic opportunities while making sure government programs and services respond to the needs of Saskatchewan people. We must continue looking for practical ways to reduce unnecessary costs, improve access to services, and help people build financial security.

Affordability is not simply a number in a budget. It is whether a parent can provide for their children, whether a young person can afford a home, and whether seniors can live with dignity and confidence. That is why economic growth and responsible public spending must go hand in hand.

Mr. Speaker, a strong economy also depends on a healthy population and accessible health care. Families want to know that when they or someone they love needs medical attention, they can access the health care they need. Health care workers want the tools, resources, and support to do their jobs. Communities want reliable access to primary care, emergency services, and other essential health services. These are not abstract concerns. They affect people every day in every corner of our province. Recruiting and retaining health care professionals, supporting the people already working in our system, and improving access to care must remain priorities.

We also need to recognize that access can look different in rural and northern communities where distance and transportation can create additional barriers. Progress requires continued attention, collaboration, and willingness to respond to what patients and health care professionals tell us.

Public safety is another essential part of the quality of life. People deserve to feel safe in their homes, in their neighbourhoods, and in their communities. That means supporting effective policing, emergency services, and community-based efforts to address the causes of crime while ensuring that there are meaningful consequences for those who harm others.

As someone who has served as an RCMP officer, I understand that public safety is not just a policy discussion. It is about real people responding to difficult and sometimes dangerous situations, often without knowing what they will encounter when they arrive. I also understand that the people who serve at the front lines need to know their government recognizes the risks they face and is prepared to support them.

That brings me to two initiatives in this Throne Speech that are of special personal meaning to me. Mr. Speaker, these initiatives speak to something fundamental about public service: our responsibility to protect people, learn from difficult experiences, and turn those lessons into meaningful action.

The first is the proposed legislation to strengthen protections for first responders and victims of crime who may be exposed to another person's bodily fluids. Having served as a police officer with the RCMP, I understand first-hand the risks faced by responders are not always obvious when they arrive at a call.

First responders enter unpredictable situations. They respond to overdose, violent incidents, medical emergencies, and circumstances in which they come into contact with blood or other bodily substances. A first responder can finish dealing with a dangerous situation, and then face another kind of uncertainty: the possibility that exposure to such fluids has placed their own health at risk.

Mr. Speaker, that uncertainty can be frightening, not only for the individual, but also for their spouse, their children, and the people who care about them. When someone experiences a potentially significant exposure, the concern is whether those bodily fluids could transmit an infectious disease and what that might mean for their health and their family's future.

I am particularly encouraged by this legislation because it addresses the importance of timely, reliable information. When someone is potentially exposed to HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] or hepatitis B or C, decisions about medical assessment, testing, and follow-up may be time sensitive.

In the case of a possible HIV exposure, Mr. Speaker, preventative medication known as post-exposure prophylaxis, or PEP, may be recommended. It must start as soon as possible, and no later than 72 hours after a potential exposure. And a typical course lasts 28 days, Mr. Speaker. I know this because I have workmates who have gone through it.

And, Mr. Speaker, the treatment itself can be physically and emotionally demanding. PEP involves taking antiretroviral medication every day for the prescribed course. Although these medications are generally well tolerated, they can cause significant side effects. For some who have just finished responding to a traumatic or dangerous incident, dealing with these side effects while continuing to manage the demands of work and family, life can be difficult.

But the physical side effects are only part of the burden. Imagine being a first responder who has just been exposed to another person's blood or bodily fluids while protecting the public. You may now face weeks of medication, medical appointments, blood tests, and follow-up testing all while carrying the fear of uncertainty of what exposure might mean for the health and your family's future. That uncertainty can be especially difficult for a spouse or partner who is worried about the person they love.

Timely-accessed information and medical assessment is critically important. Medical professionals need to assess the circumstances of exposure and determine what testing, treatment, or preventative measures are appropriate. Depending on the circumstances, that may include assessing whether hepatitis B vaccination or other preventative measures are needed, arranging baseline and follow-up blood tests, and monitoring for signs of infection. For hepatitis C there is no routinely recommended preventative medication after exposure, so testing and follow-up are particularly important.

These are not decisions a first responder should have to navigate without timely medical advice and the best information available. The proposed changes are intended to make the testing and disclosure process more timely so that those who have been exposed can make informed decisions about their medical care. They also maintain appropriate privacy protections for the person whose bodily substances are being tested.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important balance. We must respect privacy and proper legal process while recognizing the legitimate health and safety concerns of the person who may have been exposed. PEP is not automatically required after every contact with bodily fluids. A medical professional must assess the circumstances and determine whether treatment is appropriate. But when an exposure does present a potential risk, delays and uncertainty can add to an already stressful situation.

This legislation will not eliminate every risk and it does not replace medical assessment, but a timelier process can reduce unnecessary delays and give first responders and their medical care teams the information they need to make informed decisions. Our police officers, firefighters, paramedics, and other first responders accept risk because their communities depend on them. They do not hesitate to run towards danger when others need help. We have a responsibility to ensure that when they face potentially serious exposure in the course of that service, they can access timely information and appropriate care.

Having served in law enforcement, I know how important it is for those who put themselves in harm's way to protect others to know that the system will respond when their own health is at risk. They should not face additional uncertainty while waiting for information that could help guide urgent medical decisions. I am proud to support that objective, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to see our government responding to a concern that matters so much to those who serve on the front lines.

The second initiative that has special, personal meaning for me is Henry's Law. Mr. Speaker, in public life we sometimes have the opportunity to see how one family's unimaginable loss can lead to changes that protect countless other families. My involvement with the Losco family following the tragic death of their son Henry, has been a deeply meaningful reminder of that responsibility. No parent should have to experience the loss of a child, and no family should have to wonder whether a tragedy might have been prevented by a safety measure that could have provided an earlier warning.

Henry's death from carbon monoxide exposure was a tragedy that affected his family profoundly. It also brought into sharp focus the danger posed by carbon monoxide, a colourless, odourless gas that can accumulate without providing people in a home with any obvious warning. That is what makes carbon monoxide gas so dangerous. People may not realize they are being exposed until they become seriously ill. A properly installed and functioning carbon monoxide alarm can provide an essential warning and precious time for people to get to safety.

Working with the family and responding to their concerns has helped reinforce for me that public policy is not just about regulations and technical requirements. It is about people. It is about listening to families, understanding what happened, and asking what we can do differently to help prevent another family from experiencing the same loss.

At Marina and Sergio's request, strengthening requirements for carbon monoxide alarms were named Henry's Law in his memory. The changes require carbon monoxide alarms in all

residential suites regardless of where those suites are located within a building. That is an important improvement, because people deserve protection in their own homes whether they live in a single-family house, an apartment, a condominium, or another type of residential building.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the Losco family for the strength they have shown in the face of such a painful loss and for their willingness to see Henry's memory become a part of a lasting legacy to protect others. Their advocacy has helped turn grief into action.

And the significance of Henry's Law extends beyond Saskatchewan borders. When Saskatchewan strengthens its safety standards, demonstrates what can be achieved through collaboration with affected families, and establishes practical protections for residents, we create an opportunity for other jurisdictions to learn from our experience.

Other provinces and territories can look to the steps Saskatchewan has taken and consider whether similar requirements could strengthen protections for the people in their own provinces, Mr. Speaker. And that is happening today. That is how a provincial initiative can take on national significance, by demonstrating that a preventable risk deserves a practical response and by encouraging others to consider how they can provide that same protection.

I don't have a time machine, Mr. Speaker. I cannot undo what happened to Henry. But we can honour his memory by taking meaningful steps to help protect our children, other families, and other residents from the danger of carbon monoxide. Mr. Speaker, I believe that is one of the most important responsibilities we have in public service. We must be prepared to listen to people who have experienced profound loss. We must be willing to learn from a tragedy. And when there is a reasonable, practical way to improve public safety, we must have the determination to act. Henry's Law represents that commitment.

For me, both of these initiatives reflect the same principle. Whether we are protecting a first responder who has been exposed to potentially infectious bodily fluids or protecting a family from an invisible danger in their own home, government has a responsibility to take risks seriously and act in ways that make people's lives safer. These are not simply legislative measures. They are about the people behind them — the first responders who serve us, the families who rely on them, and the parents who want to know that their children are safe at home.

Mr. Speaker, a strong province is measured not only by the strength of its economy but also how it protects its people. Beyond these specific initiatives, building a strong Saskatchewan also means investing in the skills, the infrastructure, the partnerships that help communities succeed. We need to ensure that young people can see a future here. Whether they choose university, technical training, an apprenticeship, agriculture, or another career, employers need access to skilled workers and students need pathways that connect their education with real opportunities.

[21:45]

We must also recognize the importance of our rural and urban municipalities and the role they play in driving our strong and growing economy. Local governments understand their communities, deliver essential services, and maintain infrastructure that residents rely on every day. They are important partners in building safe, vibrant, and economically resilient communities.

In Saskatchewan that partnership matters. The needs of our cities, towns, villages, and hamlets are connected to those of the surrounding rural municipalities and northern communities. Roads, emergency services, housing, economic development, and regional infrastructure do not stop at municipal boundaries. We are stronger when all levels of government work together, listen to local priorities, and focus on practical outcomes.

Partnership is equally important when working with Indigenous communities. The future of Saskatchewan depends on creating opportunities that are meaningful, respectful, and built on collaboration. Indigenous people, businesses, and communities have an important role to play in our province's economic and social future. We must continue working towards strong relationships, greater opportunities, and a future in which people throughout Saskatchewan can participate and benefit from the province's growth.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize the people who do the day-to-day work of making our communities stronger — the volunteers, the community organizations, the first responders, educators, health care professionals, business owners, municipal employees — all of which who often go above and beyond what is expected of them.

Governments cannot solve every challenge on its own. Our role is to create the conditions for people in communities to succeed, provide reliable public services, and respond when people need support. That means listening carefully, making responsible decisions, and delivering results.

As I reflect on this Throne Speech I see a framework that recognizes both the economic potential of our province and the responsibility we have to protect the people who call Saskatchewan home. We have an opportunity to grow our economy, strengthen communities, support families, and improve public safety. We also have a responsibility to ensure that that growth translates into real benefits for people in every region of the province.

For the people of Saskatchewan that means a future with meaningful employment, strong local businesses, accessible services, and communities where families feel safe and supported. It means ensuring that cities and urban communities continue to serve as a strong regional centre, that rural communities have the opportunity to prosper, and that northern Saskatchewan is part of the opportunities ahead. And it means that remembering behind every government decision are real people — people with families, hopes, concerns, and expectations for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support a positive vision for Saskatchewan. I am proud, humbled, and honoured to represent the people of Saskatchewan Rivers. And I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the work of building a

stronger province.

I am particularly proud that this Throne Speech includes practical steps to protect first responders, improve carbon monoxide safety in our homes. These initiatives show that government can pursue economic opportunities while remaining focused on safety, dignity, and well-being of people who we are elected to serve.

We cannot prevent every tragedy. We cannot remove every risk. But we can listen. We can learn. We can act responsibly and make changes that help protect people. That is what public service should be about.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has much to look forward to. With hard work, responsible leadership, and a commitment to working together we can build on our strengths, create new opportunities, and leave our province stronger for the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, as I come to the close of my remarks, I want to acknowledge my family. My wife, Lesley. She is superhuman, puts up with a lot. She somehow balances a high-paced demanding job in our province's uranium sector while simultaneously caring for and shuttling our two very busy kids to and from their various activities.

My daughter Freya celebrated her 10th birthday on Saturday, on Halloween, sharing an October 31st birthday with her uncle Kyle. My son Erik, who is the third son in my family line to bear his name. To my Freya and my Erik: your dad loves you very much. And even though I can't be there with you every day, know that you're here with me every second.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support the motion made by the member for White City-Qu'Appelle and seconded by the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood. I will not be supporting any of the opposition's amendments . Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Nathaniel Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to be on my feet here today to respond to the Speech from the Throne. I've got the late-night slot. I seem to be consistently getting this late-night spot. So I think I have to talk to someone about that, maybe get a bit more prime-time spot here for my responses. But at least we've got a good audience. We've got full benches over here, because no one can really go anywhere unless we might topple the government. So it's always nice to have a big audience for these sorts of speeches. Sorry, it's 9:50 so I just had to start with a little levity.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I'll start by doing the traditional thank yous to all the folks that we hold dear in our lives. You know, I have to always say a big thank you to my partner, James, who is continuing just to kill it in the real estate world. He has stayed with me even though I've continued on in this weird job that is all over the place, never seems to have a regular schedule. But I think that's what probably keeps all of us in this work sometimes.

I want to say a big thank you to my constituency assistant, Avery Beaudin. I've mentioned her here before. But she keeps the constituency humming along, and the folks who come into our office are just so lucky to have her there. We had a really fantastic fundraiser earlier this fall, so I want to say a big thank you to all the folks who volunteer with our Saskatoon Meewasin constituency executive. And really just a big thank you to all the family and friends who make it possible to do this work. You know who you are.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to say that this is my fourth Throne Speech as the member for Saskatoon Meewasin. I celebrated the fourth anniversary of my by-election win on September 28th, so I have now officially completed a four-year term as an MLA. And so I think that's something, you know, something exciting. But just always so proud to do this work, serving the people of Saskatoon Meewasin and serving the people of this beautiful province.

It's been a busy summer, a lot going on between door knocking and constituency work. But I want to talk about a few things that stood out to me. I will kind of be highlighting a couple of them in member's statements this fall.

But one of the highlights of my summer was the opportunity to travel to Ottawa this summer to take in a historic meeting of queer and trans politicians from across Canada. Historic because this was the first time that we had politicians from almost every level of government, from almost every province in Canada, gather alongside leaders from community-based organizations from across the country.

You know, we met because we've seen a lot of developments in the human rights space. We met to say that there is a line in the sand that we want to draw. We would not continue to sit idly in the face of provinces, much like Saskatchewan and Alberta, who have used the notwithstanding clause to roll back hard-fought Charter rights. An injury to one of us is an injury to us all. You know, there's the old adage — and I'm going to use it myself — they came for the trans kids; they came for the workers; who will be next?

And so we gathered under the proviso that there has been dangerous use of the notwithstanding clause in our country. And we need to be analyzing that. We need to be standing firm in the face of that.

While in Ottawa I had the honour of also attending the Thunderhead memorial unveiling, again more to . . . I'll speak about that in a member's statement. But it was a memorial in Ottawa dedicated to the LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] Purge. I'll be chatting about that more, but it was the first time I'd learned about this. And it was such an honour to join with dignitaries from across the country to be able to take part in that ceremony in the nation's capital opening a lasting memorial that people will be able to visit for years and years to come.

I was also pleased to attend the biennial convention of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. I was joined by the member opposite, the Minister of Labour. I was also joined by our leader, and we made some bold commitments to working people of this province. We made commitments to introduce anti-scab legislation. We made commitments to restore card check certification. And we made commitments to make meaningful progress on raising the minimum wage. These commitments are about making it easier for workers to organize, ensuring there is

a fair playing field at the bargaining table and making sure that working people receive their fair share of prosperity that they helped create.

Again, I will speak more about this in a member statement — just giving a little preview to the Chamber here tonight. What I really want to do is officially congratulate Marilynne MacFarlane, the newly minted president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, and say a huge thank you to outgoing Saskatchewan Federation of Labour president Lori Johb. Just all in all I am just so grateful for the support of my constituents who have put me here to do this work.

So, the Speech from the Throne. As an exercise, the Speech from the Throne is a pretty transparent exercise. It's to lay out exactly what the priorities of this Saskatchewan government will be over the next year, highlighting legislative priorities, highlighting the priorities and values. You know what I always say: someone's priorities speak a lot to their values, what they find important.

So for the last 160 days, since about the spring legislature session, I've been thinking a little bit . . . I thought, you know, I'm going to keep a notes app open and when I think of something over the summer that I really want to put into a response from the Throne, after the budget response, I would keep it in there.

And I will get into that a little bit more in my speech, but you know, I was really thinking a lot about what got me involved in politics. What were my values? What were the issues that were important to me? What encourages me to continue to do this work? What kind of province do I want to build? What is the future that I want to leave for future generations?

And after sitting through the Throne Speech, the fourth one I've taken in this Chamber, I kept coming back to a little bit of an analogy from one of my favourite stories, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. I just kept coming back to this. And, of course, *Wicked*: *For Good*. We've had these movies come out; it's been kind of topical in our popular culture.

So I kind of had this, kind of this thought bubble brewing around the analogy of the wonderful wizard in comparison to this Saskatchewan Party government. And I speak more specifically about the wizard character himself — a mysterious, larger-than-life character projects an image of enormous power, authority, and competence. Everything is wonderful in Oz. Everything is under control. There is nothing to see here.

As folks might remember from the story of the *Wizard of Oz*, or from the numerous popular adaptions, there's a pivotal moment in the story when the curtain of illusion is pulled back and the supposedly all-powerful wizard is revealed just to be an ordinary man projecting the illusion of steadfast strength and authority that he doesn't actually possess. I think it's a rather striking parallel to what we're seeing from this Saskatchewan Party government.

In many ways our Premier and his government will stand here year after year and tell us that everything is fine, but when you do peek behind the curtain, the illusion of strong, steady governance that they profess is actually quite pallid, quite unremarkable, and in many cases quite poor. A government in last place on so many metrics it's almost embarrassing to list at this point.

When you peek behind the curtain of this *Wizard of Oz* government, there is a different story to tell. Behind the curtain you see a political party that is purposefully manufacturing chaos in our health care system so that they can privatize as much of it as possible.

[Interjections]

Speaker Goudy: — I'd ask you to apologize for that and withdraw.

Nathaniel Teed: — I apologize and withdraw, Mr. Speaker. I'll rephrase. You know, we are seeing . . . Friends of Medicare joined us in Saskatchewan. They're a healthcare organization in Alberta. And in Alberta we've seen some specific legislations, Bill 11 specifically, opening the doors to two-tier private health care.

[22:00]

Friends of Medicare have done a fantastic job connecting the through line between government policies of the Saskatchewan Party government here and the UCP [United Conservative Party] government in Alberta in their intent on moving towards more privatization in our health care system.

And we see it. We see it every day when we have folks going to Calgary for hip and knee replacements, for private mammograms. So I will maybe, you know . . . I withdraw and apologize on those. But I think there is something to think about in this space and something that certainly isn't being fully fleshed out, I think, for the people in this province.

You know what? I'll move on. I'll continue on, you know, with the analogy of peeking behind the curtain.

Behind the other curtains you see a public school system bursting at the seams. Classrooms packed to the brim so that when your child needs those extra supports, you start to consider how you're going to get those supports for your kids. And the first option is out-of-pocket private tutoring, private education. There is a real concern, a real worry that we are underfunding our classrooms in an attempt to make private education a more acceptable option in Saskatchewan, much like when you break down a public health care system to the point that regular people that I talk to on the doorsteps say to me, yeah, well maybe that two-tier health care system is going to be the solution.

Well I can tell you it's absolutely not. It costs way more. There's way more profit built into that system. There are American insurance companies salivating at the opportunity to make money off of every piece of our health care system. And they are looking at our education system with the same fervour — there is money to be made; why not make it happen?

I'll continue. Peek behind the other curtains and you see a province wracked by homelessness and mental health and addictions crises that are at record levels. You see a province where more and more children are going without, being left behind, going hungry. Once again Saskatchewan ranks worst in the country for child poverty. More than any other province in

the country, Saskatchewan sees the highest rates of food bank use by children.

And here's the thing: as soon as they're pressed on these realities, as soon as you see what is happening behind the curtain, this government will throw up a smokescreen.

And it's interesting here where the analogy of the wonderful wizard continues. In the film *Wicked: For Good*, based off the books and productions, the wonderful wizard — revealed to be, from behind the curtain, pressed for not having any real magic or power or unable to actually govern the people of Oz — says to the protagonist, what is the best way to bring folks together?

And here's the quote: "The best way to bring folks together is to give them a really good enemy." The wizard. From the movie. Quote unquote.

When things are not going your way or your ruse is uncovered, it's easy to point fingers at vulnerable groups, misunderstood groups you can find creating a really good enemy, distracting from all that you don't want people to see. And in 2023, the Sask Party government pointed the finger at queer and trans youth to scapegoat their failed policies on health care, their failed teacher bargaining, skyrocketing cost of living. They rammed bill 137 through this legislature in an emergency session using the notwithstanding clause because they knew it wouldn't stand up in court. They found a really good enemy — a misunderstood, vulnerable community.

And next door, their best friends Danielle Smith and the UCP are taking aim at immigrants to blame for their failures on public health care and public housing and the cost-of-living pressures racking our province. Another finger pointed at a vulnerable group as a smokescreen for failures.

Speaker Goudy: — There's debate. But like to be saying that the government is choosing these things intentional, like you're weaving a tale here that is very accusatory. And I'd ask you to take a different track on this, please.

Nathaniel Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll continue here and hopefully find a through-line to what I'm trying to say here with more delicate words.

You know, Mr. Speaker, what we've seen from this government is when things don't work out and they don't have anyone else to point a finger at, well they'll tell you that it's just simply bad everywhere. Your health care is bad here? Well it's bad everywhere. Your education system, $1,500 cut from per-student funding? It's bad everywhere. We've tried nothing and we're all out of ideas. Political distraction has become a substitute for actually governing.

And I will come back to Brad Wall and a quote: "Leave the place better than how you found it." I'll leave that here on the floor of the Assembly. I hope that we'll have a big long think about that come 2028 when we change the government and we start making this province a bit of a better place.

Now you don't have to pull the curtain too far back to see the realities of 20 years of this government in office. All summer long, driving in Saskatoon, you would have been treated to a set of billboards across the city that said, "Strong. Steady. Saskatchewan." And while you were driving and you were seeing these big pictures of the Premier with "Strong. Steady. Saskatchewan," well the thing I saw in my hometown, in my city of Saskatoon, was a city that had been racked by worsening and worsening homelessness — a homelessness crisis out of control in Saskatchewan.

Our downtown core is struggling. Businesses are worried, and they're locking their doors. Residents are concerned, and people experiencing homelessness are becoming increasingly visible because our systems have failed to provide them with support.

And just before we returned to the legislature this fall, updated statistics of food bank use were released in Canada; again, once again showing record numbers of children in Saskatchewan are using the food bank. And when pressed on child poverty and the record of children using the food bank, the Premier's response was, strong, steady. You don't know how good you have it, and how can children be going hungry when it's so affordable in Saskatchewan? That was the answer.

On the front of houselessness and child poverty it really begs the question about the choices we are making as a society right here in Saskatchewan. Because governing is about choices. The Throne Speech lays out this government's choices, and in it they have chosen to look away from these crises in our province.

The reason I ran was because the decisions in this room affect so, so many. And the most egregious issues facing our province could be solved right now because this Chamber could take real action for the people of this province. Because at their core, child poverty is not an inevitability; it is a policy failure. Houselessness is not an inevitability; it is a policy failure.

Governing is about choices — the policies we choose, the investments we make, the priorities we set, and the people we decide to leave behind with those decisions. Concentrated wealth is a policy choice. Inequality is a policy choice. The absence of adequate, affordable housing is a policy choice. The absence of sufficient supports for people struggling with mental health and addictions is a policy choice.

And when the government has the ability to address these problems, is presented with solutions — rent control being one of the them — and repeatedly chooses not to act, that is a choice as well. A government cannot claim that everything is strong and steady when the people who need it most are being left behind.

So I will amend the tag line for the Throne Speech. In Saskatchewan we have strong, steady child poverty. We have strong, steady houselessness, and we have strong, steady health care privatization.

I'm going to leave with a little bit more of an optimistic quote. You know, I went to the White Coat Ceremony at the University of Saskatchewan, and Dr. Sarah Forgie, the dean of the College of Medicine, stood and gave a really wonderful speech. And in it she said her advice to young people in first-year medical, students receiving their white coats, was that they needed to find a hobby. Something that they could retreat into, reset the brain. And I think it's such good advice. We all need those things that take us out of our regular day to day — hobbies, passions, all

those things.

And so, you know, I'm a bit of a nerd, I'll admit. My colleagues know this. And so some of my hobbies are quite nerdy. But you know, this summer I decided to pick up *The Hobbit*, the book by J.R.R. Tolkien, and reread it. It had been a couple of years, probably since like high school maybe? Maybe more than a couple of years. But really a fantastic read.

And one quote that really stood out to me, and I've been thinking about it a lot, that really encapsulates my values and why I chose to enter this work. So at the end of the book the protagonist, Bilbo, is called to the deathbed of Thorin Oakenshield in an effort on Thorin's part to part in friendship. . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He's laughing at me because I have to give exposition for the scene. Thorin says to Bilbo, and this is the quote that really stood out to me: "If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world."

I think about this quote a lot because at its heart it speaks to what I believe politics should be about. It asks us what we value, what we prioritize, what kind of society we want to build. Do we want hoarded wealth over the well-being of our neighbours? Do we accept that some children will go hungry while others accumulate more than they could ever need? Do we accept that people experiencing houselessness are simply someone else's problem, or do we believe that we have a collective responsibility to one another?

I believe that we can build an economy that works for everyone, an economy that creates prosperity without leaving the kids behind. A province where people have a safe place to call home, where everyone can access health care, where working people can share in the wealth that they create. We don't have to settle for bad policy or choices. We certainly don't have to settle for a government that stopped believing that things can be better. Courage, my friends. 'Tis not too late to build a better world. Change is possible.

And so I will not be supporting the Throne Speech, instead supporting the amendment from my colleagues from Saskatoon Fairview and Regina Walsh Acres. Repeal Bill 137. Thank you so much.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Doug Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today in response to the Speech from the Throne. I would like to thank the Honourable Lieutenant Governor Bernadette McIntyre for delivering the government's vision for the coming legislative session.

Mr. Speaker, this year's Throne Speech speaks about keeping Saskatchewan strong and steady. As I listened to this message, I found myself thinking about people I have had the privilege of representing throughout my years as an MLA in Cypress Hills — our farmers, our ranchers, our small-business owners, health care professionals, first responders, and the families who work hard every day to make Saskatchewan a province we're all so proud to call home.

Because when we talk about strong and steady Saskatchewan, we are talking about more than economic growth and infrastructure and government programs, we are talking about people. Their determination, their compassion, and their willingness to stand together when life's presence changes . . . They never imagine.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by acknowledging the most important people in my family. First and foremost, I am beyond grateful for my wife, Phyllis. Through my years in public service, Phyllis has been my greatest supporter. She has stood beside me through the long days, the late evenings, the community events, challenges that come with representing the people of Cypress Hills.

Anyone who has served in a public office knows that this job does not always operate on a nine-to-five schedule. And while our names may appear on a ballot, our families make the sacrifices right alongside us. Her patience and understanding and encouragement and her unwavering support have meant more to me than words can express.

I am also incredibly grateful to our children and our grandchildren. Families have a wonderful way of keeping us grounded. Our grandchildren especially remind us what really matters. They don't particularly care what happens during question period, but they just want to see grandpa. And I think there is something pretty special about that.

Mr. Speaker, when our government speaks about affordability, health care, and opportunities for our next generations, I think about our own children and our grandchildren. I want them to inherit a province where they can build careers, raise families, pursue their dreams, and feel comfortable about their future. Because behind every policy and every investment are Saskatchewan people, and those families are the reasons we are here.

[22:15]

Mr. Speaker, one thing I have learned throughout my time as an MLA is that none of us do this work alone. Our constituency offices are often the first place people turn to when they need help. Sometimes it's a simple question about government programs. Sometimes it's assistance navigating a difficult situation. And sometimes it is a family facing one of the most challenging moments in their lives. The people who work in our constituency offices are often the ones answering those first calls, listening to those concerns, and helping people find their way around.

They are people who listen when someone is frustrated, worried, and simply do not know where else to turn. And I believe the work deserves recognition because behind every phone call is a person, and behind every case file is a family. And behind every request for assistance is someone hoping that we will listen and understand and do what we can to help. That is something I hope we never lose sight of as elected representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I've been fortunate to work with some wonderful people over the years. And today I want to recognize someone who has been part of my journey in public services from the beginning: my constituency assistant, Twila. Twila originally began with me when we started in 2016. We were both learning the ropes in those early days, getting to know the responsibilities of the office and the many people we were there to serve.

Eventually Twila decided to follow another dream. She become the owner of The Grainery Bakery. Anyone who has owned a small business knows it takes determination, sacrifice, and willingness to keep going when the things get difficult. And in the bakery business I think it's fair to say that mornings start a little earlier than most of us would today prefer. Today The Grainery Bakery serves 28 businesses throughout the Southwest. That is something to be proud of.

But Twila don't stop there. Along with her daughter she has also become an owner of Trails End Buffalo Stix, a family-owned Saskatchewan business producing buffalo jerky. Together they have worked hard developing products, building relationships, and creating opportunities. The jerky went to space, and that's the truth.

Mr. Speaker, I never thought I'd be standing in this Assembly talking about Saskatchewan buffalo jerky travelling into space. NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] requested it and took it as one of the products they had on the space shuttle going into space. That's twice in two years a product from rural Saskatchewan was selected for this Canadian astronaut's menu. From the Saskatchewan prairies to space, what a remarkable achievement. And what a wonderful example of opportunities that exist right here in the province.

Sometimes you don't have to come to a large city or a major corporation to accomplish some things extraordinary. Sometimes great things begin in a small Saskatchewan community with a family, an idea, and determination to succeed.

A year ago I had the pleasure of welcoming Twila back to my constituency office. She continues to own and operate her bakery, remains involved in Trail's End jerky alongside her daughter. And I am grateful to have her working alongside me once again. She brings not only professional experience, but also something incredibly important when you're working with the public — compassion and understanding. And there is a reason for that.

Mr. Speaker, nine years ago on October 17th, 2017, a devastating wildfire swept across southern Saskatchewan. It was a day that changed lives forever. Powerful winds drove fires across the dry prairie. Families were forced to evacuate. Ranchers lost cattle, pasture land, fences, buildings, and years of hard work. And tragically a life was lost.

For those who experienced that day, October 17th is not simply another day on the calendar. It is the day they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Twila and her family knew that better than most. On that day her husband, Ron, and her son Evan were caught in those devastating wildfires. Both suffered life-threatening burns, spending months in the burn unit in Alberta. Ron suffered burns to approximately 35 per cent of his body. Evan suffered burns to approximately 65 per cent of his body.

Mr. Speaker, as a husband, father, and a grandfather myself, I cannot begin to imagine receiving that news — the fear, the uncertainty, the waiting, and overwhelming question of whether the people you love will survive.

The fear of uncertainty for Twila and her family life changed in an instant. What followed was a long, difficult road of medical treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery. There were no easy answers. There were no guarantees. But there was hope and there was Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, when tragedy strikes Saskatchewan, some things remarkable happen. People show up. Friends, neighbours, health care professionals, first responders, complete strangers step forward to help. And that is exactly what happened for Twila, Ron, and Evan and their family. People from across the province offered encouragement, prayers, donations, and countless acts of kindness.

Through medical care, determination, the love of the family, and tremendous community support, Ron and Evan survived. They began a long journey of healing. And over time they found the strength to rebuild their lives. This October 17th marked nine years since that terrible day — nine years to recover, nine years of challenges. But also nine more years of birthdays, Christmases, mornings, family gatherings, and memories — nine more years of being together. For a family that once faced the possibility of losing two people they love, that is an extraordinary blessing.

But what I find especially remarkable is what this family has chosen to do with that experience. Mr. Speaker, on that devastating day on October 17th, Ron and Evan had equipment with them that helped identify their location and allowed them to be found. They laid up against a buffalo fence. The fire went across, but the wind changed and went across them again, laying against that fence. Ron's burns were limited to 35 per cent of his body because he had fire-retardant coveralls that he supplied.

He worked with Whitecap oil down there at that time. And how they got found, he has a location identifier on one of his communication things and that's how the people found them. They survived what they went through then. In an emergency, where every minute matters, that equipment played an important part in that role. Over the years people have reached out to the family wanting to learn more about that equipment as well as the protective clothing Ron was wearing that day. They wanted to understand what worked, what made a difference, and what lessons could be learned.

But conversations have gone far beyond equipment and protective clothing. Other burn survivors and their families have reached out to Ron and Evan and Twila. Some were beginning their own difficult journey of recovery. Others were looking for reassurance, understanding, or simply someone who knew what they went through.

And sometimes, Mr. Speaker, there is no greater comfort than speaking with someone who has walked a similar road, someone who understands the fear, the uncertainty, the long days in the hospital, the challenges that continue long after their return home. Ron and Evan and Twila have been able to share their experience and offer — sometimes that can be difficult but it's in the midst of a tragedy — hope. But this family hasn't stopped there.

Over the past nine years they have continued to raise money and make donations to burn units and the fire stations. They understand first-hand the importance of training and experience, responders' specialized medical care, and the support system

families depend upon. And rather than simply looking back on what they went through, they have continued looking forward, asking what they can do to make differences for someone else.

Mr. Speaker, I find that truly remarkable. A family that once depended on the help of others is now helping to ensure that other families have access to the care and support they may have one day needed. They have turned tragedy into compassion, survival into service, and their own experience into hope for others.

Mr. Speaker, when I think about the commitments outlined in the Throne Speech to strengthen health care and support emergency services and build safer communities, I think about families like this one, because investments in health care and emergency services are not simply a number in a budget. They represent lives. They represent families. And they represent the opportunity for someone to survive, recover, and one day help another person facing a similar situation.

Behind every hospital bed is a family waiting for answers. Behind every emergency call is someone hoping for help, and will survive. And behind every recovery is a story of courage, determination, and people working together. That is why we must continue working to ensure Saskatchewan people receive the care they need when and where they need it. Because good health care doesn't just treat injuries and illness. It gives families hope. And it gives people the opportunity to recover, rebuild, and return to their lives and their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, this brings me to another October the 17th. Just days ago on October the 17th, 2026, tragedy struck during military training exercise at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright, Alberta. Four Canadian Armed Force members lost their lives and others were injured. These were individuals who had chosen to serve our country. They had families, friends, hopes, and dreams.

Today I want to extend my deepest condolences to the families of those four soldiers. To their fellow service members and everyone affected by this tragedy, please know that our thoughts are with you. And to those who were injured, we wish you the strength in healing as you face a difficult road ahead.

When I heard about this tragedy, I couldn't help but think about October 17th, 2017. Two devastating events nine years apart, both involving fire, both leaving families facing unimaginable uncertainty, and both reminding us how quickly life can change.

For Twila and her family, the news brought back memories of their own experience. They understand the fear of waiting for medical updates and the long days, sleepless nights, and the uncertainty of what tomorrow may bring.

Speaker Goudy: — Thanks, Member. It now being 10:30, this house stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]

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