



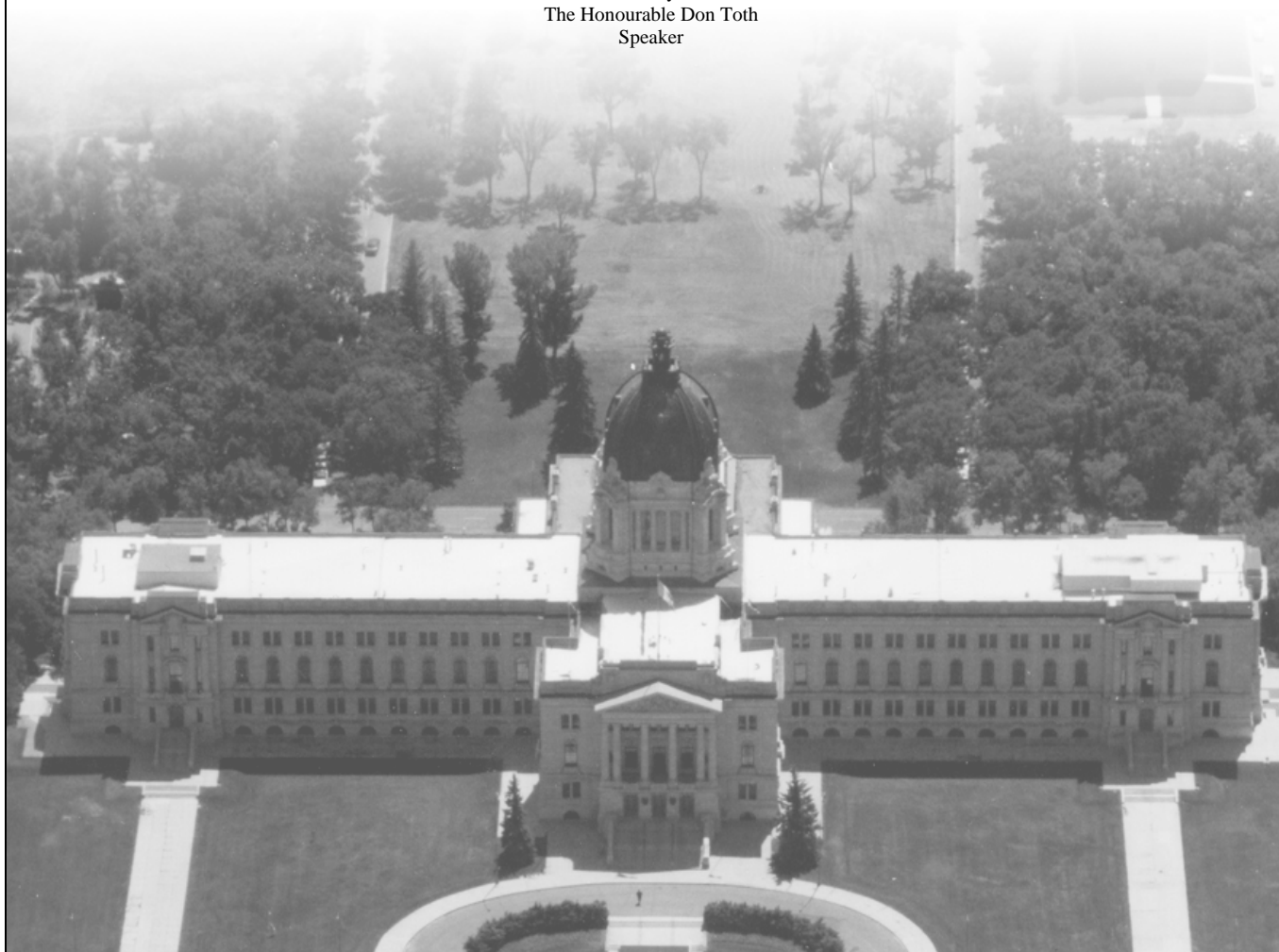
FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Lorne Calvert

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Beatty, Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Calvert, Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Speaker: — I hereby inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received, from the Chief Electoral Officer, a certificate of the election and return of Jeremy Harrison as a member for the constituency of Meadow Lake. I hereby table the return of the writ.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Jeremy Harrison, member for the constituency of Meadow Lake, who has taken the oath and signed the roll and now claims his right to take a seat.

The Speaker: — Mr. Harrison, as you take your rightful place in this Legislative Assembly, I am sure that your time here will be one that serves as a record of honour to yourself and your constituents. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Let the hon. member take his seat.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I just give notice to fellow members in the Assembly that, after some initial introductions, I'll be asking leave for an extended and special introduction. But before I do that, it's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly some very special guests who have joined us in the Speaker's gallery. Accompanied by Amy Boudreau of the protocol office is His Excellency Guillermo Russo Checa, the ambassador to Canada from Peru. And he's joined by his son, Mr. Guillermo Russo Ismodes.

These gentlemen have been in our province, the first official visit of His Excellency to the province of Saskatchewan, now for ... This is the second day. Yesterday they were in Saskatoon where they toured the University of Saskatchewan. They were touring the VIDO [Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization] centre as well as the synchrotron and talking about innovation and agriculture.

This morning I had the great pleasure of meeting with the ambassador here in the Legislative Assembly where we talked about the trading relationship between our two countries, the fact that there's a free trade agreement currently under negotiation, near complete, between Canada and Peru — about the fact that \$73 million worth of trade from Saskatchewan finds its way to Peru. And we also talked about synergies and potential partnerships as this country seeks to further develop mining and make continued progress in what is already a very

robust agricultural sector.

So I want to thank the ambassador for coming to our province, for initiating something I think will be a lasting and fruitful partnership on a number of issues. And I'd ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming him and his son to the Legislative Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would want to join with the Premier on behalf of the official opposition in welcoming His Excellency and his son to the province of Saskatchewan. We hope that your visit will further strengthen the ties between our great province and your great nation. We look forward to even a stronger relationship as the result of the work that you're doing with government and with all of the citizens of Saskatchewan. Welcome on behalf of the official opposition.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, another introduction if I may. Joining us as well in the Speaker's gallery is a friend of mine from way back in my broadcasting days, a former resident of the province, a former resident of Swift Current, and currently the play-by-play voice of the Kelowna Rockets in the BC [British Columbia] division of the WHL [Western Hockey League]. His name is Regan Bartel. He's been a friend for a long time. And I want to welcome him, together with his old colour man, my assistant Everett Hindley, who's also in the Assembly. So welcome to these two gentlemen.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, with leave of the Assembly to make a special but extended introduction of guests.

The Speaker: — The Premier asked for leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave is granted.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the members for that leave. Tomorrow people are going to be gathering in the city of Regina to celebrate the life of a remarkable young man in Chris Knox.

Shortly after being diagnosed with terminal cancer, Chris expressed a desire to attend a Riders' Labour Day classic. And of course, a lot of people went to a lot of work to make that happen for Chris, including the Saskatchewan Roughrider football team. Following the game, he was invited to the team's locker room and there was a bond between Chris and the Riders — and I think perhaps the whole province — that was born on that occasion with the attendant coverage in the media that occurred.

When the Riders won the western final against British Columbia, the Lions, there was a small group of very dedicated people, amazingly dedicated people, who went to work on behalf of Chris. They didn't know him, by the way. They were strangers to Chris, but certainly had read his story and knew a bit about him. They thought he should go to the Grey Cup and so, it seems, did everyone else who heard them initially on a talk radio show — I think it was the Drew Remenda show — heard this suggestion being made and the province literally rallied, the Rider nation rallied behind the cause.

And so joining us in our gallery today, Mr. Speaker, are two very, very special visitors that represent everything that is good about our great province. They were the driving force behind that effort and I want to introduce them here to the Assembly today and say remarks, but as I introduce them if they would stand, I'd appreciate that. Trevor Lowey is here. He is a paramedic from Kelvington and was key in this effort as was Kelly Schermann, who teaches in Nokomis but is a resident of Strasbourg. And maybe just before I continue, we should just give them a warm welcome to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — What began as an effort to get Chris to the football game though grew into a much, much, much bigger effort. Trevor and Kelly asked for help for their plan and in true Saskatchewan fashion the people of the province responded and within a few hours of getting the word out, they had raised about \$12,000 with more coming in. There was substantial corporate donations we should acknowledge this afternoon from Greystone Managed Investments, from Co-operators, from Cameco, from the Four Seasons Sports Palace, and from Transwest Air.

There was such a lot of money raised and goodwill raised for this, by the way, that it allowed Trevor and Kelly to organize a Grey Cup trip for 10 other young cancer patients from the province of Saskatchewan, together with family members and the attendant personnel that was needed for them to go to the trip. And one of those very young, brave Saskatchewan individuals is here and I'd ask the Assembly to welcome Breann Clarke to the Legislative Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — There are other guests I'd like to introduce before I go on and I hope I'm not going to miss everyone. I know some had to leave for another appointment, but Breann's mom, Sherri, is here. Trevor's wife, Tammy, is here and Larry Hart is here, who is the father of Brennan, another of the patients that got to go. And we also want to welcome all of them to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Through the efforts of Trevor and Kelly they got to enjoy a game and most importantly, at least for that game, that particular weekend, they got to enjoy a win. And the Riders invited them down onto the surface, playing surface of the Rogers Centre and met all of the patients, met the young people. And many will know that after the Grey Cup was won, the Riders also made a point of bringing that grail up to Chris's

room so that — and people will have seen that picture — so that he could have his time with the Grey Cup.

I want to just read something into the record if I can. It's something that Trevor wrote recently that I think best expresses the nature of these individuals that have done this. He wrote this:

Kelly and I have discovered over the past couple of weeks that our efforts have reached much farther than our intended targets. We had hopes of providing an experience for the children that they may never have the opportunity again to realize.

These families who have children that are terminally ill will treasure every happy moment they have been able to share.

Kelly and I are fortunate to have been given the glorious opportunity to be able to share in some small part, these memories.

They there were being thankful for the opportunity to do what they did. Pretty amazing, Mr. Speaker. I had a chance to meet with them briefly beforehand, and the Riders had sent over some gifts that they wanted our visitors to have today. But on behalf of a grateful province, thank you for demonstrating what Saskatchewan heart is all about, and welcome to your Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to extend thanks to the Premier for welcoming these guests to our Chamber, and with the Premier to extend our deep thanks to the significant efforts that you made to make these dreams come true for victims of cancer and patients of cancer.

I want to take this opportunity — just since we have this chance — to thank the Premier for his efforts. We know he was involved. And we would want to thank the Premier for his efforts in ensuring that Chris Knox and the others had the opportunity to be at the Grey Cup. Many of us wished we could've been there, and we thank you for making it possible for some to be that otherwise couldn't have been. And so we thank you, Mr. Premier, and we thank those who work so hard in our province and in our communities to make these dreams come true.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great honour to introduce a group of people from Weyburn seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. Today we have 14 students from the Southeast Regional College, 14 students of the adult basic education program, and they're here to watch the activities of the proceedings of the House and then I'll be meeting with them later on. And also with them, accompanying

them, are their teachers, Anna Fish and Cheryl Popplestone.

[13:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that Ms. Fish has a practice during election campaigns of allowing candidates to come speak to their students, and I've had the privilege of doing so over the last year and half, twice. And with our government introducing fixed election dates, I sure hope it's not another four years that I'll have to wait to visit with these students. And so I would like all members to welcome them to their Assembly today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before we move on to statements by members, I would just like to say to the guests in the Assembly, we're pleased that you're here, and you're welcome to be here as observers. We're pleased to have you come in, but we ask you not to participate to the clapping of hands or acknowledgement of hands. Just a reminder of the procedure of the Assembly. But thank you so much for coming and joining us.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the deputy leader.

Thank You to Civil Servants During Transition

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following the recent provincial election this building was a flurry of activity. With the election of a new government, many tasks had to be completed within a very short time period. Entire offices were packed up and moved; new offices were established; new computers and phone numbers were set up — just to name a few of those tasks.

As the head of this government's transition process, I would like to take a moment to thank the many civil servants within this building and outside of this building who worked so hard to make the transition as smooth as possible. I know that in the first few weeks of this government, many of our civil servants put in long hours and often worked late into the night and on weekends.

On behalf of our new government, I would personally like to thank Steve Bata and his team at Government Services here in the building for all the long hours they put in to the physical move of both government and opposition offices. I would also like to thank staff at ITO [Information Technology Office], corporate services, and SaskTel for their work in ensuring all new offices were equipped and connected. I know that much of this work continues. Finally, I would like to thank all other civil servants in all ministries and branches of government for helping to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

It is an honour to serve the people of Saskatchewan alongside all of you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Violence Against Women

Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, I am saddened to stand in the Assembly today and remember that almost 20 years ago on December 6, 14 young Canadian women were murdered simply because they were women. Mr. Speaker, I am saddened today because since that time more Canadian women have been killed or murdered simply because they are women. I am saddened today because I know that over the years to come we'll hear of more Canadian women who will die simply because they are women. I am especially saddened that so many of these women will be First Nations or Métis.

Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the good work that was done by the NDP [New Democratic Party] government and the First Nations and Métis leadership to address the causes of violence against Aboriginal women. We must continue to address the conditions that foster violence, poverty, access to education, safe shelters for women and their children, family supports, social and economic supports.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue the work to deal with the root causes and the inequalities that exist in our society. We must do better to create a safer and healthier future for women and their children. Mr. Speaker, each and every one of us must do our part to eradicate violence from our society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative

Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Canada and the province of Saskatchewan announced on Friday that as part of the Asia-Pacific gateway and corridor initiative, the Government of Canada will contribute up to 27 million to a proposed strategic infrastructure project estimated at 93 million. This project will benefit Regina and all of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, through improved traffic flow and enhanced transportation safety and security.

This infrastructure project consists of building a new Canadian Pacific Railway intermodal facility west of Regina right in my riding of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, the upgrading of Pinkie Road connecting to Highways No. 1 and 11 — both highway system routes — and connecting to the city of Regina road network which will provide direct access for international trade traffic to this facility.

Mr. Speaker, the upgraded road and rail grade crossings will also result in environmental benefits of reduced congestion and fewer vehicle emissions. Overall, Mr. Speaker, this project will improve Saskatchewan's infrastructure. Projects like this are made possible when all levels of government work together.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Human Rights Day

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday, December 10, was Human Rights Day and marked the launch of a year-long campaign leading up to the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights or UDHR.

Mr. Speaker, the UDHR is extraordinarily significant, that it's the first international document to recognize that all human beings have fundamental rights and freedoms. The theme of the campaign is Dignity and Justice For All of Us, and it is about reinforcing the declaration not as a luxury or wish list, but as a commitment to realizing the ideals of universal dignity and justice to which the declaration speaks.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan occupies a special place in the development of Canadian human rights. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Saskatchewan Bill of Rights. In 1947 under the leadership of the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] premier, Tommy Douglas, this province introduced The Saskatchewan Bill of Rights Act, the first general human rights Act in North America. Saskatchewan's Bill of Rights predated the Canadian Bill of Rights by some 13 years and is seen as the first step towards the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Mr. Speaker, we can be proud of the history of human rights law in Saskatchewan, but there is still much more to do. Human Rights Day reminds us of the need to embrace our neighbours regardless of their faith or race, and remember that we all have the right to be treated with fairness and respect. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Northwest.

Saskatoon Citizens Save a Life

Mr. LeClerc: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize four outstanding Saskatchewan citizens.

Last week on Friday morning in Saskatoon a city bus driver, Diana Thompson, stopped at a bus shelter to pick up a passenger on her route. This passenger informed Ms. Thompson that there was a man at the stop who looked to be in very poor condition. The bus driver realized that she had passed this man on her previous circuit two and a half hours earlier. She flagged down another city bus driver, Chris Clarke, who radioed for an ambulance when she brought the man on to her bus.

Two MD Ambulance paramedics, Cary Serviss and Eric Jelinski, arrived at the scene only minutes after receiving the call. The man had no pulse when they arrived. Wearing a coat but no hat and gloves, the man also had severe hypothermia. The man, who had been reported as missing earlier in the day, is now expected to make a full recovery. He is very lucky to be alive.

I wish to acknowledge these four Saskatchewan citizens and their quick and decisive actions on December 7. They saved a life. On behalf of the province of Saskatchewan, I ask all

members to thank them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Role of Opposition

Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, today ... and my colleagues take our place in opposition and assume our new role in this legislature. And to all of those who supported us and have given us the privilege and the responsibility of sitting in these benches, I want to extend our deep thanks and, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that they have given us a job to do.

In opposition we will continue to work hard on behalf of the people of this province, and see to it that this new Sask Party government is held accountable on each and every one of their many, many commitments. We will put our energy and experience to work to ensure that the best interests of Saskatchewan people are represented.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know that the role of opposition extends far beyond the blaming and complaining we saw from the Sask Party while they were in opposition. We know that our role is to hold the government of the day accountable and responsible, to oppose those policies and initiatives that will not serve the interests of Saskatchewan people, and to propose substantive alternatives and policies that do.

I can assure Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, that this is precisely what I and this New Democratic Party caucus will do.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Congratulations to Saskatchewan Roughriders

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are several characteristics that unite the people of Saskatchewan, that define who we are — hard-working, hopeful, generous, determined, just to name a few. Mr. Speaker, we are not for the most part a superstitious lot, but the people of Saskatchewan were not about to take chances, especially with the 95th Grey Cup on the line. And so with a new government in place and a legion of Riderville fans with them in Toronto and all across Canada, our beloved Roughriders captured just their third Grey Cup championship.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — And while many would point to a new provincial government as the turning point — because after all, Mr. Speaker, the Riders have never won at all under the NDP — most will agree that it was the new leadership at Mosaic Stadium, specifically the general manager, Eric Tillman, and head coach, Kent Austin, that finally put them over the top.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think I need to replay how the game went. Seeing and hearing it once was enough for anyone's blood pressure but, Mr. Speaker, when the final pages of this season

are written, the Roughriders 2007 Grey Cup winning season could be summed up by those characteristics I mentioned earlier — hard work, determination, hopefulness, and generosity.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are proud of our football team not only for the winning season but for exemplifying the best our province has to offer. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to CEO [chief executive officer] Jim Hopson, general manager Tillman, head coach Kent Austin, and all the coaches, players, and Roughrider personnel on their championship season. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Prince Albert Pulp Mill

Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I realize we are at oral questions, but somehow I think I have to respond to the last member's statement, you know. You know I've always believed that, I've always believed that what happens over there at Mosaic Stadium has much more to do with the players and the coaching staff and so on, the fans, than what happens over here. But all right, Mr. Speaker, if I had to take one for the team, I took it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, many of us have watched with some interest over the last several days and weeks the activities of this new government. So my first question is going to be to the member from Swift Current in receiving his first question as Premier of the province. Mr. Speaker, because it's the first question, I'm going to make it very simple.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier today, through you, what value does the Premier of Saskatchewan put on the process of consultation, conversation, and communication with citizens, with the people of our province before public policy decisions are made and announced? What is the value that this Premier puts on consultation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and may I say to the Leader of the Opposition that I welcome this first question.

I know one of the leading political observers in the province has recently written that it might take some time for the Leader of the Opposition to get used to his new role. It might take some time for me to get used to my new role as it relates to question period in this Assembly. And I want to assure that Leader of the Opposition, I want to make this assurance to him. We are going to work very, very hard over here to ensure that he has a very long time to hone his skills in opposition just as we will need some of that time to hone our skills in government in this Assembly.

I will also say this in answer, in direct answer to the member's question, the direct answer to the member's question is this. This side of the House very much values consultation with the public, consultation with the voters, with the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan. I note with interest, Mr. Speaker, and the leader may want to note this as well, that we just had a consultation process — a general election on the November 7. We made some commitments in that election, and as a result of the consultation, we're going to implement those commitments.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in this case I wish that the Premier's actions matched his words.

Mr. Speaker, there's a reason why the people of northern Saskatchewan, and particularly Prince Albert, worked for two years with government, with the citizens, with First Nations, and with Domtar to create a deal that would result in the reopening of the P.A. [Prince Albert] mill. They did it, Mr. Speaker, because the permanent closure of the P.A. mill will have dramatic and drastic consequences on the forestry in this province and on the citizens of Prince Albert and communities surrounding Prince Albert.

[14:00]

There was an independent study done, Mr. Speaker, by Meyers Norris Penny that tells us that the total impact of permanent mill closure would be over \$400 million in reduced annual GDP [gross domestic product], over 950 million in reduced production, and almost 4,000 in reduced employment.

The Premier's decision to simply tear this deal up will have a very negative impact on many, many Saskatchewan people and communities. So my question to the Premier is this, Mr. Speaker: with whom did the Premier consult? Who did the Premier consult with before he decided and announced to scrap the deal with Domtar?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I know the people of this province, the people of this province remember well this last-minute, desperate deal — and I use quotation marks, Mr. Speaker, because there was no deal.

This was about pulp fiction. This was about a desperate attempt on the part of that party, trailing in the polls, to try to get elected to save their political skin in Prince Albert and across the province. That's what it was. It was transparent. The media saw through this, Mr. Speaker. I would argue as well, given the fact that our party actually saw that breakthrough with a brand new member from Prince Albert in that constituency, that the people of P.A. saw through it as well.

Let me be very clear. This government is committed to doing the work necessary to get the mill reopened to ensure that our forestry industry is healthy. I was just talking to Domtar

officials this week. The minister has spoken to Domtar officials this week. We are going to do the work necessary. But what we won't do, we will not risk up to \$100 million on a fictional deal as a part of a desperate attempt that is driven more by politics than by economics. It's cruel to the people of Prince Albert, and they deserve better. They'll get better, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier was very direct and very simple. Whom did the Premier consult with before he made this decision and before he made this announcement?

Now he volunteers today that he has at last spoken to Domtar. Mr. Speaker, has the Premier spoken to Mr. Raymond Royer, CEO and president of Domtar, who worked long, hard hours with the team to put this deal together? Has he spoken to the president and CEO of Domtar? Did he do that before he made his announcement? Did he speak to the community of Prince Albert before he made his announcement? Did he consult or not, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, for years it has been the policy of this party, in opposition and now in government, that the risking of taxpayers' dollars in mature industries — like we saw this government do at the Meadow Lake pulp mill where they lost \$800 million taxpayers' dollars, like the 35 million that they lost on SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], and the list goes on — that that kind of practice by a government, whatever its stripe, is no substitute for proper economic development policy.

And in coming to that conclusion we consulted, Mr. Speaker, with chambers of commerce. We consulted with community economic development agencies. We developed policy as a party. We were very clear all along. And even after the Leader of the Opposition, then the premier, made this very desperate announcement in September, we were clear that we would not risk taxpayers' money in this deal. We would work to open the mill short of government money.

In the intervening time, Mr. Speaker, there was a general election — an election that saw a member from Prince Albert elected to our party, 37 others elected for the Saskatchewan Party, and a brand new government. That's pretty good consultation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Here the Premier's been in office a couple of weeks; already he seems to be getting hard of hearing.

Mr. Speaker, the question is as follows: who did the Premier consult with before he made the decision to scrap the MOU

[memorandum of understanding] with Domtar? Did he talk to people in Prince Albert? Did he talk to people in the task force? Did he talk to people at Domtar?

He says initially he values consultation. He says his government values consultation. Well I say it's too bad his actions don't match his words. Again I ask the Premier, who did he talk to? Who did he consult with before making the decision to shut down the MOU and shut down the future of the P.A. mill?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it strikes me that the NDP opposition has completely forgot about November 7, an intervening general election. And all the time, and all the time that went before that general election, Mr. Speaker, when this party in developing our policy that said a Saskatchewan Party government would not invest, would not risk taxpayers' money in mature industries, that consultation then occurred over the years in places like Swift Current. It occurred in Moose Jaw. It occurred in the northwest part of the province. That consultation occurred in Regina and in Saskatoon and constituencies across this province.

And then on November 7, the people of the province had the opportunity to weigh in on which view they liked better — direct investment risking taxpayers' money, as we saw from the NDP in government, or getting the fundamentals right and the proper vision, the proper economic plan for the province of Saskatchewan. Asked and answered, Mr. Speaker. The consultation happened on November 7. We can send the Leader of the Opposition the clippings of the result if he would like.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, now the Premier seems to be adopting the same point of view as the part-time Minister of Labour, who was talking to the press the other day. And when asked did he consult about issues like essential services legislation, what did he say? Well no, we had a consultation; it was called an election. Now we have a mandate to do as we please.

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier believes that an election mandate is to do simply as he pleases without consultation, we're all in for trouble here, Mr. Speaker. Now if in fact the Premier had made a decision on ideological basis that this MOU was going to be scrapped after the election, why did he not tell his candidate in Prince Albert the same thing before this candidate ran ads during the election campaign which say — and I'm quoting the ad, Mr. Speaker — Darryl Hickie says, "a vote for Darryl is a vote for the mill open and people working."

Well you know, Mr. Speaker, he might have at least consulted with his caucus colleagues and his future caucus colleague from Prince Albert.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that that member would characterize that announcement that occurred in September a deal when nobody else in the province with common sense would characterize that announcement as a deal to reopen the mill including, including, Mr. Speaker, the officials at Domtar, where the vice-president of corporate communication said, and I quote:

We feel that it is premature at this time to give people false hope and say to them by next summer you're going to start working again. It's not possible and Domtar does not work that way.

Domtar officials changed their position three times. It's also interesting to note as a part of this fictional deal that the Montreal Lake Cree Nation said for the public record that that member, when he was on this side of the House, failed to consult . . . [inaudible] . . . with them when they have a direct stake in what's happening over there. He says, Chief Lionel Bird says there was no consultation that came from the government.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, what the new member for Prince Albert said campaigning, what I said campaigning is that we will work hard to ensure that that mill reopens and forestry is healthy. But we will not risk taxpayers' money on a fictional deal.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — If only the actions matched the words, Mr. Speaker. If only the actions matched the words.

The now minister from Prince Albert didn't say he'd work toward. No. He said to the people of Prince Albert, quote, "a vote for Darryl is a vote for the mill open and people working." Mr. Speaker, who understood this to be a deal? I'll tell you who understood it to be a deal: the people of Prince Albert, the task force in Prince Albert, CEP [Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada], the working people, the families, the executives of Domtar.

Mr. Speaker, if this Premier for ideological reasons has decided to tear up all of this work, then it is incumbent upon him today to tell the people of Prince Albert, tell the people of northern Saskatchewan — Big River, Carrot River, Hudson Bay — to tell the people of Saskatchewan what is his plan. What is his plan to reopen the mill in Prince Albert? And, Mr. Speaker, what is his timeline? For a failure to produce a timeline will represent a failure of his government to the people of Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, what is the Premier's plan, and what is the timeline to see the mill reopen as guaranteed it would be by the candidate and now the member from Prince Albert?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about a timeline because, when he announced this deal, he had his own timeline. Remember that? He said it's going to open by the summer.

But then Domtar officials got word of this, and their comment was no; we'd better not be saying it's going to open by summer. The quote here I read from Domtar officials was about false hope. And all of the punditry and all of the journalists, business journalists, weighed in on the province and said there is no deal here.

The Speaker: — I call the members to order. I invite the Premier to finish his response.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — And so, Mr. Speaker, what the people of Prince Albert and area with the forestry can, what those folks can expect from this new government is a sincere attempt to find a real solution for the mill — not a fictional one. We are going to work very hard with the city officials. The work of the task force is certainly not lost. We are going to consult with First Nations, by the way, who have a stake in this — unlike our predecessors. And more to the point, Mr. Speaker, we will not leave Big River out in the cold as his plan, his fictional plan intended to do.

What the people of Prince Albert and area can expect from this new government and that member and this minister is to get the right deal for P.A. and area for that mill. That is our intention. I'll be in Prince Albert on Friday to meet with the chamber and the mayor to begin work, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, here's what the Saskatchewan Party had to say before the election on the Domtar deal. Quote:

"The forestry is a vital and often overlooked part of our economy, and the way we manage this important resource for future generations will determine the long term prosperity for many people . . . Key to this future is the important role to be played by First Nations who must be involved in every step of the deliberations."

Well the way they managed this important resource was to scrap the deal — some management, Mr. Speaker.

As for First Nations people being involved in every step of the deliberations, I question if they were involved in any step of the deliberations.

To the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations: did she consult with First Nations people before her government made the decision to tear up the deal? Were First Nations part of any deliberations?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, there were . . .

The Speaker: — I call the members to order. Order. The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to consultations . . . I think we won't be taking any lessons from the members opposite. Referring to the Domtar deal:

“There's a legal requirement for them . . . to consult with us,” Bird said, adding that the province . . . [proceeding with the plan] “without any care or desire to deal with any concern the Montreal Lake Cree Nation has.”

And that is with respect to . . . Chief Bird has said that. So when it comes to consultations, absolutely we will consult with the people in Prince Albert, and we will be happy to do that on an ongoing basis, something that the members opposite never did when they cooked up the deal in the 11th hour just prior to an election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — The Saskatchewan Party have a lot of explaining to do to the people of Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. The people of my constituency are feeling misled by the members across the way — misled. None more so than the working men and women of the pulp mill. It's no wonder why, Mr. Speaker. Here's what the *Leader-Post* reported November 10, three days after the election. And I'll quote:

Darryl Hickie . . . said he spoke to the local head of the mill workers' union and to the plant manager on Thursday and he's hopeful that negotiations will begin soon with Domtar.

It appears the union was given assurances by the member for Prince Albert Carlton that the mill would reopen. No wonder this promise breaking came as such a surprise to them. My question is to the Minister of Labour: did he happen to consult with union before they tore up the deal with Domtar?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, indeed the reviews on this whole deal are coming from across Saskatchewan. In a *StarPhoenix* editorial on September 14, the editorial board in *The StarPhoenix* says:

This deal needs to be seen for exactly what it is — a political equation for the NDP rather than an economic one for the rest of . . . [the people of Saskatchewan].

And everyone in Saskatchewan knows, Mr. Speaker, that at the 11th hour, at the 11th hour a deal put together by the former Premier of this province was not a good one for the people of Saskatchewan. And that is why the reason on November 7 of

this past month the people of Saskatchewan said in an overwhelming fashion that that's where you need to be sitting now, sir, and not on this side of the House with the government that we have today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for P.A. Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's no surprise that this new government consulted neither with First Nations or with the unions on killing the Domtar deal, this despite the Saskatchewan Party's wringing of hands and shedding of crocodile tears at the negative effect this will have on the P.A. economy, the provincial economy, and of course to the people directly affected. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the member for Prince Albert Carlton made the outrageous claim during the election campaign that a vote for him was a vote for the mill open and people working.

Given that the Saskatchewan Party made these promises to the people in my constituency, and given that they didn't consult with First Nations, with unions, or with the people they represent, my question's to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

An Hon. Member: — We'll try somebody else.

Mr. Furber: — Yes, we'll try. Did he consult with the people of Prince Albert, with the city of Prince Albert before killing the deal to reopen their pulp mill?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Mines.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier has had a discussion with the Domtar officials. I have had a discussion with the Domtar officials. And the members opposite can be rest assured that we will be doing everything we can in talks and in negotiations with Domtar to do just as what the member has suggested, that we will want to work with them to ensure that the mill stays open, and we'll be doing that at ongoing basis.

But what we won't be doing, what we will not be doing, is putting \$100 million of taxpayers' money at risk for a deal cooked up on the 11th hour just before an election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from P. A. Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — So Mr. Speaker, this government has taken upon themselves, it's obvious, to kill the Domtar deal. No consultation whatsoever — not with First Nations, not with the people of Prince Albert, the unions affected, and not even with Domtar.

My question is to the Minister of Forestry finally. Now that he's killed this deal, can we see the details of the plan that he has to open a mill?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — What we will be doing, what we will be doing, Mr. Speaker, is we'll be consulting with a broad number of people all across Saskatchewan. But what we won't be doing is some of the things that your government did in the past. The Shoal Lake First Nation chief, Marcel Head, said on September 13, "There just doesn't seem to be any . . ."

The Speaker: — I think there's too much debate going on. We'd like to hear the response from the minister. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Shoal Lake First Nation chief, Marcel Head, on September 13 said, "There just doesn't seem to be any co-operation," referring to your previous administration.

There just doesn't seem to be any co-operation. We've . . . been left [entirely out] in the dark about this.

And that is something that we will not be doing, Mr. Speaker. We'll be doing everything we can to work with Domtar to make sure that the mill remains open in Prince Albert. And we intend to do that as soon as we possibly can.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from P.A. Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the members of . . . or the people of Prince Albert would love an explanation as to how the members of that government, members of that cabinet could tell them that a vote for the Saskatchewan Party was a vote for keeping the mill open and then have the Saskatchewan Party leader turn around and drive a stake through the heart of the deal.

Here's what the P.A. *Herald* said about this flip-flop on December 10, and I'll quote:

Now comes an interesting test for the cop-turned-politician. His constituents have raised their voices: will Hickie speak for Prince Albert to the government, or will he be a voice of government to Prince Albert?

I'd like to ask the minister the same question as did the media of Prince Albert. Will he be a voice for the people of Prince Albert, or will he sell them out to his political masters?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the Premier's already had discussions with Domtar. I've already had discussions with Domtar officials. We'll be working hard with them. We have said in a number of ways that we are prepared to work with them on things like infrastructure.

We're prepared to look at cogeneration opportunities for them. We're prepared to look at possible other incentives that we would be prepared to work with them on it.

And the Premier's indicated to them — and he's going to be meeting with some folks in Prince Albert later on this week — that we'll be doing everything we possible can to reopen the mill in Prince Albert and make sure that there are good jobs and employment for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from P.A. Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address this question to the member from Prince Albert Carlton. In his newspaper ad, when he said that a vote for him and Saskatchewan Party was a vote for the mill open and people working, was he aware of the Saskatchewan Party plan to tear up the deal?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's really quite instructive here. The people opposite, the members opposite are suggesting that somehow or another there was a deal, when in fact there was an MOU that was non-binding. And everyone understands that.

You put in place 100 million, at risk \$100 million of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money, and that's something that the people on this side of the House are not going to do with the taxpayers' money. We're going to be responsible. We're going to ensure that the people of Saskatchewan . . . that managed properly the finances of this government.

And we will not do something like the members opposite did in this past few months. We will not put \$100 million at risk in an MOU moments before an election campaign is announced here in Saskatchewan. That's maybe what you people on that side would do, Mr. Speaker, but the people of this . . . The people that represent . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I ask the minister to make his comments through the Chair. Final comments.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. We will not be risking taxpayers' dollars as was at risk in the MOU that the previous administration handled. And I think the people of Saskatchewan in the election campaign in a whole-hearted fashion said yes; they agree with what we're doing in this administration.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I call the members to attention. Order. I call the member from Canora to attention.

ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Speaker: — Members of the Legislative Assembly,

pursuant to rule 43 it is your duty at this time to elect a member to serve as Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committee of the Whole. I now ask the Clerk to initiate proceedings.

Clerk: — Pursuant to the procedure specified under rule 42(1) and rule 45(4), the following member has declared his intention to stand as candidate for election to the office of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committee of the Whole — Mr. Greg Brkich, the hon. member of the Legislative Assembly for Arm River-Watrous.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, may I ask leave to make a few brief remarks?

The Speaker: — The member has asked for leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. The member may proceed.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate you on the election of Speaker. I know with your many, many years of service to the House you're going to do an excellent job, and I look forward to working under you in any way that I can in serving this House.

I want to thank all members present for expressing their confidence in me as Deputy Speaker. I will fulfill that office with the very best of my ability. The times when I am asked to assume the Chair, I will do it with fairness and impartiality. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, it is my pleasure to inform you that you have elected Greg Brkich, the hon. member of the Legislative Assembly for Arm River-Watrous, as your Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committee of the Whole. Any further comments? I recognize the Premier.

MOTIONS

Appointment of Deputy Chair of Committees

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. Moved by myself and seconded by the Government House Leader, with leave of the Assembly, I move the following:

That Mr. Tim McMillan, member for the constituency of Lloydminster, be appointed to preside as Deputy Chair of Committees of this Assembly.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — So moved, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Moved by the Premier, seconded by the member from Melfort, by leave of the Assembly:

That Mr. Tim McMillan, member of the constituency of Lloydminster, be appointed to preside as Deputy Chair of Committees.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion carried.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — My apologies, members. I should have given the member the opportunity to have a word if he so wished. And so I would ask leave of the Assembly to allow the member to respond. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Premier and the House Leader for their confidence, and I'd look forward to the responsibility that this position entails. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask leave of this Assembly to move a motion setting the end of this session.

The Speaker: — The member has asked for leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Member may proceed.

House Adjournment

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move, seconded by the Opposition House Leader:

That when this Assembly adjourn at the end of the sitting day on December 20, 2007, it shall stand adjourned at a date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven clear days notice, if possible, of such date and time.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved, seconded by the Opposition House Leader by leave of this Assembly:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of the sitting day on December 20, 2007, it shall stand adjourned to a date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member . . .

Order. Would members come to order, please. I will read the motion again. By leave of the Assembly:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of the sitting day on December 20, 2007, it shall stand adjourned to a date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government and that Mr. Speaker will give each member seven clear days notice, if possible, of such date and time.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to rise in this Chamber to move the first Throne Speech by a Saskatchewan Party government, and I will be making the official motion at the conclusion of my remarks.

But before I respond to the Throne Speech, there are a few comments I would like to make. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your new role. I can't think of anyone more suited to this position than yourself, and I know you will serve in a fair and diligent manner. Mr. Speaker, we all know that you have been in this Assembly for many, many, many sessions, and you have acquired much knowledge from your experience. So it is fitting for you and again congratulations.

[14:30]

I also want to congratulate all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] on their election and re-election. To the new MLAs on both sides of the House, this is work that is very rewarding, constant interaction with people. And as any veteran MLA will tell you, the time commitments and time away from your families will sometimes exceed what you thought. Being an MLA is also an opportunity and an experience shared by very few citizens of this province. We are 58 people out of a province of approximately 1 million people. So it is indeed special.

And, Mr. Speaker, all MLAs owe a great deal of thanks to their constituency assistants. They are the first people that people see

when they contact us, and that forms a first impression of the MLA. To my CA [constituency assistant], Rosalie George, who has been with me for about eight months and prior to that, Leanne Fox, I am so thankful for the courteous and professional manner in which all my constituents are treated.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend my congratulations to the member from Swift Current as he assumes duties as Premier. Saskatchewan people have come to realize that this Premier has new ideas, energy, and the ability to help Saskatchewan realize its potential. I am so proud to part of his team.

And congratulations also to those who were appointed to cabinet — I think that they will work their hardest to do a very good job for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take a moment to thank my family, my husband Vic, my kids, and grandkids for their never-ending support. Not unlike my colleagues in this Chamber, my family has made many sacrifices so that I can do my job efficiently and effectively. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, my family has been facing health issues for the past four and a half months. I thank my colleagues from both sides of the House for their thoughts and prayers. They along with family and friends have been so supportive, and we have gained a lot of strength from that support.

I would also like to extend appreciation to my mom who lives in Estevan, and I know she will be watching this today. She watches it every day, Mr. Speaker. So I just want her to know that I love her and appreciate her support.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people of the Estevan constituency for again electing me as their representative to this honourable Assembly. This was the third time I was elected. The first time — in 1999 — I received over 48 per cent of the vote. In 2003 I received 51.3 per cent of the vote, and on November 7 I garnered over 66 per cent of the vote. So thank you again.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — So thank you again to all the people of my constituency. I am so honoured to represent them.

Mr. Speaker, I did notice yesterday when the Swift Current Comp Chamber choir sang their first selection, they mentioned the different places in Saskatchewan, and they did mention the city of Estevan two or three times. They also mentioned several other towns in my riding: Bienfait, Midale, Torquay, and even Hitchcock. I was thrilled, and I'm sure those watching from their homes were as well. Thank you to the Comp Chamber Singers from Swift Current on a job well done.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency is in a very vibrant corner of this province. Estevan is the largest centre and the only city in the riding, but our boundaries extend west to include Radville. The southern boundary of my riding is to the United States border. The Estevan constituency boasts a vast agricultural base, thriving oil industries, and many small businesses — all of

these areas contributing greatly to the well-being of our province.

They are a proud people. They are hard-working people, people you can trust, people of their word. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, they expect the same from their government. When commitments are made, they expect you to keep them, and this has been a problem in Saskatchewan. Prior to yesterday's Throne Speech, the responses could have pretty well been the same year after year because the Throne Speech was always the same: re-announcement after re-announcement, empty promises. Finally the people of this province had had enough. Fearmongering didn't work. People chose hope and positive change over fear.

What people heard yesterday were new ideas from a new government. These were our plans for this province as stated in our election platform. Saskatchewan is a rich province, rich in natural resources and human resources, but we've underachieved. We've underachieved because the previous government settled for mediocrity. We have so much potential for growth. We need to keep our future, our children, our youth in this province. The Throne Speech addressed this issue.

Mr. Speaker, when I was door knocking during the election campaign, many of the people I spoke to really liked our plan that included tuition rebates and also the program for young entrepreneurs. For too long our youth have been leaving this province because there were no incentives encouraging them to stay. This program will deal with the educate-and-export mentality of the previous government. We in the Saskatchewan Party believe that we should train and retain.

Another issue that was and is very important is increased property tax relief. For the past several years the NDP promised to deal with this issue. They said that when the Boughen report was released this would be dealt with. The NDP cherry-picked from that report, choosing to raise the PST [provincial sales tax] by 1 per cent but there was no relief on the education portion of property tax. Then it was dependent on school amalgamations. Then it got so it was almost dependent on the weather, Mr. Speaker, and certainly dependent on the approaching election.

Finally people are getting what they voted for. The education portion of property taxes will be reduced by doubling rebates over the next four years. And, Mr. Speaker, this applies to farm land as well as urban dwellings.

People in my area were also very happy with the announcement that used cars and light trucks are exempt from the PST. No one could figure out why PST was paid over and over again on the same vehicle. Many people cannot afford to drive a new vehicle, so this program really helps those who need it most, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities are pleased with our commitment to negotiate a new revenue-sharing agreement. Local governments have faced cuts and downloading during harder times. But now that the economy has improved, little has been done. Negotiations will include a percentage of our own-source revenue.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is a very important industry in my

constituency and indeed the province. The producers of this province have faced some extremely trying times in recent years. Thankfully, grain prices are on the upswing now, but ranchers are still struggling. This industry has been ignored by the NDP for 16 years. We had a minister who didn't understand or care, or maybe both, about agriculture. It's time Saskatchewan played a leadership role in negotiating programs such as CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] with the federal government, and I'm confident this will happen with the member for Melville-Saltcoats being the Minister of Agriculture. He is someone who truly understands the industry.

Mr. Speaker, my husband and I farm. We live on a farm and love the peacefulness and freedom that goes with that lifestyle. In our area there are some young people moving back to the farm. Just this past summer we had a young couple build a nice new home on an acreage just about a half a mile from our farm. And a real drawing card in attracting people to a community is the distance to the school. So it is important that schools are within a reasonable distance for students travelling by bus and also for the economic well-being of a community. When people are interested in relocating that is probably the number one question asked.

Education is a priority for this government, as is fairness regarding operating grants. The Saskatchewan Party government realizes that children are the future and will increase K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] operating funding by 20 per cent over four years. We must remember that the school closures in rural Saskatchewan are a result of the NDP government's total abandonment of rural Saskatchewan, driving people out of their communities.

Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected in 1999 I think I received more inquiries regarding health care than any other single issue. Highways would probably be a close second. Surgical waiting lists are the longest in the nation; shortages of doctors and nurses and, in some areas, rural hospital closures on a temporary basis. The last point I mentioned did not happen in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, but that was only because in the early '90s the NDP closed so many hospitals that most of them were closed then.

Mr. Speaker, we do need more doctors and nurses. We need more training seats and more residency positions. We need to ensure that enough of the health care budget is direct to front lines of patient care. And, Mr. Speaker, for the past four and a half months my husband and I have been in and out of the hospital more times than anyone can imagine. I must say that despite the fact that doctors and nurses are run off their feet, they've always been very caring, compassionate, professional, and dedicated. There's just not enough of them and they're tired. And this issue is finally being addressed.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it was also in 1999 when then Premier Roy Romanow delivered a Throne Speech in which there was a promise of 200 new police officers. That was another commitment that was never kept. Mr. Speaker, the growth of this province is extremely important. But equally important is security. We must ensure that our communities are safe, and this will be achieved by working with communities on a long-term policing strategy that will include the provision of 120 new police officers over four years.

Mr. Speaker, in a province such as Saskatchewan with all its wealth and the food produced in bountiful harvests, we must help those in need. We are committed to providing more funds for school lunch and anti-hunger programs. We all realize that when children are hungry, it affects their learning ability. So working hand in hand with CBOs [community-based organization] across the province, we will provide these services to those who need them.

CBOs will also receive an additional \$20 million over four years to provide employment skills training to those who need extra assistance. And, Mr. Speaker, I have visited the Estevan Diversified Services many times, and it is just a joy to walk in there and see the employees meaningfully employed and realizing their capabilities.

Mr. Speaker, before I take my seat, I would like to say that this Throne Speech is one of vision, whether the creation of Enterprise Saskatchewan, partnerships with First Nations people who we are indebted to for their help in building this province and also in dealing with the labour shortages. The First Nations and Métis people will have a key part in that.

We also address environmental issues, protecting and conserving our resources. And we must remember that Saskatchewan under the NDP had the highest rate of growth in greenhouse gas emissions since 1990 — more than any other province or territory.

Mr. Speaker, these were all part of our election platform, Securing the Future. The people of this province voted for growth. They voted for security. And the government is committed to keeping its promises while being fiscally responsible. That is why we will introduce the Saskatchewan growth and financial security Act that will require the provincial budget to be balanced every year using surpluses to pay down the provincial debt and investing in the future. We must turn the current economic boom into lasting prosperity for this province that we love. We will keep our promises, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan will judge us on November 7, 2011.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity, and I move, seconded by the member from Yorkton:

That a humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor:

To His Honour the Honourable Gordon L. Barnhart, Lieutenant Governor for the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member from Estevan, seconded by the member from Yorkton, has presented a motion in regards to the Throne Speech. Will the members take the motion as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your election. I know you'll serve this House fairly. Thank you to all for the warm welcome I've received since I've come to this building, and congratulations to all of the newly elected and re-elected members on both sides of the House, especially our newly elected Premier. I am pleased and honoured to have this opportunity to second the 2007 Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, I have always been interested in politics, but I must admit three years ago I would never have imagined taking my place here today. I had been approached prior to my nomination a couple of times. However being a family man and coming from small business and doing a lot of community service, I really wasn't interested.

It took some convincing by a dear uncle and aunt to consider the possibilities, and after a meeting with our current Deputy Premier, I began thinking about seeking nomination. After one meeting with our current Premier, I was certain I would seek nomination. With the support of my wife, Leone, who is seated up in the gallery today — the west gallery — and my daughters, Katelin and Rayanne, I was nominated almost two years ago.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to acknowledge a man I've known for over 20 years, the former deputy premier, Mr. Clay Serby, for his 16 years of dedication to my home constituency of Yorkton. I urge all people, particularly my colleagues here in the House, to keep Clay in their thoughts and in their prayers on his road to recovery.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:45]

Mr. Ottenbreit: — I'm honoured now to take his place and represent Yorkton. I'm excited for the future of my home constituency and being able to represent and work for the people there in a government looking to the future and not the past.

Mr. Speaker, upon seeking the nomination, I spoke with Mr. Serby before my intentions became public. And we have a very good relationship, Clay and I do. We . . . [inaudible] . . . joked with each other. And at that time I told him it may be a good idea to let somebody younger and with different ideas take over the needs of the constituency of Yorkton. And he told me at that time he would consider it if I would run for the NDP. Obviously that wasn't going to happen.

One visit to the Assembly I had, Mr. Serby introduced my family and I. He said that knowing that I was a pilot, knowing I wasn't afraid of heights, he would do his best to keep me up there in the Speaker's gallery. However the people of Yorkton

and area had a different idea, and we outdid their best efforts in the recent election and I take my place here today.

In the past two years, Mr. Speaker, I had plenty of opportunity to come to this Assembly, sit in on caucus meetings, observe the proceedings in these galleries. However I must admit that never prepared me for the first time back here after the election. I must admit, Mr. Speaker, on that day I stopped halfway up those grand front steps and I went, holy cow, I work here.

That same day, Mr. Speaker, the Premier asked me what my biggest victory was during the election. I'd have to say because my family was present. My mom worked tirelessly through the election delivering flyers, whatever needed to be done, as did my wife Leone. No one I believe worked harder than her and I'm forever grateful. My daughters Katelin and Rayanne as well were very supportive and encouraging even when they couldn't be present.

One of the big highlights of that day came when I came up to the podium at our victory celebration. Upon reaching the front of the room with my wife and girls, I was greeted with a huge hug by my father. I hadn't seen him in months. All he had to say was congratulations, son, I'm proud of you, and I broke into tears. Seeing the pride in their eyes was the high point and I believe feeling the presence and pride of my son on that day as well made me feel very victorious.

Mr. Speaker, since I'm talking about people, I'd really like to acknowledge a few. I would like to thank my mother and father for giving me the basis of work ethics and morals, and bringing me up to be the person my wife saw fit to marry.

I'd like to thank my wife of 21 years, Leone, who has stuck by me, loved me, and supported me through thick and thin, good and bad. She has given me three wonderful children and has contributed the most to make me who I am today. And through her guidance and prayers I will continue to be the man I think I should be.

Thank you to the rest of my family and my community of Yorkton, my home for almost all of my life. Thank you to Yorkton for supporting my family through all we've been through during the illness and subsequent death of our son and brother, Brayden, and for embracing what we continue to do to preserve his legacy. When he became ill we began to fight against cancer, starting a fundraising event that participants take part in and raise funds, and they shave their heads to support cancer research. Upon Brayden's passing over seven years ago, the event was renamed in his honour, Mr. Speaker. And today, the Brayden Ottenbreit Close Cuts for Cancer event, I'm proud to say, has raised over \$400,000 for research, and over \$15,000 for local cancer initiatives right in Yorkton.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, this is but a small example of the support and caring attitude that people of my home constituency of Yorkton have for each other. Our event could never be successful without the total support of residents, businesses, and the people of Yorkton. I must say as well it portrays the philosophy Leone and I have adopted through our lives, take a bad situation and make good come from it. Bitter

or better, Mr. Speaker — all we need to do is choose the vowel.

And I'm grateful to all the people in Yorkton for showing their support and electing me. They've given me so much, and I will continue to give back. I'd like to thank the people that worked for us throughout the election and before the election: the Yorkton executive, the campaign team, hundreds of volunteers who contributed to the win in Yorkton, and our win throughout the province. The number of individuals, Mr. Speaker, was overwhelming. The ones that contributed were apparent during our post-campaign appreciation social we held only a number of weeks back. The room was overfilled; we didn't have enough chairs.

I'd like to thank everyone involved with the Saskatchewan Party, but particularly Brad Wall and Tami Wall, Ken and Gail Krawetz, for their strong guidance, their support, and to show how actually a family and politics can work together.

Thank you to all the staff in this great and historical building for the welcoming and helpful atmosphere that you do have here and for the knowledgeable guidance you have offered and that I will continue to seek.

Mr. Speaker, many have asked me why I would want to run for politics at this time in my life. My family is almost grown. I've built a successful business on what my parents started some 44 years ago. We were to the point we were taking it fairly easy in life. A friend of mine so graciously pointed out to me that as a politician I should realize that half the time half the people hate you, and the rest of the time everyone hates you.

But I did see a need for positive change. And at this time of my life, I feel I have something to contribute although, Mr. Speaker, it has also been pointed out to me as well that I may have a tougher road to travel than most.

As you may well know, recently politicians were voted as the least-respected occupation, but still above lawyers. Sorry, to the Minister of Justice. But politicians were voted as being below respectability of arms dealers, Mr. Speaker. Furthermore, the least desirable occupation was voted to be a sanitation engineer — I use quotes. And so now, in consideration of my past business background and my new career, I may have some stereotypes to overcome, but I am up to the challenge. I'm sure glad that I'm not an arms dealer.

But joking aside, I'm very proud of my government's plans for growth, security and accountability. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the people of my constituency of Yorkton are willing to give me that opportunity to represent them. In our recent victory, we had 60 per cent of the popular vote, something for which I am very grateful and humbled; Mr. Speaker, something I believe is more of a testament to the leadership and substance of the party than myself.

Back to the main reason I decided to run for politics, Mr. Speaker. Recently I read an article right before election or during the election where the writer said politics is really about people. And during the campaign, I was reminded on that very point one afternoon of door knocking. I met an older couple at the door who was quite excited to see me, which seemed odd during election time. Mr. Speaker, as the conversation

progressed, I realized they had someone visiting them that they were quite anxious for me to meet, and it seemed like they wanted my wife to meet them as well. That's when I knew it must have something to do with our cancer fighting efforts, our walk with our son, Brayden, and our community service. Our cancer fighting efforts are known throughout our community and as well throughout the province.

The person that we met that day was . . . It was really touching. And she really touched my heart, and she's no stranger to this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. The little girl I met that day was baby Paige, a small person whose cause our party took up in this very Legislative Building, a reminder for all of us as to why we're here: to do right by people, to look after our constituents, to work selflessly for them. All I needed to do, Mr. Speaker, was look into that little girl's baby blue eyes to realize that — to ponder what she had gone through, what she had to endure. It really made that sink in.

Mr. Speaker, talking about door knocking experiences brings me back to the election and the mood of our province now. We had to battle against attacks of misinformation and fear, but hope prevailed and as I said, the people of Yorkton spoke with 60 per cent of the popular vote in our support.

Mr. Speaker, there's a positive attitude and feeling of optimism out there. It's our time. It's Saskatchewan's time for the Saskatchewan Party government, and now the Saskatchewan Roughriders Grey Cup win. And our government will work hard, and I will work hard to follow through with the promises in the present and look ahead to continue to deliver on the promises and secure the future of our province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Yorkton is a great place to live. It's a great place to work, conduct business and raise a family. We are surrounded by valleys, rivers, lakes, and parks. And I believe some of our Throne Speech plans for parks will benefit our area. We have a wide-ranging sports, arts, and cultural environment. Our residents have one of the most diverse ancestral backgrounds in the province, I believe, ranging from Ukrainian, German, First Nations, Irish, English, Scottish, you name it. I think we just about represent everybody in our corner of the province.

Like many other places in Saskatchewan, we face many challenges. The last 16 years, Mr. Speaker, won't be repaired in 16 days. But being the third largest trading area in the province behind only Regina and Saskatoon, I believe Yorkton can and will be better. We have challenges in health care in the areas of personnel, facilities, and services. But I feel the Throne Speech addresses some of those areas, and we will be able to reach our potential in Yorkton and become the true regional health facility that we can be.

Our economy is doing well; I must agree, but again we have room to grow, Mr. Speaker, to give our young people more opportunities to stay, learn, work, and build families and businesses in our province. There's expanded opportunities in education and tax relief addressed in the Throne Speech. The Throne Speech addresses this as well by building a more diverse and less volatile economy — a true, not a virtual economy that will help Yorkton and Saskatchewan develop into a retail, industrial, and agribusiness leader in our province,

country and the world.

Yorkton is very reflective of this already with private companies such as Ram, Leon's, and Morris Industries providing manufacturing to the agricultural industrial sectors. And I believe the Throne Speech as well addresses some of the agricultural concerns will help our farmers move into that agribusiness, being an agribusiness leader in the country and in the world.

I believe we can turn the boom into long-term growth and prosperity, Mr. Speaker, with more security. I also believe the Throne Speech has the potential to begin to fill the billion dollar potholes in our roads and infrastructure, and make Saskatchewan a more attractive, safer place to travel, live, and do business — a better place in all communities by sharing revenue with municipal governments to help alleviate some of their concerns and also alleviate the policing shortages and make our communities safer.

I'm going to wrap up here, Mr. Speaker. But I would also like to thank again the Premier for the honour of being named the Legislative Secretary to Social Services responsible for community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, culturally-based organizations, and food banks.

I look forward to working with the Minister of Social Services in carrying out her mandate to create a social safety net with the help of those organizations. I recognize that these organizations need more funding, longer-term funding to carry out their important work and contributions they make so selflessly and efficiently to the people in our province.

I take the responsibility of this appointment very seriously, and I look forward to aiding these groups in reaching more of their potential in the delivery of their services. Working with many of these groups is something I've strived for in my private life, and I'm honoured to work towards and show the Saskatchewan Party government's strong social conscience. Our government is intent on keeping promises and growing the province to create more opportunities, Mr. Speaker, and to secure the future for Saskatchewan people and show compassion and help those in need.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to second the motion from the member for Estevan regarding His Honour's 2007 Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members, just before I recognize the next speaker, I'd just like to remind members, and especially for the sake of new members, remember that we're not to use first names but recognize people by their constituency or their position. And just a reminder so I'm not interfering in the debate.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition

[15:00]

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to

join other members in congratulating those who have been the newly elected to our legislature, to congratulate the member from Yorkton on his first speech in this legislature, and to congratulate all members on our re-election as we take up the responsibilities of this new twenty-sixth legislature in the province of Saskatchewan.

I want to extend my own thanks to the constituents of Riversdale in Saskatoon for affording me the opportunity to sit in this legislature, to thank the many, many who worked very hard in the most recent campaign to provide for myself this, this privilege.

And if I may say, Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to represent what I think is arguably one of the most diverse constituencies in the province of Saskatchewan — diverse in our demographic, diverse in our economic base, diverse in the many challenges that face the constituency of Riversdale — and to say how much I have treasured the opportunity to work with the people of Riversdale over these last number of years now and to look at the accomplishments that we have achieved within the constituency of Riversdale by working together and by working with government whether it be in education, the new high schools on the west side of Saskatoon, Tommy Douglas and Bethlehem, the new programming that we're anticipating and building towards in Mount Royal in terms of training, the new W.P. Bate school, all of the work that we've done in the community schools, Mr. Speaker. This work has occurred because communities have worked together.

I think of the work that we've been able to do in terms of housing in the constituency of Riversdale and in the west side of Saskatoon, particularly proud of the efforts we've undertaken with CUMFI [Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.], with the urban Métis housing, with Station 20, and all of the community . . . [inaudible] . . . groups that have come together at Station 20, the housing programs that are available there now. I'm very proud of the work that we've been able to do with the Juniper Manor in seniors' housing, with Abbeyfield, with Arbor Green.

I think of the work that we've been able to do by working together in Riversdale to improving the health status. We recognize the health status challenges we had as a result of poverty and addictions. I'm very proud of the work we've done with the College of Medicine and students from that college in the SWITCH [student wellness initiative toward community health] program through the White Buffalo Youth Lodge, through the West Winds health clinic on the west side of Saskatoon.

And I'm very proud of the work that we've been able to do as a community together in redeveloping River Landing in the new farmer's market, in the new small business vitality that is part of Riversdale. And I very, very much appreciate this opportunity to work with the people of Riversdale again in building to the future of our constituency and our city and our province.

If I may say, Mr. Speaker, high on my agenda as the member of the legislature from Riversdale will be to seek continuing work towards a new St. Mary's School within our constituency and the adjacent and attached housing developments that can flow from that. I look forward to working with the people of

Riversdale on one of the highest needs in the constituency of Riversdale and, if I may say, on the west side of Saskatoon. And that's all of the needs around housing, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to have a word or two to say about that in a moment.

Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to enter into this Throne Speech debate. I thank His Honour for his reading of the Throne Speech of the Premier, and I want to observe just briefly this afternoon on some areas in the Throne Speech which are obvious by their omission, Mr. Speaker — things that are not in this speech, things that the people of Saskatchewan might well have expected to see in the first Throne Speech of a newly mandated, newly elected government that is not new to this legislature, but a party that has been part of this legislature, that has been part of issues, now elected to government. The people of Saskatchewan might well have anticipated within this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, things which are not there, things which should be there, mind you, but are not there.

I turn in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, to the section on agriculture, an issue that is not unknown to the members opposite. They raise the issue of agriculture in their Throne Speech and their major commitment — get this, Mr. Speaker — their major commitment in agriculture is to, and I quote right from the Throne Speech:

My government is committed to fully funding the province's share of the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program (CAIS) . . .

They make this as a brand new announcement in their Throne Speech, from the brand new government, with a brand new mandate. This is the new project. This is the new proposal to save agriculture in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, where have these people been? We have been fully funding CAIS for years, Mr. Speaker. We have been fully funding CAIS for years.

It's time to move beyond CAIS. It's time to look for those better programs that better support base for producers in our province. So the major initiative from this new government, in a brand new Throne Speech, this is the noble vision for agriculture, Mr. Speaker, is we're going to fully fund CAIS. Well been there, done that and it's time to get on with it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one might have expected — and I'm sure the livestock producers of Saskatchewan waiting for the Throne Speech might have well expected — that within the course of this Throne Speech we would see some very clear indication of what this government intends to do to support the livestock producers of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, you'll be aware, members are aware that our livestock producers are in some jeopardy these days as a result of the high Canadian dollar, as a result of pressures in their industry as a result of high grain prices.

Our livestock producers, some of them, are describing a situation today as worse than the situation when they were contending with the closure of the border with BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy]. Some of them are saying it's worse today than it was then. Well, Mr. Speaker, where is this government? Where is this government? Where is the comment in the Throne Speech about a plan of action, Mr. Speaker?

Now we have some big references here that the government was actually going to listen to producer groups. Well isn't that a news headline. They're going to listen to producer groups and, in some cooperation with the federal government, they're going to find a way to work through this, which they call a difficult transition period. Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan, the producers of Saskatchewan, the livestock producers of Saskatchewan deserve something better than this in a Throne Speech from a government with a brand new mandate.

They should expect, we expect some plan. And I'm going to ask this government, we'll be asking this government over the course of this session and in the weeks and the months to come, if necessary, what is their plan for the livestock industry. And when will we see that plan? When will we see timelines? When will we see some real support, not just rhetorical comments in the Throne Speech but some real support for the producers of Saskatchewan? We would have expected that, Mr. Speaker.

Now what else is missing from this Throne Speech? Well we would have expected in this Throne Speech a significant plan for the forest industry. Now we've already learned that this government for ideological reasons alone tore up the MOU that was established between Domtar, the people of Saskatchewan, the people of communities of Prince Albert, Big River, the First Nations of the North. This government for ideological reasons, without any consultation we've learned, has taken that MOU and torn it up — well fair enough, if that's their ideology.

Their ideology is they will not participate with private industry. They will not participate with communities. They will not participate with people in economic development. That's their philosophy — fair enough. But if you're going to tear up an MOU, if you're going to tear up two years of work, then, Mr. Speaker, you would assume that they would come with a Throne Speech with a very clear plan on how they intend to open the mill.

Now, you know, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't many months ago, it wasn't that long ago that that party now in government was sitting here in the opposition. And they said to the then government failure to produce a timeline for the opening of the mill would represent a failure of government. Well, Mr. Speaker, now the question comes right back to them. What is their timeline for the opening for the P.A. mill? Now if I was just to take the Throne Speech, if that's all there is, well the timeline is going to be a very lengthy timeline.

Mr. Speaker, the industry is at risk. Families are at risk. They've been hanging on. They've been hanging on, and now they say we need to start all over again. Well what is the timeline, Mr. Speaker? What is the plan for the forestry? I would have expected to see that in the Throne Speech.

I tell you what else, Mr. Speaker, we should have seen in this Throne Speech is something much more substantive than what we see as a plan for the future of our environment. Now interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, this government has adopted, has adopted . . . According to the Throne Speech, they've adopted Saskatchewan's, quote, “. . . existing greenhouse gas emission target of reducing levels by 32 per cent to 2020.”

Well now that's a step forward, Mr. Speaker. They've now at least adopted a target — the target set by our government mind you — but the short-term target. They've not adopted, I noted, the longer term targets, but they've adopted at least the short-term target.

But, Mr. Speaker, how are they going to achieve that target? Again where is the plan? Where is the climate change plan? Where is the plan? Well all we've learned from this government since they took office is they have gutted the funding that was set aside to do this goal, to achieve this goal. They've gutted the funding. So, Mr. Speaker, that's their choice. They've done that, but now they claim they're going to meet that target.

Well the question is being asked by this caucus, by this opposition — the question being asked in the province — is just how are they going to do it? Because they've taken all the financial resources and yet they suggest, they suggest that they'll be operating hybrid cars and high emission vehicles. Well that's fine. But I just want to tell the Premier and the government that that's not going to do it. That alone is not going to do it. That's not going to reach a 32 per cent emission reduction target by 2020. It's going to take much more dramatic action than that and, if I may say, much more dramatic financing than that.

Well they've gutted the financing. They've gutted that. So the question is, what's the plan? Mr. Speaker, what's the plan? We're not going to meet these targets without a plan. And what's the timeline? Well the timeline is set. It's 2020. How are we going to move from today to 2020 and a 32 per cent emission? Mr. Speaker, we might have expected that in the Throne Speech.

And if I may say, I fully expected, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure the people of Saskatchewan fully expected to see in this Throne Speech the position and the plan of this government regarding the most significant single issue between Saskatchewan and the national government — that being the issue of equalization and a fair deal for the people of Saskatchewan under equalization for the resources that belong to the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, here is an entire Throne Speech, an entire Throne Speech from a new government that does not mention this most significant issue between the province of Saskatchewan and the national government. Not a word in this Throne Speech about equalization or a fair deal for the resources of Saskatchewan people.

Now what does this lead you to believe, Mr. Speaker? Well this leads me to believe that somehow they've already cooked up a deal with their political friends in Ottawa. And we'll see, Mr. Speaker, because when that deal is revealed we're going to want to be sure that the people of Saskatchewan are getting full value for their resources valued at \$800 million a year — \$800 million a year. If they've cooked up a deal with their political friends, fair enough. Let's see it, Mr. Speaker. They chose not to mention a word about this issue in the Throne Speech.

So there are some very significant, some very significant areas of concern in our province that are not mentioned in the Throne Speech. And the one that struck me perhaps most vividly, Mr. Speaker, not a word in this Throne Speech, not a word about

housing, not a word. And I'm not sure who's even in charge over there, the Minister of Social Services perhaps. But I can't believe a minister in charge of housing wouldn't insist that within the Throne Speech the issue of housing was included. And there is not a word, Mr. Speaker.

We're in a situation today where we have rents skyrocketing on Saskatchewan families and young people and students and seniors. We're in a situation today, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan where people are being ejected from their rental accommodation as they see those buildings being turned into condominiums with the condo conversions.

We have a situation in Saskatchewan today where young people are finding it harder and harder to own and buy their first home. We're finding a situation where seniors are finding it hard to find accommodation. And if I may say, in the inner city we're seeing already signs of significant homelessness. In my own constituency of Riversdale the Salvation Army have significantly expanded their shelter capacity, and even with the expansion they're not able to meet some of the need.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you travel to the First Nations of Saskatchewan, speak to First Nations, speak to the chiefs and councillors, the women of First Nations. Many of them will tell you the number one issue on their First Nation is the question of housing. Mr. Speaker, not a word, not a word in this Throne Speech about one of the most significant issues facing Saskatchewan families today.

And if I may say, all those renters who are observing the process of this legislature, all of those who are renting accommodations today in the province of Saskatchewan, they're saying, what about us? Why have we been forgotten by this new government? All of the seniors seeking new housing opportunities, they're saying, why have we been forgotten by this new government so early, so early in their term?

So there's nothing substantive in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, for the livestock producers of Saskatchewan. There is no substantive plan for the forestry. No substantive plan for climate change and the environment. There's no reference to a fair equalization deal from Ottawa. And there is nothing in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, that speaks to one of the significant issues of our time, that being the issue of housing for Saskatchewan people. And this, Mr. Speaker, from a government with a brand new mandate, a brand new mandate and already they have forgotten all of these significant issues in their very first Throne Speech.

But what is in, what is in their Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker? Well now this is of significant interest. The Throne Speech speaks to the platform commitments of the Saskatchewan Party, and that's fair. And that's fair. But how is it, Mr. Speaker, that some of those commitments made by the Saskatchewan Party in a very recent election are now being watered down in the Throne Speech? Now you'll remember, Mr. Speaker, and members will remember how they tried another tack, and the tack was to lower expectations of the people of Saskatchewan that they will keep their promises.

[15:15]

About 10 minutes after the new Premier was sworn in, what did he do? Came out and said to the press, oh woe is us; the province is broke. The cupboard is bare. The situation, he said, was stark, stark. Well everyone in Saskatchewan, beyond those who sit in the government benches now, knows that is simply not the case. Everyone in Saskatchewan knows that no government entering the halls of government in the history of this province has ever inherited the kind of fiscal resources that this government has.

Mr. Speaker, there are \$2 billion in the bank — \$2 billion in the bank, Mr. Speaker. Two billion dollars in the bank and they don't have a plan to help the livestock producers? Two billion dollars in the bank and they don't have a plan to achieve their targets? Two billion dollars in the bank and they have nothing to do for housing, the needs of housing in this province? No, they came out and they tried to say, the Premier tried to say, no, the cupboard's bare and it's stark.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we all know what that's about. It's trying to get people to believe there's going to be an excuse for not keeping their promises. That was the first trick. Well it didn't work. The journalists saw through it. The economists saw through it. The people of Saskatchewan saw through it.

So now what we have is a Throne Speech, a Throne Speech that tries to do the same thing on some of the most significant commitments made in the campaign. We have a Throne Speech . . . Well let me go back, Mr. Speaker. We have a platform of the Sask Party which said very clearly . . . You can refer it to yourself in the platform; it's all there. Get it quick before they take it off the website. It will say in that platform document, it will say that this government will provide for the people of Saskatchewan, will hire 800 new nurses. That's what it said. We will hire 800 new nurses. That's what they said in their platform. That's what they campaigned on. That's what the people of Saskatchewan voted for.

Now what exactly does the Throne Speech say? Oh no, it doesn't any longer say we will hire 800 nurses. No, no, no, no, no, no. Now I'm going to quote right from the Throne Speech. It says now well, Mr. Speaker: "The goal will be to hire 800 . . . Nurses." Oh the goal will be. Well now isn't that interesting, Mr. Speaker. During the campaign it was a promise. It was a firm commitment for 800 nurses. It wasn't a goal. It wasn't a shot in the dark. It wasn't, as the part-time Minister of Labour says, their best shot. No, no, no, no, it was a commitment.

Well now, Mr. Speaker, wonder of wonders, a month after they're elected, that commitment is now a goal. Well I wonder what it'll be by next Throne Speech. A dream? And what will it be . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Semantics, semantics says the member. Well I tell you, semantics matters when it comes to making promises. They made a promise for 800 new nurses, and we are going to be, as this official opposition, asking of that government precisely the timeline when those nurses will be in place. We're going to be asking precisely how they intend to accomplish this promise because, Mr. Speaker, to break that promise — probably the most significant promise they've made in the entire election campaign — to break that promise will be a significant, a significant breach of trust with the Saskatchewan people.

But you know, it's not only this promise about nurses. It's not only this promise about nurses. You can read the campaign literature yourself. You can read the platform document. They say very clearly in their platform document . . . What do they say about doctors? They say we're going to have 40 new training positions and 60 new residencies for doctors — 100 new doctors. They define it 100 — 40 and 60. It's right there in the platform. You can read it yourself. Well what do I read in the Throne Speech yesterday? Well again let me quote, Mr. Speaker. Well now that commitment is now “. . . to creating more training seats and more residency positions for our doctors.” Well somehow 40 and 60, somehow the 100 is gone. Already gone in one month and now we have a promise just for more.

Well, Mr. Speaker, again let me remind you and the people of Saskatchewan what this is all about. They're trying to build an escape hatch. They're trying to build an escape hatch when they know that they're not going to keep these very significant promises to the people of Saskatchewan.

You know in the run up to the election, government opposite, their members were saying, we are going to revise The Education Act. We're going to revise The Education Act to ensure that communities facing . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I think there's a little . . . Order. The member from Humboldt will come to order. I think there's a little too much debate going on in the Assembly. We're trying to hear the Opposition House Leader, and I would ask members to allow the member to speak. Thank you.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was pointing out in that in opposition, when it came to the issue of school closures, they made a firm commitment to people in Saskatchewan — again you can read it in their platform — that they will revise The Education Act. They're going to revise The Education Act to provide these protections against school closures. Well, Mr. Speaker, if I can find it here in the Throne Speech, what do I see in the language of the Throne Speech?

Well now you know what we're going to do? We're going to examine revising The Education Act. Now before the election, you know, they say one thing before an election: we're going to revise the Act. Now after the election we get the Throne Speech when the rubber hits the road, and now what do they say? Well we're going to revise the Act. You see what's going on here, Mr. Speaker. They're trying to open these escape hatches. They're trying already to escape the promises they made only weeks ago.

And remember today's question period, Mr. Speaker? We had a promise from the member from Prince Albert, the new minister from Prince Albert. You know, vote for him and the mill will be open. That was a promise; he put it in the paper. He put it right in the paper. Well not even days after the election, his Premier breaks the deal, breaks the deal.

Now when that member was making this promise to the people of Prince Albert, he either was doing it knowing they were going to break the deal, or he made the promise in good faith and he was being fooled by his leader and his Premier.

Mr. Speaker, what we see in this Throne Speech, fundamentally two things. We see a Throne Speech that does not deal with significant plans and timelines to deal with issues like our livestock producers, forestry, the environment, housing, equalization. We have a Throne Speech that tries to water down the promises they made.

And then finally let me say this, Mr. Speaker: it's a Throne Speech that doesn't even carry the courage of their own convictions. You know, they didn't consult with anyone when they decided they were going to produce essential services legislation in this House — at least I've not found anyone in the province. Even their own ministers weren't consulted with. That's apparent.

I haven't found anyone in the province they consulted with before they decided — before the Premier decided, I guess — to institute essential services legislation. Well fair enough. Again, fair enough. If that's your philosophy, if that's your program, why wasn't it in the platform? The question is well asked. If you intend to do essential services legislation, why wasn't that in the platform? Well not a word about that in the platform and interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, not a word about it in the Throne Speech.

Now if it's your conviction, if it is your political conviction that the people of Saskatchewan ought to have essential services legislation, fair enough. But at least have the courage of your convictions and put it in your platform and put it in your Throne Speech — not just this roundabout rhetoric that says we're somehow going to be competitive in terms of labour protections with other Canadian jurisdictions. And by the way, Mr. Speaker, when these debates get going, I'm going to be asking the question: why do we need to be just competitive? Why can't we be leading Canada as we always have?

So, Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech hides from the convictions of the party opposite, now in government. It does not address significant issues that face Saskatchewan communities and Saskatchewan people. And it begins to water down and already break the promises, the commitments that they made to Saskatchewan people only but days and weeks ago. And so therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Regina Douglas Park, the following:

That the motion be changed to read as follows:

That this government no longer enjoys the confidence of this Assembly because it has a hidden agenda that picks winners and losers, because it puts the interests of the federal government ahead of Saskatchewan citizens, and because it is already making excuses to abandon election commitments.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I ask the members to come to order. The Leader of the Opposition, seconded by the member from Regina Douglas Park, has moved an amendment. The amendment reads:

That the motion be amended by adding the following:

That this government no longer enjoys the confidence of the Assembly because it has a hidden agenda that picks winners and losers, because it puts the interests of the federal government ahead of Saskatchewan citizens, and because it is already making excuses to abandon election commitments.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, may I at the outset congratulate you, sir, on your election as Speaker. When you first indicated and it was communicated to us that you were seeking the office, my thoughts were, here is someone that will need no training; here is someone whose experience will serve the members of the Legislative Assembly extremely well in the years to come. So I mean that sincerely. Congratulations, sir.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — And I'd say that in the brief time that we've had the opportunity to be here under your tutelage you have in fact confirmed for me that it was not a difficult transition to make.

Speaking of transition, Mr. Speaker, there are many members of this House who are making the transition — new members to now elected status, members of the Assembly who are changing their roles in this Assembly. I might say that it's at times been a difficult adjustment, but I have made that transition.

I'd like to quote the former Member of the Legislative Assembly, one Davey Steuart, who, commenting on the transition from being on the front benches in cabinet to being a private member, who observed that "I have successfully learned to open my own car door." So, Mr. Speaker, I can say that I've made that transition and I think that we all in the coming days and weeks will learn to make that transition.

I want to congratulate the government on its election. I want to congratulate those members of the governing party that were appointed to cabinet — somewhat surprised at some of the . . . well not surprised at the appointments, but I guess at some of the appointments that weren't made.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to of course congratulate all members on their election and especially the new members who will be joining us. And I look forward to their contributions in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, let me also take this opportunity to thank the constituents of Regina Douglas Park for their continued support and their election of me as their representative in this Legislative Assembly. I very much enjoyed the opportunity to knock on doors, to visit with my constituents. When I was not in cabinet I had more opportunity to do that and therefore I very much relished the opportunity that was afforded by the election campaign to meet with them, to learn from them about their issues. And we will all know, on both sides of the House, that when you talk to people in your constituencies on the doorsteps, there will be many issues raised that are not necessarily raised in the election platforms of any of the parties, that people have

other concerns, other issues that we need to follow up on now that we're here.

Mr. Speaker, as the previous speaker . . . And I didn't consult with him about the direction that he was going but I find myself going the same direction. What I find interesting about the Throne Speech is what was not in the Throne Speech.

[15:30]

You know, to a very great extent the Throne Speech was predictable. But there are a number of issues that confront Saskatchewan people. There are a number of issues that should concern us all that in fact were not mentioned in the Throne Speech, and I thought that they would have received much more explanation so that people's minds could be set at ease, that people of Saskatchewan have a better idea where it is the government is going on a number of significant fronts.

There was no repetition of remarks by the Premier where he characterized the province's financial situation as quote, "stark." Shortly after being sworn in, the Premier announced to one and all that in his view the province's financial situation was stark. A week after those remarks it was revealed in the mid-year financial report that the new Saskatchewan Party government had inherited from the NDP government quote, "an embarrassment of riches." "An embarrassment of riches," to quote a *Leader-Post* editorial.

And it was a similar reaction, a similar reaction throughout Saskatchewan. All of the pundits, the editorialists, all of the commentators where they really questioned what it really is the Premier was getting at when he characterized our financial situation as stark, at the same time releasing financial information that suggests that the government is sitting on a billion-dollar-plus surplus. There is something strictly at odds here.

So the Premier's comment was distinctly at odds with reality and I think distinctly at odds with comments prior to the election where many members on their side said words to the effect, and I quote them, the NDP government quote, "sitting on a mountain of money." Another one, "flush with cash." Another one, quote, "mountain of extra cash," and then again, "mountain of money."

Again I guess that was the line of the day for the members from their caucus. That was the line to be used in characterizing the financial situation. It is very clear what they're getting at is that there is very, very good fiscal circumstances in Saskatchewan. And now we see a Premier's comments that are distinctly at odds with the comments prior to the election and certainly at odds with the reality after the election.

We would have thought that the Throne Speech would afford the Premier an excellent opportunity to explain to Saskatchewan people what his thinking was when he said that our financial situation's at odds. Well I find the comments distinctly odd, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is also no mention in the Throne Speech of the issue concerning the pulp mill in Prince Albert, no mention that the provincial government had ripped up a memorandum of

understanding with Domtar, owners of the P.A. pulp mill.

And the government can say what it likes about, you know, Enterprise Saskatchewan and what we plan to do and what our goals are, or what our hopes are in terms of economic development. You would have thought that they might deign to talk about forestry in substantive terms as opposed to these generalizations that are contained in the Throne Speech, that they might talk in specific terms about an issue that faces not just the people up in Prince Albert but all of the people that are involved in forestry in Saskatchewan, which is significant number of people. Thousands of people are employed in that industry, the P.A. pulp mill being, if you like, the tip of the iceberg that supports a massive forest industry in Saskatchewan.

You would have thought that that government in its Throne Speech might have addressed that situation to give some comfort as to where it is that we are headed. But there was no mention in the Throne Speech of the P.A. pulp mill and no mention of the fact that their candidates were promising the people of P.A. and area that they would open the pulp mill.

Again, as was pointed out in question period, a quote in the *Leader-Post* that I saw where it indicated that, and I'm quoting here, "a vote for Darryl Hickie is a vote to open the mill," Mr. Speaker. And of course that person is now the member for Prince Albert Northcote, I believe the riding is. Well, Mr. Speaker, anyone who looked at those comments, recognizing that there was some framework for discussion to keep that mill open, would have interpreted that as being support for that specific initiative. Not one person in P.A. saw it as being anything other than that.

So here is a Throne Speech that would have provided an opportunity to reconcile where you have comments prior to the election, comments after the election, but there is no reconciliation, if you like, of those comments, no clear indication of where we go with that significant aspect of Saskatchewan's provincial economy.

And I could go on, Mr. Speaker, about the Sask Party undertaking prior to the election to go on a fact-finding mission in the forest fringe to find out what needed to be done in terms of the forest industry. I could go on about their comments over the years or the years leading up to the memorandum of understanding about there needed to be a deal, that something needed to be done. But no, Mr. Speaker, I won't do that.

But again I was hopeful that the Throne Speech might have dealt with that very significant issue to people in the forest fringe and northern Saskatchewan.

There was also, Mr. Speaker, no mention in the Throne Speech of essential services legislation. We all remember prior to the election the member for Indian Head and who is now the current — I think it's Indian Head, Indian Head-Milestone — who is now the Minister of Health saying, and I quote, when he was questioned just immediately prior to the election about essential services legislation, direct question: would you legislate essential services? The member for Indian Head: no, it "needs to be negotiated . . ." And further on, "I don't think we need to get to legislation, I don't think we need to go there at all."

Well how else is one to interpret the intentions of a Sask Party government other than they have no intention to proceed with essential services legislation? What else could the people of Saskatchewan, and especially people in the health sector, interpret from those remarks except this is a Sask Party government that, contrary to musings that they might have had, had no intention to proceed with essential services legislation? Well of course after the election we have the Premier saying that his Health minister made a mistake when he ruled out essential services legislation because certainly this was a Sask Party government that was in fact going to proceed with essential services legislation.

Well, Mr. Speaker, and it's just not the current Minister of Health that he was contradicting. Here's a Premier who on September 22 said, and I'm quoting him in an article, quote, "There's some common sense," and this is the Premier, the now Premier speaking:

"There's some common sense at play here that simply says before collective bargaining begins, before the expiry of a contract, both sides (should) sit down and agree to providing essential services."

Wall told *Leader-Post* reporter Angela Hall, even going so far as to say:

. . . legislation wouldn't necessarily be required to set out essential services.

What are the people of Saskatchewan to interpret from that except that this was a Sask Party government that was not going to proceed with essential services legislation and now saying that it will proceed with essential services legislation? There's a very clear contradiction of what was said before the election as to what is now being said.

One might have thought that the Throne Speech, in discussing significant issues that face Saskatchewan people, might have at least paid some attention to this very important issue, Mr. Speaker. But no, this is not something that we've seen in this Throne Speech and well, one can make of it what one wants, Mr. Speaker, but what was it that Murray Mandryk said in the *Leader-Post*? Basic honesty, minimum expectation.

Mr. Speaker, one of the unfortunate facts of life in modern society is that there will always be demographic trends. And those demographic trends in Saskatchewan are more powerful here than in many other jurisdictions as we'd see a continuing shift of people from the farm and into towns and into our cities. That's a very powerful and seemingly irreversible trend that we're seeing in our society.

And one of the consequences of that is that it will always put pressure on services. Whether it's services provided by individuals to people in those communities or services provided by public agencies to people in those communities, there will always be pressure on those institutions and those services to be kept operating.

And very, very important in that of course is the question of schools. We saw prior to the election a great deal of debate in Saskatchewan because of plans by school boards to proceed to

close a number of schools in Saskatchewan, in their view, because of the changing demographics, the changing populations in their districts that they are intimately aware of and therefore put forward plans to close a number of schools.

What we had then at that time was a Sask Party opposition, I guess you could say, milking that issue for everything that it was worth, milking it for everything that it could, playing on people's fears about school closures and going so far as to say they had a reliable plan to keep schools open. Here's the quote, here is the quote on May 14 of this year from their critic at that time, the member for Melfort saying quote, ". . . the official opposition at least has a plan that people of this province can rely on."

Well now we see after the elections, here's the new Minister of Education saying quote:

"The school closures have gone on forever and there will be schools that will close because of declining enrolments, (or) whatever."

Whatever? Mr. Speaker, is that the best that we can do? Well, Mr. Speaker, they said they had a reliable plan to keep schools open and now that plan is, whatever.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we had expected more. The Throne Speech would've been a good opportunity to outline the government's vision, the vision and their plan in terms of dealing with these powerful demographic trends and how it is that we might keep schools open, Mr. Speaker. But I think we can say on that score too that the Throne Speech is a monumental failure.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I must say this is an issue I've been dealing with for some years in my previous life as minister. And this is a huge omission because it is the singular most important issue, in my view, that faces the people of Saskatchewan. And that is the question of getting fair recognition of non-renewable resource revenues when it comes to important federal programs such as equalization, where we are being treated differently than other jurisdictions in this country. We are being treated in a way that can be characterized as nothing less than shabby by previous governments and by the current government in Ottawa.

One would have thought that there would have been some mention of what the government's plan was with respect to equalization. There is no mention in the Throne Speech of equalization, of what that \$800 million a year represents. About one-tenth of our current revenues — what that would mean to the men, women, and children of Saskatchewan; what that would mean to the future of Saskatchewan. What is the government's plan? This Throne Speech was strangely silent on what is surely one of the most significant public policy issues to face Saskatchewan people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to close here in a few minutes because I've gone on long enough. I want to just make a couple of observations. One of the observations I would make is when you look at the retreat from stated positions — stated positions on essential services, stated positions on school closures, stated positions on the fiscal circumstances in Saskatchewan, stated positions in terms of the P.A. mill — when you look at the

retreat from stated positions to what we have now, Mr. Speaker, well I wouldn't go so far as, but it certainly does bring to mind famous retreats in history, not the least of which was Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, another observation I would make, not just based on the Premier's contradiction and correcting the Minister of Health, but also, prior to the election, of his contradicting and setting clear what it is another member had to say — and that member now being a member of cabinet — what credence can we give to anything that cabinet ministers now say in Saskatchewan?

Can we rely on the word of cabinet ministers unless we know it's had the *Good Housekeeping* seal of approval from the Premier's office? We've seen in the last number of months two, I think, very substantial contradictions by members on that side, by their leader, now the Premier. It raises the question about what credence we can put in the words of cabinet ministers based on what we've seen these last few days, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the overwhelming thought of Saskatchewan people would be, 16 years, we've made this huge change. What are we seeing? Well, Mr. Speaker, I think Saskatchewan people are massively underwhelmed what they see in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

I might say to the members opposite, have fun in caucus sorting this all out. And having said that, Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to second the amendment. And I will be voting against the main motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. LeClerc: — Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to stand here in support of the Throne Speech. And I am humbled and it's my honour to represent the people of Saskatoon Northwest and to represent the people of Saskatchewan as they have decided to take the Sask Party and make them the government of the day.

It was about five years ago that I was invited to come to this province. I sat in a hotel room and I had been invited to come here by a number of leading citizens, Mr. Speaker, of Saskatchewan — the retired police chief of Saskatoon and a number of people that I knew from Crime Stoppers — to ask me if I would consider coming to this province to start a charity by the name of Teen Challenge.

I sat there and I asked these people a number of questions. I have degrees in sociology and social work and I love stats and I did some research before I came to the meeting, travelling from Ontario. I had toured this province on a number of occasions with Crime Stoppers, speaking throughout the high school system of Saskatoon and Prince Albert and The Battlefords. And so I was aware of Saskatchewan. I was aware that Tommy Douglas was one of the premiers of the province and had started medicare, had started a social fabric for the rest of Canada to look on whose policies were to leave no one behind.

And I asked this group of men and women if they would answer some questions for me. I asked them if they were aware that Saskatchewan leads the nation in child poverty, that close to one in four children live in this province in poverty, that Saskatchewan leads the nation in child incarceration rates. In fact, they lead all of North America in incarcerating more children per capita than anywhere else.

I asked them if they were aware that Saskatchewan leads the nation in substance abuse with the least amount of resources and that in fact Mr. Calvert when he was the minister of Health, his first action was to close one of the leading . . . I apologize, Mr. . . . The Leader of the Opposition, when he was the minister of Health, upon his first action was to close Whitespruce, one of the leading organizations in Canada treating addictions of young people that I was privileged to spend some time at in professional development and taking back to Ontario to the Toronto Board of Education some of the practices of it.

Were they aware that Saskatchewan had the leading stats for youth recruitment into gangs, that they led the nation year after year in crime, that the prisons were splitting at the seams from a lack of attention to the infrastructure and the human care of it, that children were dying every year under the care of government from an antiquated model that said families first instead of children first?

I informed them that I had read on the front page of *The StarPhoenix* of a 13-year-old girl that had died of an overdose in an apartment that was abandoned. And they couldn't find her mother. And she traded her body to buy pills.

I asked them if they were sure that they wanted me to come to this province because, quite frankly, I didn't want to come here. I informed them that I believed this province had lost its way and whatever legacy of Tommy Douglas had been lost with a growing infrastructure of government. A province that led the nation in government bureaucracy almost double the national average; a province that had the highest union membership per capita and seemed more concerned about playing politics and getting itself re-elected than actually following the legacy of Tommy Douglas in dealing with the least of our brethren in our society — I informed them that I didn't think they would like to have my mouth in this province leading a charity because as a social advocate I would have to speak out against such bad practices.

I told them that I would consider it. I would talk to my wife and as a Christian that I would contemplate in prayer what I should do, which is usually the Christian answer for no because who's going to argue if you say that God told you not to come. I have no idea what my wife was praying. But when she informed me that we ought to come, that in fact this province needed my voice and my action, she reminded me of my own beginnings — being born to a child, a Cree girl just barely into her teens, raped, giving birth to me in an abandoned building; as that product of rape, being brought up in the inner city of Toronto in abject poverty in one of the greatest ghettos rivalling the new ghettos of Canada in the central northwest of Regina or in the Leader of the Opposition's own riding in Saskatoon.

She reminded me of when I was taken away from my mother and placed in the most violent and brutal training school in the

history of Canada at the age of 8 where I was to become a street kid at the age of 12, an alcoholic by the time I was 15, and a gang leader by the time I was 17, and a drug dealer; where I was to be incarcerated at 19 in the Canadian penitentiary system, a confirmed drug dealer and drug addict, embarking upon my early beginnings.

She reminded me that maybe my voice and the failure of the current provincial government at the time, the NDP, was the reason that I ought to come here because, you see, those stats are not just stats — they are human beings. They are a cost to our society in human cost. They are a cost to our society in taxes. They are a cost that we can ill-afford in this province, the province of Tommy Douglas — an embarrassment to his legacy and quite frankly an embarrassment to the CCF, because I don't know where the NDP has morphed to, but it is not to having a social conscience.

The Leader of the Opposition said that we should be first and that it was his goal to make us first. But we are first. We are first in the national embarrassment. We are first in leaving our most weakest and vulnerable behind. We are first in failing the citizens of this province.

So when I look at the Throne Speech, when I look at a yes being yes and no being no and keeping your word of honouring what you've set out in a mandate to do, I look at our Throne Speech as a delivery of that — of hope, a hope of change, a hope of security, a hope of growth. Where you honour your promises given as leaders in a province. Not playing political rhetoric and political games at the expense of children and the weakest of our society, but honouring what you have told the people that support you to get you elected, who have voted you into office to represent them.

I support this Throne Speech because it is the reason why I came to this province — to correct what is wrong with this province, to allow the equity and the prosperity of this province to go forward to all regardless if they are red or white or half of each, regardless of where they started in life.

Everyone has the ability to have life if we prepare them with the proper foundations. We lead the nation in leaving children behind in child poverty — one in four. It's a disgrace, the child incarceration rate — where we have failed our children by warehousing them so that they can be socialized into adult criminals, where 80 per cent of adult convicts started in juvenile custody, where we're allowing our children to be recruited in the highest numbers in this country into gangs, to have a form of value and self-esteem by belonging to something instead of belonging to third world conditions which exist in our inner cities and exist throughout this province on reserves.

I stand for a government that has come forward to say, we will have value. We will do what we have said we will do. We will not fail the citizens of this province. We will not play politics for the sake of politics. And we will bring forward the ideals of what Tommy Douglas once stood for in leading this nation of having social conscience and heart, of being honourable and delivering your word instead of playing little political games and acting like a bunch of children throwing insults at each other, but rather leading with respect and integrity. That's what I believe our Throne Speech stands for.

That is why I have added my voice and my actions to this government. And when my friend Ted Merriman said that he couldn't run and asked me if I would, when I asked the Premier of our province would my background cause a problem, and he said your background will give you an expertise of what we want to do as a government for the least of, the most vulnerable of, for those who need a solid and strong government to live by their word and their actions, then I took that invitation and I allowed my name to stand in Saskatoon Northwest. Why I am so humbled that the people of that constituency, regardless of where I came from, could recognize who I am today and that my voice will be a voice of representation for them and for the people of this province, delivering on the promises that the Sask Party stands for. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Well I want to thank all the members in the Legislative Assembly today for this honour to have this time to talk about the Throne Speech. To begin with, I want to congratulate all the newly elected members from both sides of the Chamber for running and seeking public office. It was a new experience for all of us. I also want to congratulate our new Premier on his victory and for his vision he's provided in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

Today I'm truly proud, Mr. Speaker, to represent the people of Saskatchewan and those who elected me on November 7. It has been just over a month since being elected, and I have been able to attend this Chamber twice already. The first was the day of procedural training when the member from Prince Albert Northcote and I exchanged a quick volley across the floor at one another. And the second time when I and other MLAs from the Saskatchewan Party were sworn in last Tuesday afternoon. After the latter, Mr. Speaker, I remembered that the name of Hickie had graced the pages of *Hansard* even before I put my maiden speech forward today.

Approximately one and a half years ago, both of my daughters came to the Legislative Assembly for a tour while on a school band trip. They were able to sit in the gallery across from where I stand today, and they were introduced by my colleague and friend, Mr. Delbert Kirsch, from Batoche . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . sorry, my colleague from Batoche. I correct that sir. They were also able to sit and watch part of question period that day, and I asked them over the past weekend what they remembered and thought of the experience. Both of my girls stated that it was, quote, "cool" to be here and see the building and see inside the Chamber.

I thought about the language my two daughters actually used to describe their experience that day, and I pondered how that my recent experience within this Chamber and the actual Legislative Assembly has left its mark on me, Mr. Speaker. Of course after some thought I constructed a phrase befitting a 43-year-old, first-time MLA, Mr. Speaker, and it comes out like this: to be a part of this historic Chamber and to be here today is really cool, Mr. Speaker. Now I'm sure my daughters will hear this, and for some reason, I have to think that it just won't sound as good as they were describing their experience.

[16:00]

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my family for all their love, encouragement and support over the past two years that I campaigned to get here. I have the utmost respect and admiration for my wife because she was always there after the evenings of door knocking and meetings, asking how it went and encouraging me to go out and do more. I can never thank her enough for all those evenings she took on the family responsibilities — being a chauffeur, counsellor and friend — but also committing time to her own profession as a teacher during the school year.

Mr. Speaker, for all of us who are married to teachers or who may have been a teacher or are teachers, we have come to understand that their work is never really done because after the workday is finished they have to get ready for the next day. And this goes on until June.

To my daughters, Alyssa and Mackenzie, I thank them for understanding that Dad was working towards a goal that would make their lives better and make this province a better place for their future opportunities.

As I worked towards having the honour today of standing here, Mr. Speaker, and addressing this Assembly, I know the hard work took me away from my home on a lot of evenings, as it did for all of us who sought public office. The importance of making time in our hectic schedules to spend with our loved ones and our children is something that we should never lose sight of. And I for one will never forget how my daughters lent their dad to the process of democracy to see a Saskatchewan Party government today, Mr. Speaker.

As I find myself reflecting on the past two years, I could not help but remember all of the campaign staff, volunteers and supporters who made the run so exciting and rewarding. So many people gave unselfishly of themselves to ensure that I got to advance in and around Prince Albert, made sure that the direction we were taking was always towards a goal — the goal of having the privilege today to sit to your right, Mr. Speaker, and make history as a member of the Saskatchewan Party government.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, all of those who took in the process, took a part in the process, volunteered and voted to see a Saskatchewan Party win have become a part of our province's history. To all of those people who wanted and needed to see change, I am truly mindful of the responsibility bestowed upon me. I am thankful to each and every supporter who made this possibility a reality, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about my constituency of Prince Albert Carlton. My constituency has the potential to become the economic hub of our north, with our vast resources that some have argued were underutilized over the past 16 years. The women and men of Prince Albert and our province should and will benefit from a new investment climate, Mr. Speaker.

For years I have heard questions from my community in regards to why don't we have an oil sands development in this province? Why is it that the nuclear industry hasn't established

themselves more in our province, Mr. Speaker? If you have been paying attention for the past number of years, industry leaders from these sectors have been looking at expanding their investment into our economy, but the climate for that to occur wasn't available, Mr. Speaker, and now that will be changing.

The people of Prince Albert Carlton, along with the citizens of Prince Albert and area, will benefit from the change in government. Our children have opportunities now to return to Saskatchewan, and others will now have the opportunity to stay, Mr. Speaker.

The evening of November 7 brought with it the true spirit of Prince Albert Carlton, I believe. Hope beats fear. The campaign of hope beats fear, Mr. Speaker, was province-wide, but in my constituency I truly believe it meant something more. The voters who put their X next to my name did so because they too wanted to see opportunities expanded and not wasted. The voters wanted to see a government in Saskatchewan that was responsible, a government that was accountable to the people, a government that would stop putting good money after bad into investment ventures, Mr. Speaker. That practice over the past 16 years should have taught the previous administration that, as elected officials, we need to stop trying to pick winners and losers in our economy. We need to stop risking taxpayers' dollars, Mr. Speaker.

The voters of Prince Albert Carlton and other constituencies across our great province wanted to see a government who provided an investment climate for prosperity while not being forced to participate in it with their own tax dollars, Mr. Speaker. There were almost one billion reasons they wanted to have their say, Mr. Speaker, and on that day of November 7, they had their say.

The Throne Speech has set forth our government's plan for the next year, Mr. Speaker, and it also contained the blueprint for the next four years and I'm sure for some time to come after that. Our Premier has made it clear that a plan for growth, security, and keeping our promises is how the Saskatchewan Party government will provide a future for our great province.

The first part of our plan involves the growth initiative our candidates spoke of throughout the 28-day campaign, and our party spoke of leading up to the election call, Mr. Speaker. This initiative will see our government accountable to the people, Mr. Speaker, through not only the balancing of budgets but also the projection of the four years after each and every budget year. That, Mr. Speaker, should have been a cornerstone of government, but it took the will of the Saskatchewan Party voters to finally get the realization of sound policy that will give the citizens of Prince Albert and Saskatchewan the larger financial picture and not just a snapshot in time as has been the case in the past.

Our growth initiative will bring with it a confidence in our economy that will see an investment climate without direct government inputs, with more effective measures that will allow for large and small businesses to start, and those already contributing to our economy to expand and stay, Mr. Speaker. Once again I believe that these measures alone will make my constituency more prosperous in the years to come.

Security, Mr. Speaker, is all encompassing. It involves the protection of people in the broadest sense. Within this initiative, we will provide security to those who need it the most, the citizens — young and old alike — who need a strong social safety net that will be there for them in their time of need.

Our health care system will see our plan to put additional resources into the front line with doctors and nurses. I am truly thankful to see that part of our platform become reality, Mr. Speaker, because the Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert and other hospitals across our province need these resources to advance the care of our citizens.

My hospital alone services a vast geographical section of this province, and the demands upon its services have been increasing over the years. The health care professionals have been pushed to the max, while the NDP failed to take the steps to improve the health care system they alone let slip, slip into its current state, Mr. Speaker.

We will also be there for those who have been victimized by a part of society, Mr. Speaker. Some of these individuals know of no other way but to lash out at the system and at people. We will be there for both of these groups. For those who offend against property or persons, there are underlying factors that have led to the commission of their offences and a vast majority of these incidences. Substance abuse and use has resulted in the perception that committing crime is the only way they can survive, Mr. Speaker, or at a minimum these concerns have been a factor in the crime being committed. It would appear that not enough emphasis was placed on treatment beds or programs by the previous administration either, in their tenure, to make an impact on the situation today. It's time for a positive change in that direction as well, Mr. Speaker.

As Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, I can tell you that resources will be allocated under our plan to address a record we never should have attained. The unfortunate fact that our province has the highest violent crime rate in Canada for the past nine years is another reason I believe the citizens of Prince Albert Carlton put their X next to my name, Mr. Speaker.

As a police officer, I've had to have the unfortunate task of attending violent crime scenes and homicides. I've also had the unenvied task of having to inform parents that their child was a victim of a homicide, Mr. Speaker. I've heard the cries of a father asking why. I've heard the screams of a mother who, after a moment of clarity, understood that we had just told her she'd lost her child and that child had been killed by someone. I was not able to answer their pleas at the time when they asked me who did it. All I was able to do was assure them that we, the police service, the men and women who are committed to law enforcement, would work day and night until we brought all the suspects to justice, Mr. Speaker.

We have a situation in our province right now that has our police services and officers pitted against an increase in gangs. We should not try to hide the fact or forget the fact that these members of gangs are members of organized crime, Mr. Speaker.

A Saskatchewan Party government recognizes that it is time to

develop a long-term policing strategy that clearly identifies the current and emerging needs of local police services. We have people on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, who can speak from experience on how the NDP were funding positions within our police services that left, for all intents and purposes, violent crime completely untouched. Mr. Speaker, all one has to do is check into the national crime statistics to see that the provincial violent crime rate led the nation for each of the past nine years.

As we stated in the introduction of the Throne Speech: “. . . actions speak louder than words,” Mr. Speaker. And for too many years, the NDP kept using words by telling the general public about their funded crime fighting initiatives while our citizens were being assaulted and murdered. Sadly these words never led the former government to follow their own words with adequate actions.

As a person who takes law enforcement seriously, I know that more can be done by those who protect and serve, that they need a government to stand beside them in order to get off of that nine-year run at the top of the most unenvied list in this country, Mr. Speaker, a list that the NDP should be very ashamed of.

The final pillar I'll call it, Mr. Speaker, is that the Saskatchewan Party government will keep its promises. We came out during the election with a platform that provided mandates that our government will fulfill. As of yesterday, the people of Saskatchewan can see that as a party we made statements, and now as a government we are putting those statements into action, not just words, Mr. Speaker, as we've heard over the past 16 years — a mandate, actions that are accountable to the people of our great province, Mr. Speaker. On November 7, Mr. Speaker, we listened. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And before I begin my remarks, may I congratulate you on your election today to the Deputy Speaker's position. I appreciated the comments that you made, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in accepting the wishes of the House, and I look forward to working with you in your various capacities here in the Chair and in committees. So congratulations to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

That having been said, I also want to congratulate the elected Speaker who was elected yesterday, who will bring a renewed sense of who we are to this Chamber, an individual who has indeed served a considerable number of years in this place and understands the value of those who occupy the chairs throughout the Chamber.

I also want to take a moment to congratulate the government on their election on November 7. It was a hard-fought election campaign across the province. And, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite came to this Chamber with more constituency representation than my party, Mr. Speaker, and I congratulate them on their success in that regard.

And also, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleagues

who are serving with me on this side of the Chamber. As our leader indicated on the night that we were sworn in here, there is not a bad seat in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. There is not a bad seat whether you serve on that side of the Chamber or whether you serve on this side or indeed whether you serve at the Table, Mr. Speaker, because indeed we are all doing the work of the people of Saskatchewan. They rely on us to ensure that monies are distributed fairly and equally across the province and that laws that are affecting all people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, are indeed fair and balanced and take into account the needs of all Saskatchewan representatives. So I congratulate my colleagues on the efforts that they put in during the election campaign and indeed the representation that they are now going to make as they go forward over the next four years.

And specifically, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate and welcome my new colleagues, members from different parts of the province — Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert — who have been elected to serve for the first time in this Chamber, and I wish them well.

Mr. Speaker, I also want one moment to thank my constituents and the volunteers who served in my campaign, Mr. Speaker. This is the second time that my constituents have supported me and the representation that I will make on their behalf. I am grateful for the people of The Battlefords — the support that they have given me to serve. I am grateful for the support that my volunteers gave to ensure that I was able to run and manage an effective campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I think you are aware that I previously served twice in the federal House of Commons. I thanked my constituents at that time. And, Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful that they are continuing to support me through now my second term in the Saskatchewan legislature.

[16:15]

We are here today, Mr. Speaker, as you are aware and all members are aware, to reply to and comment upon the vision of the new government as expressed in the Throne Speech delivered in this Chamber earlier this week.

Mr. Speaker, it is a Throne Speech that addresses a number of issues that the new government feels are important for the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, of course as other members from this side have indicated there are also some omissions, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan have indicated are important to them but have not yet been addressed by the new government.

And so therefore, Mr. Speaker, to take the new government on its words during the delivery of the Throne Speech — “It's time to get to work,” for example and “. . . actions speak louder than words” — well, Mr. Speaker, we are certainly looking for the actions that will stem from the words that were expressed in the Throne Speech. And we are in fact hoping for actions that go beyond the words that have been expressed here because there are some significant omissions.

And I mentioned my gratefulness to my constituents, Mr. Speaker, for their support for me in this election campaign. And

I'd like to address this Throne Speech first, Mr. Speaker, from the perspective of my constituents.

There were a number of things that we addressed on the doorsteps during the election campaign, a number of issues that weren't necessarily a part of either party's provincial campaign, that weren't necessarily a part of the general thinking . . . the media comments with regards to the election and the future, Mr. Speaker. But there were some things that my constituents were telling me on the doorstep that were important to them, and I am bringing those issues back to the Legislative Assembly here in Regina. Mr. Speaker, I will do so not only today but throughout the term of this government because, Mr. Speaker, these are issues that my constituents told me are important to them.

And, Mr. Speaker, one of those issues that came up frequently during the campaign was an issue that the Leader of the Opposition referred to in some of his remarks just a few moments ago, Mr. Speaker, and that is housing — more importantly, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency — seniors' housing.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen indeed the economy of this province grow at a great rate over the course of the last three years, an economy that is having an impact at the local level and on persons, Mr. Speaker, not only in a positive way — like more jobs are being created. There's more wealth in the province. There are greater resources available, fiscal resources available to government to address some of our social challenges, Mr. Speaker. But the booming economy, the prosperity of this province has also created some stresses for ordinary people in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Those stresses include increased value of property, increased costs to new homeowners, increased rents to renters. And what my constituents were telling me during the election campaign is if we're all going to benefit from the prosperity of this province, then what is government going to do to ensure that there is affordable housing for seniors throughout Saskatchewan? Affordable housing, Mr. Speaker, in the sense that many seniors living independently are living in apartment buildings. And in North Battleford as in Saskatoon and in Regina, we're seeing a number of apartment buildings being converted to condominiums, Mr. Speaker, because of course the more prosperous economy has created an opportunity for investors and others to move from rental accommodations in one place to purchasing property, purchasing condominiums. Well that opportunity has stressed seniors who are on limited and often fixed incomes. And their ability to remain in their own homes, the apartments that they've been renting, Mr. Speaker, have stressed them considerably.

So what is the plan of the government opposite in addressing not only the prosperous sides of our growing economy, but some of the negative and some of the stresses caused by this prosperity, Mr. Speaker?

When it comes to housing, I read the Throne Speech. My constituents read the Throne Speech. We have nothing to say, Mr. Speaker, to the people of Saskatchewan who are stressed by housing. Primarily seniors in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, but if we just take a look at what this means to students in rental

accommodations where the rents are increasing three and four times a year now because property values have increased or those properties in fact have been purchased at highly inflated values by outside-of-the-province investors, Mr. Speaker, they're pushing the values up for students in our universities and colleges, for seniors in our communities on fixed incomes and, Mr. Speaker, for average families who are still trying to find . . . or young people starting a family, Mr. Speaker, who are looking for their first home. A home that in North Battleford three years ago was \$70,000, that home is now \$200,000, Mr. Speaker. Very difficult in a very short period of time for young people to be able to start their families and enjoy and benefit from our local economy.

So housing, Mr. Speaker, seniors in particular but also students and young families, an issue that my constituents want raised in this Chamber. I will raise it again, Mr. Speaker, but the absence of housing from the Throne Speech indicates that this government, Mr. Speaker, doesn't seem to get the issue of prosperity also needs to be managed by government.

The other piece, Mr. Speaker, is of course that along with prosperity and a growing economy and the great number of jobs that have been created in this economy, Mr. Speaker, is the labour shortage. And of course the new government has talked a little bit about immigration. They've talked a little bit about First Nations, Mr. Speaker. But what they haven't talked about and what they have not addressed in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, is training spaces at our institutions of higher learning, Mr. Speaker, that will allow for Saskatchewan young people — whether they are First Nations or non-First Nations or immigrants coming into our province — to gain the skills necessary to ensure that we'll be able to fill the jobs that have been created.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, in the four years that I served on the other side of the House as a minister of the Crown, and each and every month when the job numbers came out and there more jobs created in the province of Saskatchewan than ever before, not a question, not a comment from the opposition benches, Mr. Speaker, about job creation in the province. But, Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting that one of the first news releases issued by the new government was to acknowledge the latest reports about new job numbers in Saskatchewan, the highest employment rate ever achieved in the province of Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, the highest number of people working in the Saskatchewan economy, Mr. Speaker, in the history of our province. So interesting that when the job numbers were good and the members opposite were on this side of the House, not a comment about that, and now taking credit for and enjoying the benefits of the work that had been done previously.

But, Mr. Speaker, the stress that all these new jobs and new investment is causing into our provincial economy, Mr. Speaker, the stress of that on ordinary people about having the skill levels to be able to go out and compete for these new jobs, Mr. Speaker, not acknowledged in this Throne Speech at all. North West Regional College and other regional colleges throughout Saskatchewan looking forward to being able to deliver new programs to meet the needs of the local labour force, Mr. Speaker . . . We have to ensure, we have to ensure that we're going to have the training spaces necessary at the

local levels to be able to meet the needs of our growing economy.

That takes me also, Mr. Speaker, to an issue that was addressed in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and it has to do with health care. Of course I am well aware of the stresses on the health care system, the need for additional doctors and nurses in the system, and of course the need to ensure that we're going to be able to deliver value to the Saskatchewan population through our health care system.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the new health care audit that's being proposed by the members opposite in the Throne Speech. We know, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan already has the lowest administration costs of every health system in the country, in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And so the government now is saying that from the base of the lowest cost administrative system in Canada we're going to squeeze some money that's going to allow for us to hire more nurses and more doctors, Mr. Speaker. We need a greater commitment than that, Mr. Speaker, if we're going to serve the public through the health care system. We need a greater commitment than that.

And I'm hoping that actions will speak louder than words because, Mr. Speaker, the words in the Throne Speech do not meet the expectations that were created during the election campaign where the public was told this new government, when elected, if elected, would hire 800 new nurses. There was no plan of course behind that commitment. And now we're finding out that not only is there no plan, there's not even anything more than it's just a goal of this government to actually hire new nurses. We need more than that, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing is, I do have some concern, Mr. Speaker, with concerns about the new Enterprise Saskatchewan, a group of appointed individuals who are now going to manage the new economy. Mr. Speaker, I think the public should be most concerned about the language in the Throne Speech and what it might mean for us. The language says that the new government will ". . . return direction of the economy to the hands of people who create the jobs." In other words, Mr. Speaker, this government is privatizing the economy of the province of Saskatchewan.

This place, Mr. Speaker, is where the direction for the economy should be decided, this place, Mr. Speaker, because we are placed here by the people of Saskatchewan to do the bidding of the people of Saskatchewan. And this government is in turn handing off the responsibility for that to the private sector, Mr. Speaker. And while it's important that jobs are created and it's important that government work with the private sector, we do not, as it says here, ". . . return direction of the economy to the hands of the people who create the jobs," privatizing the economy of the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I see that my time is reaching the end, Mr. Speaker. I want to indicate that I have been very pleased to serve the people of The Battlefords for the last four years. I'm pleased to be able to represent them for the next four years. And, Mr. Speaker, I signal today that I will be supporting the amendment and not supporting the . . . I'm sorry. I will not be supporting the motion . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh I see that I'm being given some direction, Mr. Speaker, on my feet.

It's a good thing that I can do two things at once, speak and listen at the same time. And, Mr. Speaker, as a result of that, assuming that I have heard things correctly, I would like to at this point move adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from North Battleford has made a motion to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the House for the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — I move that the House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — There has been a motion for the House to adjourn. The House will meet tomorrow at 1:30. Is it agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — The motion is carried. The House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:28.]

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