



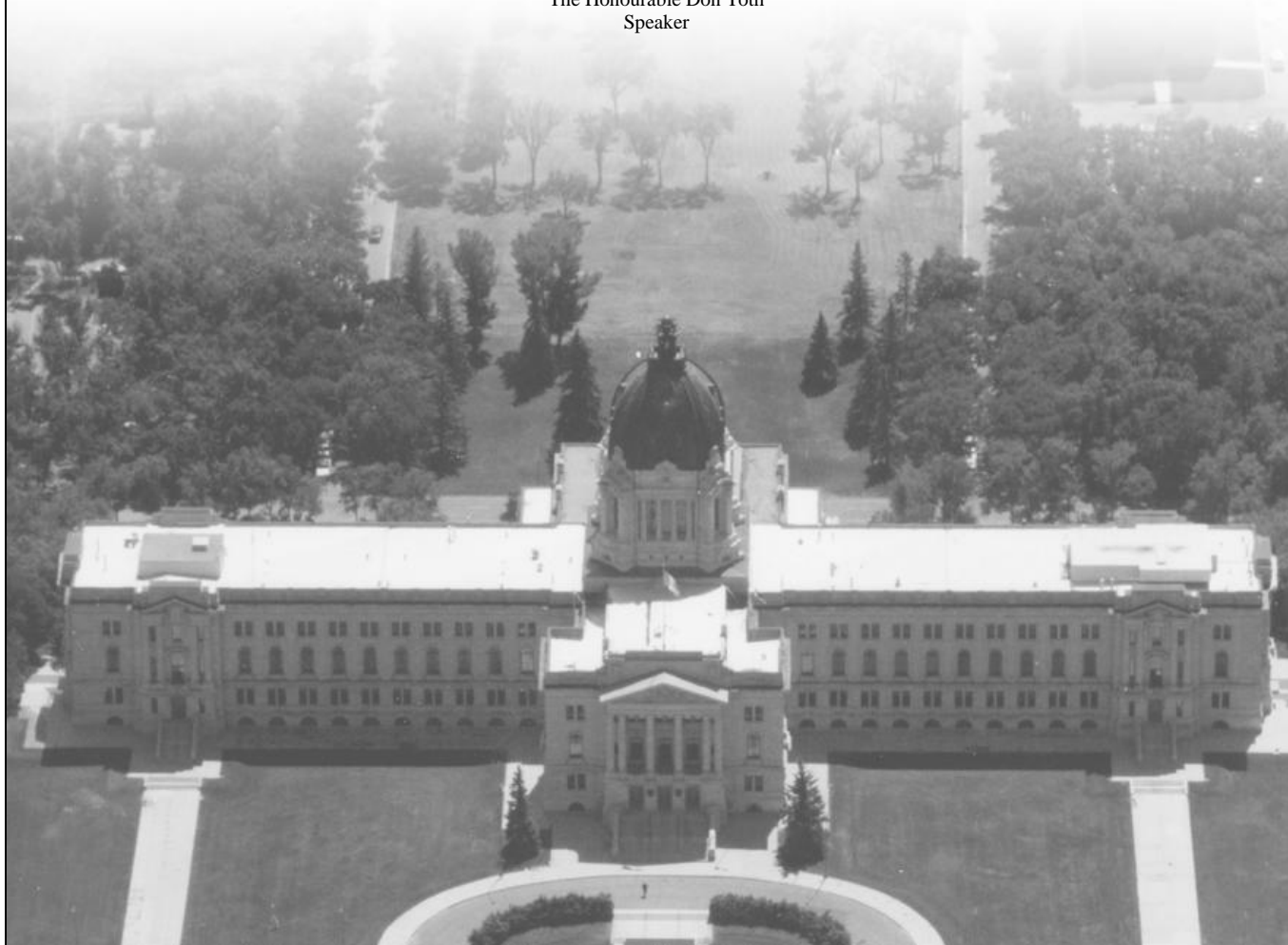
THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

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 — Dwain Lingenfelter

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
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
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
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D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, 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, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
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Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (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
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
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, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, 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
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery this morning is a large group of men and women who most of us, as members of the Legislative Assembly, had the opportunity to meet last night at a reception hosted here in the Legislative Building. And I want to thank on behalf of all members for their kind hospitality and the opportunity to share on concerns to the Association of Saskatchewan Realtors. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly this morning.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of the official opposition I want to join the Deputy Premier in welcoming realtors to the Saskatchewan legislature, their Assembly, their legislature, Mr. Speaker, and I want to stress that the three issues that they raised with us today, Mr. Speaker — property tax relief, affordable housing, and changes in the assessment of property in Saskatchewan — are issues that I think we all need to take note of, Mr. Speaker.

And I thank the realtors of Saskatchewan who have done a tremendous job over the years at the provincial and at the national level, Mr. Speaker. I thank them for their continued efforts on behalf of Saskatchewan people.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present another petition calling for wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And we know that the low wages that are paid to the people working in community-based organizations result in high staff turnover, the subsequent lack of caregiver continuity, and it has a negative impact on the quality of care clients often receive. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the development and implementation of a multi-year funding plan to ensure that CBO workers achieve wage equity with employees who perform work of equal value in government departments.

And, Mr. Speaker, these folks come from the city of North Battleford and Saskatoon. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of fairness for students here in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately expand the graduate retention program to include master's and Ph.D. graduates.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals that signed this petition are from all over Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind with respect to providing safe and affordable water. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to financially assist the town of Duck Lake residents for the good of their health and safety due to the exorbitant water rates being forced on them by a government agency, and that this government fulfills its commitment to rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Duck Lake, Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I stand to present a petition in support of maintaining quality health care services in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners are concerned that the health care providers . . . that the government address the retention and recruitment issues and ensure safe staffing levels. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintaining quality health care services and job security for all public health care providers.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The petition is signed by people from Rosetown, Mildred, and Fiske. I so present.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise to present a petition in support of affordable rents and housing in The Battlefords. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners note the rapidly rising increases in rental rates

and the lack of supply of housing units. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners pray:

That the honourable Legislative Assembly call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to develop an affordable housing program that will result in a greater number of quality and affordable rental units to be made available to a greater number of people throughout The Battlefords, and that will implement a process of rent review or rent control to better protect tenants in a non-competitive housing environment.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by residents of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned Saskatchewan residents as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of their finances, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to start managing our provincial finances responsibly and prudently to ensure that it does not continue its trend of massive budgetary shortfalls, runaway and unsustainable spending, equity stripping from our Crowns, and irresponsible revenue setting.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions are signed by concerned citizens here in Regina, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I would request leave of the Assembly for a slightly extended member statement to honour the sacrifice of Lieutenant Justin Boyes.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. I recognize the Premier.

Lieutenant Justin Garrett Boyes

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to colleagues in the legislature for the leave.

It is my sad duty today to rise and join in prayer and sorrow with the family of Lieutenant Justin Garrett Boyes of Saskatoon. Lieutenant Boyes was killed yesterday just southwest of Kandahar city. He was 26. He leaves behind his wife, Alanna, and their three-year-old son, James. Our thoughts are with them, and our thoughts are also with Justin's parents,

Brian and Angie.

Brian and Angie live just a few doors down, as it turns out, and across the street from the Minister of Justice. And I had a chance to talk to him a bit this morning about them, and they're a great couple and great neighbours. And after Justin's first tour in Afghanistan, the neighbourhood was festooned in yellow ribbons. And so we are very mindful of their loss this morning.

Lieutenant Boyes started out his military career as a reservist with the North Saskatchewan Regiment. He chose to join in a more full-time capacity last year and was serving with the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Light Infantry. He was a mere 10 days into his second tour in Afghanistan when he died, and he recently spoke of how happy he was to be back in Afghanistan following months of rigorous training.

Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago we had the occasion in this Assembly, in the library of this Assembly, to honour our reservists and to declare Reserve Forces Day in Saskatchewan. It was an honour for our government, and humbling for all of us, to be able to express our gratitude to tell these reservists how proud we are of them, to tell these women and men how grateful we are that they are prepared to serve in this way.

We are humbled by their willingness to perform, to sacrifice. They are part of an unbroken line, these reservists, and so is Lieutenant Justin Boyes — part of an unbroken line of honour and sacrifice that stretches from today all the way back to Vimy Ridge where our country came of age.

This morning I invoke those same thoughts and words in memory of Justin Garrett Boyes. That unbroken line that stretches back to Vimy Ridge has been thickened in recent months by blood, and strengthened by uncommon valour. We honour Justin for his courage and his valour this morning.

In this Assembly we stand on the shoulders of those who are prepared to make that sacrifice for freedom and for democracy. We tread on their valour, these heroes of the past. But there are heroes still in Saskatchewan and Canada, and what a view of security and freedom and protection we have on their shoulders as they bear the standard of freedom and carry the colours of our nation.

Let's be very clear this morning. Because of what Justin did and what others are prepared to do and have done in Afghanistan, there are no more camps there that trade in terror. There are fewer threats to our families, to our country, from those who name Canada as an enemy.

Justin's purchase for us is security and safety and freedom. The currency with which he made that purchase is courage and valour and service.

There is a flag on this building today that is flying at half-mast. That flag and these inadequate words are our way to say this morning, thank you. To his mom and his dad, to Brian and Angie, to his wife, Alanna, to his young son, James, we offer them the gratitude of a grateful province and the love of neighbours, and we pray for them the peace that passes understanding.

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

Kindergarten Students Visit Constituency Office

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, October 23rd, I had the pleasure of hosting the kindergarten class from École Victoria School at my office in Saskatoon Nutana.

The students are taking part in a series of who are the people in your neighbourhood walks. So they've gotten to know their neighbourhood better. So far they have been to the Saskatchewan Craft Council on Broadway, the St. John's Music store where they got to play the piano, The Refinery, which is a performing arts centre attached to St. James' Anglican Church, and, last Friday, my constituency office.

While visiting my office I asked if any of them knew what a member of the legislature did and one little girl enthusiastically replied, "You people run the whole world." So colleagues, we have some very high expectations amongst our kindergarten constituents.

These kindergarten students had a number of questions. They wanted to talk about our parks and camping. They were interested in budgets and animal protection, particularly wildlife and cats and dogs. They're interested in highway signs and, Mr. Speaker, they wanted to know who we were. And I have a number of photos on my constituency wall so I was able to tell them who our Premier is and who other members of the Legislative Assembly are.

The students were extremely well-behaved and they received juice, a Saskatchewan flag tattoo, and a small Saskatchewan flag for their classroom. Accompanying them were their teacher, Kari McRae, parents Marie Sellar, Sam Lindsey, Bryn Rawlyk, Clint Westman, as well as their educational assistant, Emily Bilay.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the École Victoria School kindergarten class for taking an interest in their neighbourhood and an interest in what we do. And I would ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Kari McRae and her students — who are watching the Assembly this morning — well as they strive for a creative and productive future.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar.

Trick-or-Treat Proceeds for African Children

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a big weekend for kids across Saskatchewan. Dressed as Hannah Montana or a transformer, they will fan out across their neighbourhoods in their annual quest for candy. Mr. Speaker, Halloween is once again upon us.

Many of those trick-or-treaters, through their schools and community groups, will also be raising money to help children around the world through the annual Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund] campaign.

For more than 50 years, Canadian kids have been collecting

money to help less fortunate kids in countries they have only read about. This year the money they raise will go toward sending children in Africa to school. In partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation, UNICEF hopes to help close to 1 million children in Rwanda and other African countries receive an education. No amount is too small, Mr. Speaker. As little as \$5 can help provide pencils for an entire class; \$10 buys a soccer ball for the entire school; for \$5,000 we can provide clean water for a community school.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Halloween I would encourage all members of this House to put the change jar next to the candy bowl to give children around the world a better life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

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

Prince Albert Hosts National Council of Women Convention

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, in June of this year, Prince Albert was host to the National Council of Women of Canada convention, or the NCWC. The three-day event took place at the E.A. Rawlinson Centre for the Arts. The president is Karen Dempsey from Halifax, and the hosting council was from the Prince Albert Council of Women led by President Patricia Leson.

Mr. Speaker, the NCWC was founded in 1893 in Toronto and has been designated by the Government of Canada as being of historical significance for its role in Canadian women's history. Today there are local councils in 20 Canadian cities, including the city of Prince Albert, and the NCWC is a member of the International Council of Women, which represents women in over 70 countries.

Mr. Speaker, the delegates were treated to a gala opening night event in which over 20 women from Prince Albert were acknowledged for their contributions to our community. Over the three-day event, delegates had the opportunity to enjoy Prince Albert's famous hospitality. Delegates were also treated to local talent, including Cathleen Lesperance and the Diva Hags.

The women who attended the convention were from every part of Canada, including Halifax, Montreal, Vancouver, Winnipeg, to name a few. For many it was their first trip to Prince Albert, and for some their first trip to Saskatchewan, but all commented on how beautiful our province is and the wonderful hospitality of the people of Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in acknowledging the contributions of the National Council of Women of Canada, and in congratulating Patricia Leson and the Prince Albert Council of Women for being wonderful ambassadors for Saskatchewan and for organizing such a wonderful event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Habitat for Humanity Key Ceremony

Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I had pleasure of attending another Habitat for Humanity key ceremony right here in Regina. Habitat for Humanity and its many community partners and volunteers have again come together to help build a home for a family here in Regina. The Canadian Institute of Plumbing & Heating hosted last night's event. They were key contributors to the plumbing and heating systems of this home. This was part of the association's commitment to help with Habitat's build across the country.

On March 30th, our government committed to Habitat for Humanity \$1 million to build 20 new homes throughout Saskatchewan. Of this 1 million, 50,000 was contributed towards the construction of the Zatlun family home. The Zatluns are originally a Burmese family who have now obtained Canadian citizenship. They originally came to Canada and Regina via a Cambodian refugee camp. Families selected to receive Habitat for Humanity have to put in a minimum of 500 hours of sweat equity. This feat is even more remarkable by the fact that the Zatluns have four children under the age of eight.

Our government believes that everyone should have access to safe, affordable housing — housing that promotes health, dignity, security, and independence. Our government cannot emphasize enough how community partners such as Habitat for Humanity are essential to making this a reality. Thank you very much.

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

Results of Municipal Elections

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, municipal elections took place yesterday across the province, offering an opportunity for Saskatchewan citizens to exercise their democratic right to choose their representatives. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate all candidates who sought election and commend them for allowing their name to stand for public office. It represents a commitment to our communities and a desire to be involved in the democratic process. Thank you for your contribution.

To those candidates who were successful, I extend deep congratulations. You obviously have the confidence of electors and mandate to proceed with your best judgment in the interest of your citizens. I wish you the satisfaction of public service and the patience and good humour that are needed to ensure your service is satisfying and productive.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to extend a special congratulations to a man I am proud to have worked alongside in this legislature for many years — Glenn Hagel. The newly elected mayor of Moose Jaw received a remarkable 64 per cent of the popular vote. I look forward to the positive work he and our new council will accomplish for our city of Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the Assembly join me in congratulating all of those newly elected officials right across the province. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this time to congratulate all the winners from last night's municipal elections. First of all, let me congratulate our new mayor of Yorkton. James Wilson was victorious over Randy Goulden, the two separated by only 54 votes. I know Mr. Wilson well. I witnessed his involvement, commitment, and leadership in his community, family, and his work. Mr. Wilson, the incumbent, and new council members will serve Yorkton well, and I know will be leaders that we can all be proud of. Let's hope Mr. Wilson can be serving as successfully as Mr. Walter Streelasky of Melville, who last night was acclaimed.

Next I would like to congratulate the mayors of Saskatoon and Regina. They once again received strong approval of their leadership. Mayor Fiacco received 85 per cent, while Mayor Atchison received 58 per cent. In the border city of Lloydminster, Jeff Mulligan defeated incumbent mayor, Ken Baker.

Other winners in mayoralty races were Jerrod Schafer of Swift Current, Ian Hamilton in North Battleford, Debra Button in Weyburn, Malcolm Eaton in Humboldt, Mr. Glenn Hagel in Moose Jaw, and Jim Scarrow in Prince Albert. Another acclamation was Mr. Gary St. Onge of Estevan.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all the other winners from last night's election. The mayors, the councillors that put their names forward in other jurisdictions, I commend them for putting their names forward as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Public Safety Policies

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing confirm for the people of Saskatchewan today that a dangerous sex offender is unlawfully at large from the correctional system in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have no knowledge of that at this point in time. If the member would like to pass some information over to me, I will definitely look into it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, is it still the government's policy to be open and transparent about the release, unlawful release, or escape of offenders from the correctional system in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — As the member opposite would know, Mr. Speaker, that the policy of somebody that's at large on a level 1 is the policy, and that we would notify the public if it's a level 1. There are extenuating circumstances to some cases, I would suggest, where in consultation with the police services whether it's at the best advice of the public whether it's notified or is not. Again, if the member would like to offer some more details on the specifics of the case, I would be very happy to look into it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, if the minister was doing his job, he would know that Brock Wiebe, a dangerous sexual offender, has been unlawfully at large from the Regina Correctional Centre since July 30 at 5:23 p.m. — three months ago. He was serving time for sexual assault, assault with a weapon, and obstruct of a police officer among other charges. Why has the news media not been informed? Why have the people of Saskatchewan not been informed that this dangerous offender from Swift Current, Saskatchewan is at large?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that the member opposite has given me some information that I can work with, I can tell him that I am aware of the particular case, that the member was accidentally released on probation. He was released 71 days early. Mr. Wiebe followed all of the conditions of his probation. He is now living in Calgary. We have an address of Mr. Wiebe. We have contacted the police services in Calgary to apprehend.

One of the reasons that the decision was made not to put it public is — there's a number of reasons, Mr. Speaker — one of the reasons that we decided and I decided not to make a public announcement of this is because we were under the impression, with the police services, that it might drive Mr. Wiebe underground.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, we have a policy that the government described as open and transparent that the people of the province of Saskatchewan would be notified when an offender was at large. This offender has been at large for now over three months. As of today, he's still listed as unlawfully at large and listed as dangerous by the system. How does the minister defend not allowing the people of this province and of this country to know that this individual is at large?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've explained, Mr. Wiebe is at large. We have contacted the police to try and apprehend Mr. Wiebe and bring him back to Saskatchewan.

It's also noted that Mr. Wiebe . . . The member opposite is

talking about a dangerous offender. I can advise the House that Mr. Wiebe has been complying with his probation officer. He has a part-time job. He has a known address. He's living with relatives in Calgary. My thoughts of his designation as a dangerous offender, he was released. He was released by the Parole Board early.

But I would like to also, Mr. Speaker, remind members opposite that under the previous administration, there are nine . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. The members are aware of the rules. Listen to the answer. Minister Responsible for Corrections.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, under the previous administration, there was nine cases where inmates were released mistakenly — nine cases between 1998 and 2007. The more interesting of those cases, nine incidents, two of the incidents involved an offender accused and charged with murder, was released in September of 2005 and in 2007 under the watch of the member asking the question. He was in charge at the time.

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

H1N1 Pandemic Planning

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that there are at least four suspected cases and two confirmed cases of H1N1 at the university of Saskatoon. Yesterday I asked the minister if, in the face of a full-blown pandemic, would the University of Saskatchewan students be able to access the H1N1 vaccination before November 24th. And he dodged the question. Mr. Speaker, to the minister, I'll ask again: is the minister scheduling a clinic immediately to vaccinate students at the University of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I answered yesterday, we go on the advice of our chief medical officer, Moira McKinnon, as to how the rollout of the vaccine should be conducted around the province. Mr. Speaker, she's advising and I take her advice that we need to do all our health care workers; isolated communities, many of them in the North right now; people that are at risk over the next week or so; and then into the general public.

We can only vaccinate as many as we receive vaccinations from the federal government, Mr. Speaker, which is on a per capita basis. There is no negotiating between provinces to provinces to the federal government. It's on a per capita basis. It's being rolled out across Canada.

I would note though, Mr. Speaker, that I don't think it would be appropriate to run after an area that may have some increase in H1N1 and not have enough for our high-risk people, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if that's what she's suggesting. I think that would be inappropriate, especially when you look at, for example, Wilcox or the Notre Dame college. As of today there are zero confirmed cases because they did as we asked — they

self-isolated.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, this government owes Saskatchewan mothers some straight answers. The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region website states that children six months to four years of age are in the high-risk group and will be vaccinated November 2nd to the 6th. The Saskatoon Health Region website states children over six months up to five years — they're in the high-risk group, and they'll be vaccinated starting November 9th.

To the minister: Saskatoon mothers want to know why their children are forced to wait an extra week to get the vaccination, and Regina mothers want to know why their five-year-old children are not considered to be high risk when Saskatoon's five-year-olds are. And they want an answer from the minister, not dodge it and pass it on to the health region.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday that, again, it's the chief medical officer that sets out the sequencing, and we set it out in a broad context. It's the health regions that deliver. The health regions deliver the health care services in our province, across the province in 12 different regions.

[10:30]

And there will be some variation within the health regions. If you think that delivery of a vaccine should be the same in Regina as it would be in Mamawetan Churchill, you're completely out of the category because, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Members are aware of the fact that all comments are to be directed through the Chair, and I'll ask the Minister of Health to comply. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will forward my remarks through you to the critic. And I'll try and do it slow so she can completely understand, Mr. Speaker, because yesterday in the news scrum, she certainly had a hard time understanding how it was being rolled out, Mr. Speaker.

It's being rolled out through the health regions on a very controlled basis, unlike in other provinces where there's up to seven-hour waits and when they do get there, there is no vaccine left.

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

Health Care Options

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I gather the minister still has no answer and he's reduced himself to personal insults.

An Hon. Member: — Shame.

Ms. Junor: — It is a shame. I have another question, Mr. Speaker. A report from BC [British Columbia] yesterday says that the Saskatchewan government is in discussion with that province to “. . . sell 400 hip and knee replacement surgeries to Saskatchewan over the next two years.” The news story goes on to note that Saskatchewan will pay more for the service and that will help BC patients get their surgeries faster.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is this government paying more to the BC government when it could be investing in solutions here at home? Why is the Wall government more concerned about patients in BC than . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Members are just reminded of the fact that they're to direct the comments through the Chair, not to individual members. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview for the question.

Ms. Junor: — I'll re-ask the question. Sorry, Mr. Speaker. Why is this government paying more to the BC government when it could be investing in solutions here at home? And why is the Sask Party government more concerned about patients in BC than those needing urgent care here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, you know certainly through many conversations that we've had with constituents around this province, but more importantly through the Patient First Review that has listened to people across the province as to what are their priorities — what do they want to see in the health care system — one of the areas is wait times. It's been an issue in the province for many, many years. In fact it's been growing in the province for many, many years. And we finally got a handle on it so that, you know, we're as many people in or what is being operated on and going out, Mr. Speaker. But there is a huge wait list in between.

And I believe that, Mr. Speaker, it's our responsibility as a government, it was in the Speech from the Throne to address that huge wait list, Mr. Speaker. And I'm going to challenge the health care system to look at all options. Mr. Speaker, I know there's more capacity within the system. I know there's other options, Mr. Speaker. If we look to what has been done in Great Britain who had the same problem, they looked at a number of innovative ways to reduce that wait time. Mr. Speaker, that's what we'll be doing as well.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Reports from BC today suggest that the Premier's plan to send patients needing hip and knee surgeries to that province for treatment will end up costing the province a premium for that service. “This is an opportunity . . .” And this is a quote from the BC Health minister: “This is an opportunity for us to charge a premium by doing Saskatchewan surgeries . . .”

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: how much is Saskatchewan paying in premiums for this surgery, and why is the minister not

investing in the health care system here? Why has he stripped away funding for the surgical centre in Regina that would have done just what BC is proposing at a less cost?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — We are looking at all the options that are available, Mr. Speaker. In the public system if there's more capacity, that is great. We're certainly looking at that. If we have to look at a private deliverer operating within the province, Mr. Speaker, that will be done because what we are doing is we're putting the patient first — unlike their ideology that left people languish on a wait list for over two years. Mr. Speaker, two years — absolutely unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, if we have to deal with other provinces and work with other provinces, we're more than willing to do that — unlike that government would build walls around their province and keep people languishing on waiting lists for far too long.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

H1N1 Pandemic Planning

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Health told the media and today the Minister of Health told the Assembly that a number of H1N1 . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Health told the media and today he tells the Assembly that a number of H1N1 vaccines were on their way to northern Saskatchewan. In the North we have the problems of overcrowding housing, of isolation, and as Aboriginal people, mostly Aboriginal people, we are considered a very high-risk group. This is very alarming to everyone, very concerning.

To the minister: where and when will the people of Athabasca receive the H1N1 vaccination?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my earlier answers, that the chief medical officer is rolling out the vaccine protocol across the province. Vaccines have been delivered to all 12 health regions. It's up to those health regions then to carry on the vaccination plan within their area.

Mr. Speaker, through the week there have been vaccines given to health care workers. But also in the northern communities, Mr. Speaker, the two northern health regions are in possession of the vaccine and they're rolling those vaccines out. It cannot be done in every community on the first day — no, it can't be, Mr. Speaker — but they're working through the North to try and vaccinate and immunize those communities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I find it very curious that the member would be asking those questions when the Health critic would want

something totally different. Maybe we should take those vaccines from the North and give them to the university. Is that what they're saying, Mr. Speaker? Because it's a contradiction between those two.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about the region's website, and we did go through the region's website just a half an hour ago. They have no information as to where and when the people in northern Saskatchewan will receive their vaccination. And I've got a copy of that right here for the minister.

Mr. Speaker, the question I have, does this minister know what he's doing? No, he does not, Mr. Speaker. Again I'll ask that minister, without playing politics, and the question is when will he get this information out to the people of the North and in particular Athabasca, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the health regions are responsible for the delivery within their area on an overarching basis through the Ministry of Health and through our chief medical officer, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they've been working at it, and they're out delivering those vaccines as we speak, as they go across the northern parts of our province to isolated communities, Mr. Speaker.

Is there a lack of information on the odd website? I would say probably there is. If there is no information on the Mamawetan Churchill or Keewatin Yatthé health regions, Mr. Speaker, that should be corrected. And we'll look to make sure that is.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Over the past couple of days I've been attempting to ensure that members understand the rules of directing the questions through the Speaker. And I just want to remind members. And sometimes members inadvertently refer directly, but I would ask members to direct all questions, no reference directly to an individual but to the minister or whether it's a member at large.

I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Energy Issues

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know this government conducted a poll a few weeks ago using a Toronto polling firm, Angus Reid Strategies. This expensive, Toronto-generated online survey tells the public this about SaskPower rates: "It is projected that an average annual rate adjustment of approximately 8% will be required during the next decade . . ." On a compounded basis, Mr. Speaker, that means 100 per cent of rate increases and more than that over the next 10 years — a doubling of rates, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: can the minister confirm that this is the rate plan of the Sask Party government for SaskPower?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has been no application by SaskPower for a rate increase at this particular time. There probably will be at some point in time. There has been no decision taken with respect to it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No application, but they're spending big bucks to let the people of Saskatchewan know that there's going to be over a 100 per cent rate increase. Bit of a disconnect here, Mr. Speaker.

This Toronto-generated survey asks an interesting question about the future decisions of SaskPower. It asks, "Who do you believe is best equipped to make decisions about future electrical supply?" Among the options is private sector.

To the minister: which private sector companies does this government propose to put in charge of making decisions about SaskPower's future electrical supply? Is it Bruce Power? If not, then who is it?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the generation of electricity in Saskatchewan, SaskPower has facilities that they operate themselves. They have facilities that they have joint ventures with. They have private partnerships. And that has been ongoing for a long time both under this administration, under the previous administration.

However I can understand why the NDP [New Democratic Party] have a reluctance to get involved in private sector generation in Saskatchewan. In 1995, the last time that they got involved in one, they asked for proposals to come forward. Proposals did come forward from a number of different companies. At that point, they cancelled the proposal request. And then they took the information, they grabbed the information and went about it and built it themselves. The only problem with it was, Mr. Speaker, was they were sued for doing so, and they were dragged through the courts of Saskatchewan for seven years for that.

The Speaker: — I recognize . . . Order. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — It wasn't an answer to my question. The question related to who's best served in making those decisions about our electrical supply. This government's suggesting that the private sector should be making those decisions. I'm not talking about who's participating in generation, but who's making those decisions. This government thinks the private sector should be making those decisions.

My question to the minister: who in the private sector should be making decisions about Saskatchewan's electrical supply?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SaskPower has had a long-standing relationship with private sector deliverers of electrical generation in Saskatchewan for a long, long time, dating back to the years when the NDP were in government. We continue that tradition. If you pay attention to what the CEO [chief executive officer] of SaskPower is saying, this is an adequate mix between private sector and public sector generation.

And as I said, I can understand why the NDP doesn't want to get involved in that once again because they got sued by these companies, were dragged through the courts for seven years. And the whole mess, the whole bungling mess, was managed by none other than the Leader of the Opposition.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Members will come to order. The Minister of Health will come to order. I recognize the member from . . . Order. Members want to have question period? We can have it or we can let it pass by.

I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So we asked the question twice; it wasn't answered either time. We're not talking about power generation. Maybe the minister doesn't understand here. What we're talking about is who's best to make the decisions about Saskatchewan's future electrical supply. These guys, that minister, thinks it should be the private sector.

I'll go on here, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting that one group is missing from the list of people who I think might be interested in being involved in SaskPower's future decisions about electrical supply, that being Saskatchewan people.

To the minister: the government admits, with its question in its expensive poll, that it has no plan to listen to the public when making decisions about the future energy options for Saskatchewan. Why is this?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, SaskPower is responsible for making the decisions just as they have been for a long, long time; just as they have been when they are making decisions about their public ownership generation; just as they are when they're making decisions along with private sector partners, which they have for a very, very long time.

Mr. Speaker, I also note that the Leader of the Opposition shouts from his seat that it wasn't him that was responsible for it; it was Doug Anguish that was responsible for it. He wants to throw him under the bus. But at the time, Mr. Speaker, he was a member of cabinet. He was the CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] minister, and he most certainly did have responsibility for it.

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we need that minister to focus on the present and today he's focused so much on the past. And what's really important here is the fact that Saskatchewan businesses . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Member's fairly close to the Speaker's chair, and it's almost impossible to hear the question. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can understand why the minister's trying to deflect everything here and focus on the past instead of what's important, and that's 100 per cent rate increases for families and businesses in this province. Talk to families, that's very difficult for them. Talk to the Federation of Independent Business, that's their number one challenge for business.

The same survey says that SaskPower has a short-term, mid-term, and long-term plan to meet the power needs of Saskatchewan people. Surprisingly, demand-side management or energy conservation is only mentioned as a short-term option to meet Saskatchewan's power needs. And the plan is far too modest at only 10 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Looking at power production, the cheapest megawatt is the one that's not needed, the one that's conserved, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: why does the Sask Party government for SaskPower have no plan to improve energy efficiency and conservation beyond the short term? Why is the Sask Party failing Saskatchewan families on conservation?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, SaskPower has ongoing consultations that they conduct with the consumers and the customers of this province on an ongoing basis. In addition to that, in the first time in history in Saskatchewan, there has been a legislative committee that has been struck to look at the energy options for the future of Saskatchewan. Those options include conservation. They include new generation, They include wind power, biomass — all of the different components, whether you're looking at natural gas and even perhaps at some point, nuclear.

But, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the members opposite do not know which way they want to go on this file. Do they want to have SaskPower make the decisions, as they always have? Do they want to let the private sector make the decisions? We believe that SaskPower is best equipped to make those decisions.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would argue and I would say that the last person who we're going to be asking for advice is the captain of industry that came back from Alberta to offer his advice. On one hand, he was in favour of nuclear, but when he came back, all of a sudden he's a big proponent of wind energy in Saskatchewan.

Well I would say to the people of Saskatchewan, SaskPower will make those decisions.

The Speaker: — Order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Not Debatable)

Return No. 1

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar, the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the Assembly to issue an order for return.

The Speaker: — Order for return.

Return No. 2

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar, the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — For return, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order for return.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise today and join my colleagues and other members of the Legislative Assembly in speaking to the Speech from the Throne and the amendment that has been placed in front of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Before I make comments specific to the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make some other comments relating to other matters in front of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

In particular, I'm interested in joining with my colleagues in welcoming the two new members to the legislature in this session, Mr. Speaker. Two by-elections were held in September. Those two by-elections were won by representatives of the official opposition, Mr. Speaker. And I want to welcome the new member from Saskatoon Riversdale and the new member from Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Speaker, these two members are going to add to the dynamic, the incredible dynamic that is this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And I look forward to working with both members — one the new Leader of the New Democratic Party, the official opposition, and the second a new member who has distinguished herself in the Saskatoon community and who I have no doubt will distinguish herself in this Assembly on

behalf of her constituents for the entire province.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of The Battlefords constituency for continuing to support me, Mr. Speaker, in the last election. The fact that I was returned for another term, Mr. Speaker, gave me great confidence in being able to continue the work that I had begun previously. And, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last two years since the election in 2007, I've been overwhelmed to receive representations from throughout The Battlefords about issues that are important to my community, Mr. Speaker. A number of those issues I will raise shortly in my comments related to the Speech from the Throne itself.

Mr. Speaker, on this day I also want to congratulate the people of Saskatchewan who allowed their names to stand for election yesterday in this province, election to municipal government across the province. And, Mr. Speaker, in particular, although I value the work that has been done by municipal leaders right across the province of Saskatchewan, and I remind members that indeed I served on the city council in the city of North Battleford for a term, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all those who let their names stand and I look forward to working with those who have been elected for the next municipal term.

But in particular, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank those elected in The Battlefords constituency. First in the town of Battleford, returned by acclamation, the mayor, Chris Odishaw. But in the council of the town of Battleford, Mr. Derek Mahon, Mr. Garth Walls, Ms. Donna Lavin, Mr. Cam Duncan, Mr. Bill Halewich were all returned incumbents, Mr. Speaker. All returned to their seats, joined by a new member, Ms. Susan McLean-Tady, Mr. Speaker, an individual who has worked for the town of Battleford, who knows the town of Battleford very, very well, will be joining them on that council. And I congratulate all of them and look forward to working with them during their term in office.

In the city of North Battleford, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people who allowed their name to stand and congratulate those who were elected, Mr. Speaker.

A very tight race for mayor in the city of North Battleford. Last night the numbers came in; only 15 votes separated the first and the second candidates on the ballot. But declared elected, Mr. Speaker, former councillor, Mr. Ian Hamilton as the new mayor in the city of North Battleford, also joined by incumbent Don Buglas, Ray Fox, and Grace Lang.

The city of North Battleford has three new councillors, Mr. Speaker: Rhonda Seidel, Ron Crush, and Trent Houk. Mr. Speaker, this will be a dynamic council in the city of North Battleford. I congratulate them all and I look forward to working with those members of the council, city of North Battleford and the town of Battleford.

I also, while I'm talking about municipal leaders, Mr. Speaker, do want to send a congratulation out to our former colleague here in the legislature, Mr. Glenn Hagel, who was elected with more than 60 per cent of the votes in the city of Moose Jaw.

Mr. Speaker, I've been watching the Moose Jaw election for a number of reasons — not only because a former colleague was

in that race, but also because the city of Moose Jaw and the city of North Battleford share a number of issues in common, not the least of which is financing and bringing into being a new recreation and cultural facility for the community. And I know that Mr. Hagel from the mayor's chair will manage issues in the city of Moose Jaw with a very capable hand.

And one other piece of news I want to bring to the attention of the members of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that I read in *The StarPhoenix* this morning. I wasn't aware of this, but I'm extremely pleased to hear that the Canadian Institute of Health Information, an organization we refer to as CIHI, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Institute of Health Information has just named John Wright, former deputy minister of Health in the province of Saskatchewan, an individual let go from the Health department by the Sask Party opposite, is now the new head of the CIHI. Mr. Speaker, a national body that is critical to the development of the electronic medical record in Canada and guaranteeing the rights of individuals in the health system to privacy but to sharing of information for medical purposes.

Mr. Speaker, my congratulations to John Wright, who is now being recognized on the national stage for his past contributions to health and recognized for his ability to be a leader nationally in the health field, Mr. Speaker. My congratulations to my former deputy minister of Health, Mr. John Wright.

Mr. Speaker, two other thank yous that I want to express. Number one: I know a lot of the people of The Battlefords who contact my office talk with my constituency assistant, Colleen Smith, before they have a chance to talk to me. Primarily, Mr. Speaker, because she's always there and I, Mr. Speaker, am sometimes here, sometimes at meetings in other places around the province, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank Colleen Smith for the tremendous job that she has done and will continue to do in representing me and, more importantly, representing the interests of my constituents to me when I'm not there, Mr. Speaker. She does a tremendous job.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, I also want to pay tribute to and thank my spouse, Cheryl Cook-Taylor, who has contributed greatly to my ability to represent the people of The Battlefords here in the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, my thanks and love to my wonderful wife.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn my attention now to just letting the members of the Assembly know what the issues are in The Battlefords that I see. Because, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech is intended to provide a vision to the people of Saskatchewan, the vision of the government for the year ahead.

Mr. Speaker, the idea of the Throne Speech, the history going back many years, is to assure the public that the government understands the issues of the province and has a plan, an idea — more importantly, a vision — of how to address those issues and give the people of the province an opportunity to prepare themselves to work in concert with the government in addressing those issues. So, Mr. Speaker, Throne Speech: general in nature, but always addressing vision, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to talk about the needs of the city of North Battleford, the town of Battleford, and the constituents of The Battlefords — and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, the challenges that they

face, given the circumstances that exist in the province today. Because, Mr. Speaker, in direct relation to the vision outlined in the Throne Speech, I'm asking members to think, are the needs being addressed by vision outlined by the province of Saskatchewan?

[11:00]

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned in the House yesterday that the primary issue in The Battlefords is indeed affordable housing. Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that is best presented by the fact that there are virtually no alternative accommodations in The Battlefords. We have a shortage of rental units, Mr. Speaker.

This shortage of rental units is compounded by a number of factors. Number one, the growing economy is bringing people into the community for education and, Mr. Speaker, for employment. And the lack of rental accommodations, Mr. Speaker, particularly for immigrants and for young people moving into the community for their first job, number one, they can't find places. But number two of course, Mr. Speaker, they can't afford a place that becomes available, if any become available, because of course the rents are increasing.

Now I don't begrudge a landlord or an owner of a property getting a return on their investment, Mr. Speaker. But it has to be tied to, in my belief, the economy of the region. And the latest increase in rents, Mr. Speaker, is in a property that's primarily, the residents of that property are primarily seniors or low- to middle-income individuals.

Mr. Speaker, the property has recently been purchased by residents who live in the city of Calgary. And all of a sudden, the North Battleford economy is seeing the rents in this building being increased commensurate with the economy in Calgary, Mr. Speaker. The building was purchased on the basis of highly leveraged circumstances. And as a result, the new landlord wants a rate of return very similar to what is available in a larger, even more active economy.

So seniors on fixed income, low-income people in basically low-wage jobs, Mr. Speaker, are being asked to contribute 40 per cent more in rent. And that date of application, Mr. Speaker, will take effect on February 1st, essentially the coldest day of the year.

Mr. Speaker, without some appeal procedure or some appeal provision, a number of these people are going to have to find a way to justify spending money on rent versus spending money on groceries, or perhaps — even for the seniors, Mr. Speaker — prescription drugs. Mr. Speaker, they'll have to make decisions because they can't move. And others, Mr. Speaker, who are fortunate enough to be able to move, Mr. Speaker, are finding that the quality of the accommodation that is otherwise available is not up to the standards that they feel they deserve after having lived in a quality building for, in some cases, 10, 15, and 18 years. So, Mr. Speaker, that's just one example.

But we have a community that's in growth. We have young people moving to the community. We have a large senior population on fixed income. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a large number of First Nations communities in the area, Mr. Speaker, and quite a number of people, young First Nations people

moving into the community to take employment — often their first jobs, Mr. Speaker — and there are virtually no rental units available, Mr. Speaker. So I simply state that housing is a critical issue in The Battlefords . . . needs to be addressed in terms of the challenges of our growing economy, Mr. Speaker.

And I look at the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. What's the vision for housing? Well the Throne Speech response to housing is, we've done a little bit, and there's a little bit under way. The only paragraph in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker — no identification of where this government, the Sask Party government, intends to go with housing. I'll have more to say on that in a couple of minutes, Mr. Speaker, when I get to the lack of vision, when I get to some comments on the lack of vision in the speech itself.

Other issues, Mr. Speaker. It's no surprise to members in here that I believe that the province needs to have immediate action on the construction of a new hospital, a new mental health facility. Saskatchewan Hospital, North Battleford has been on the agenda of government now for a couple of years, Mr. Speaker. The commitments were there previously during the election campaign in 2003, 2007, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Party government made their commitments and promises to replacing Saskatchewan Hospital. Two years later, Mr. Speaker, we're still not there. So, Mr. Speaker, second issue in The Battlefords. I'll address that in a little more detail in a few minutes.

We do have some highway issues, Mr. Speaker, that people have been raising. The government talks a little bit about the infrastructure needs, etc., but the town of Battleford, Mr. Speaker, has been struggling with the Department of Highways opposite on the program about urban connectors and the issue relating to the ability of traffic to move through the town of Battleford on a provincial highway, Mr. Speaker, and the lack of response over the last two years to this issue, an important issue for the people.

It's not so much money, Mr. Speaker. It's about the attitude and the ability of the department to get this issue resolved so that the town of Battleford can continue the growth that has begun there, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Highways has not demonstrated the ready-for-growth attitude that the government has been cheerleading over, Mr. Speaker, for the last two years.

And also, Mr. Speaker, I don't need to remind members of the casualties, the tragedies that have occurred on Highway 4 North, going north of The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker. We've lost a number of young people over the course of the last few years, Mr. Speaker, to accidents. Municipal leaders throughout the whole region from The Battlefords north to the town of Glaslyn, Mr. Speaker, have been calling for additional investment in that highway. All has to do with safety, Mr. Speaker. They've gone so far as to call for a twinning of that highway, Mr. Speaker. But to this date there's still been no concrete resolution. Municipal leaders want to see that, the safety of that road dealt with by the Minister of Highways.

Mr. Speaker, we had a meeting the other day with representatives from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Mr. Speaker. One of the issues that CFIB raised was a shortage of qualified labour. There isn't a week in The

Battlefords, Mr. Speaker, that an employer somewhere in the community doesn't mention to me the difficulties that our community has in growing the workforce because of the lack of qualified labour, Mr. Speaker. And indeed the government needs to put additional efforts into ensuring that where business needs employers, Mr. Speaker, that we've got the province, the government, supporting them.

That is one of the other big issues in The Battlefords because, Mr. Speaker, west side of the province, lots of resource activity taking place, ideally positioned on the Yellowhead highway, Mr. Speaker — The Battlefords certainly needs to experience the capacity to grow. But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, that growth presents challenges and we need the support of the provincial government to meet those challenges.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, like other . . . Well not lastly. I have two other points. Second last, Mr. Speaker, we are looking for continued efforts to fund recreation and cultural opportunities.

The people of The Battlefords are very pleased that the province was able to contribute \$7 million to our multi-purpose facility. Mr. Speaker, this is a project that our new council is going to deal with and bring to fruition but of course, Mr. Speaker, since the province provided funding to that building, of course the costs have escalated somewhat and the community has to deal with raising money to complete the financing of that project. Mr. Speaker, we will meet that challenge but we also have another challenge, Mr. Speaker, and that's funding of other municipal projects while this one is under way.

And in particular, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment will know that a couple of weeks ago I sent a letter to her talking about the needs of Saskatchewan municipal golf courses, Mr. Speaker, to improve their irrigation systems, to make these golf courses more environmentally friendly, Mr. Speaker, to reduce their environmental footprint.

Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity to improve irrigation systems in municipal golf courses across the province, reducing chemical use, reducing water wastage, Mr. Speaker, and protecting the fragile environments that exist around some of our golf courses.

Mr. Speaker, an issue in The Battlefords that I know is also going to be an issue in other communities, Mr. Speaker, is the whole issue of funding a new environmental approach to golf course irrigation management, Mr. Speaker. And I hope the government will be able to address that issue soon.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, to the government, another issue that's emerging is our Citizens on Patrol program. The Citizens on Patrol exist in other communities as well, Mr. Speaker. With the loss of FleetNet and some other things that have been taking place, the communication systems between local police officials, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] in our community, and the citizens who have volunteered to be the eyes on the ground, Mr. Speaker, the communication system has deteriorated to the point where it's virtually non-existent. Mr. Speaker, I've called on the government to try to address this issue.

Those are significant issues in The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker. I

wanted members to understand that as the province grows, as our communities grow, there is a need for the province to address and pay attention to the challenges that affect us. Mr. Speaker, that's sort of the theme towards my conclusion. I'm not at the conclusion yet, Mr. Speaker, but the theme towards my conclusion is the ability of this government to manage the challenges that we are facing in the province, Mr. Speaker.

My conclusion will of course be that this government is failing to manage those challenges. Great at cheerleading the optimism that's in the province, Mr. Speaker, because there is some, but there are serious challenges, Mr. Speaker, that can't be fixed by cheerleading. They can only be fixed by addressing them face to face, face on, Mr. Speaker.

And I look at the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, that talks about moving forward. And of course as other members of the Assembly have already pointed out, this Throne Speech is less about moving forward and more about looking back — and again I use the word cheerleading, Mr. Speaker — cheerleading what has already taken place, but failing to think about what this means and what it could mean to the citizens of Saskatchewan over the course of the coming year.

And that was my opening comment, Mr. Speaker. A Throne Speech is about what confidence can we have in the government for the coming year — are they going to address our issues? By and large, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech sets that out. This one fails miserably in that department.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's just jump back briefly. I don't want to use too much of the time of the House, Mr. Speaker, but I just want to jump back briefly and take a look at what this government has done since they were elected in 2007, since they're very good on cheerleading, Mr. Speaker. I want to look at the throne speeches for the last two years, Mr. Speaker, before this one.

And we recall that in 2007, after the election in 2007, the Saskatchewan Party came to government. The Throne Speech was called "Securing the Future," Mr. Speaker. And I quote from that Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, 2007. This was the vision that the government set out right after the election. The vision is, ". . . [We] will have a growth agenda . . . [It] will be built on a foundation of sound financial management." How long did that last, Mr. Speaker? Sound, sound financial management . . .

An Hon. Member: — And we're starting to see it, Len. Growth agenda — 360 students more.

Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, we have no trouble with a growth agenda. The Deputy Premier yells, growth agenda. We're getting there. Mr. Speaker, the NDP was there, Mr. Speaker, in 2007 in November. You look at all the charts, Mr. Speaker. The province was growing before the Sask Party got elected, Mr. Speaker, and growing at a considerable pace, I might add. However, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. We're well aware of the fact that we all have differences of opinion. We also have the right

to respect the right of an individual to speak. I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The point of the quote from the Throne Speech was, “. . . built on a foundation of sound financial management.” No sooner, Mr. Speaker, did this Saskatchewan Party government take the seats opposite than they started to try to creatively . . . I think the Minister of Enterprise talked about creative accounting over there. Well, Mr. Speaker, we took a \$2 billion surplus and dropped it to 800 billion. The money is gone. We don't know where it is.

[11:15]

Mr. Speaker, they built a budget — 20 per cent of that money was going to come from potash revenue, Mr. Speaker. They didn't get the potash revenue. We're cutting back in this province now on commitments, particularly commitments to health care, Mr. Speaker. And where is this foundation of sound financial management that was the promise of the Throne Speech, the vision of the members opposite, in 2007?

Mr. Speaker, they talked about a labour shortage. In The Battlefords, I mentioned earlier, two years later the labour shortage is still there. Is there any evidence, Mr. Speaker, that this government has a vision of dealing with that this year? No, Mr. Speaker. But in 2007 that was a commitment.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech in 2007 focused on forestry, and Enterprise Saskatchewan was going to deal with the forestry sector. Well, Mr. Speaker, that didn't last very long either. No sooner did they say, we're going to manage the forestry sector better, than we got to a point today, two years later, we have virtually no forestry sector left, Mr. Speaker.

And of course the conclusion there talked about, growth will produce a higher quality of life for the people of Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, they forgot to say that in two years time, a higher quality of life — unless you're a senior on fixed income, unless you're a student going to college or university, unless you're unemployed, unless you live in the North, unless you are a person of First Nations ancestry, Mr. Speaker, unless you are a recent immigrant to this province. Higher quality of life — we all demand it, we all deserve it, Mr. Speaker — vision of the members opposite in 2007.

Let's go to 2008, Mr. Speaker, and this was the interesting year — 2008. The Throne Speech was referred to. “A Stronger Saskatchewan. A Better Life,” that was the title, Mr. Speaker. And it also said in the Throne Speech the year will be “characterized by fiscal prudence,” Mr. Speaker — fiscal prudence. Here we go.

The year that they put all their eggs in the potash basket, Mr. Speaker. And the Minister of Energy yesterday tried to explain why they made their mistakes, Mr. Speaker, and he had a pretty good explanation. But it contradicts what the Premier says in the Throne Speech, that it was process. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy indicated it wasn't process. It's the way that, the attitude about how you do things, Mr. Speaker. Potash, 20 per cent, not there. We've had some difficulties as a result. How do we manage the challenge in front of us, Mr. Speaker? They have failed in managing the challenges.

But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, what were the words of joy that came out of that second Throne Speech in 2008, Mr. Speaker? Saskatchewan used to be next year country. This year is this year country, Mr. Speaker. That's what the Throne Speech said.

So, Mr. Speaker, what came about as a result of this so-called it's not next year country; it's happening this year, Mr. Speaker? Well where have we come from now, Mr. Speaker?

The children's hospital is next year. The surgical centre is next year. The Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford may be next year. Affordable housing in the province, next year. Cattle and hog production support, Mr. Speaker, next year, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite in 2008, a full two Throne Speeches ago, Mr. Speaker, talked about Saskatchewan being this year country. All we got, Mr. Speaker, was a flawed fiscal approach and now we've got cutbacks and are paying the penalty.

Mr. Speaker, is this the government to meet the challenges faced by our economy and the challenges faced by individuals living in our economy? Mr. Speaker, I argue that no, it isn't. Saskatchewan as far as their plans are concerned, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan from a Saskatchewan Party perspective is still next year country.

And this year, Mr. Speaker, this year's Throne Speech, we sat here and listened carefully. We looked at the title, “Moving Forward.” We all get excited, Mr. Speaker, because we all want to move forward. But, Mr. Speaker, as colleagues here have indicated, there was more looking back in this vision than there was looking forward. And there's no vision, Mr. Speaker, there's no vision at all in looking back. We need to know what we've done to move forward, but we have to use what we've done to plan, to make the plan for going forward. So, Mr. Speaker, what's lacking in here?

Let's go back to my desires of the people in The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker. There's nothing in this Throne Speech for housing. There's nothing in this Throne Speech for forestry which is part of the economy of the North and of The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker. Nothing in here for cattle and hog producers which surround the economy of The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker. Nothing in here to deal with the labour shortage in the province, Mr. Speaker. All issues that are critical to the quality of life and the future of the economy in The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker, these are very, very important.

And, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government opposite not to postpone for very long if they want to manage wait-lists and the surgical health care needs of the people of Saskatchewan, not to postpone very long the surgical day centre here in Regina. It will assist people in The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker, to get their surgeries done.

And once that's finished, Mr. Speaker, let's remember the commitment that the New Democrats made — not just one surgical day centre in the province, Mr. Speaker, but two: one in Regina and one in Saskatoon over time as resources permitted. Mr. Speaker, this will go a long, long way to ensuring that Saskatchewan will benefit.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that my time has elapsed. Mr. Speaker, I want to stress finally and in conclusion that when . . . Oh, I forgot one other thing, Mr. Speaker. I can't, I would be remiss if I forgot this. We had a very nice meeting with those representing small business in Saskatchewan, the other day as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, a very good meeting. And I would argue that 85 per cent of the business people in The Battlefords constituency, that which I represent, would be considered small business, Mr. Speaker. They talked to me not only about the inability to attract qualified labour, but they also talked about other things that governments can be doing to assist small business.

Well let's just take a look at what was also happening in Saskatchewan a week ago, what was happening a week ago when the Throne Speech was brought forward, Mr. Speaker. The Throne Speech was delivered during Small Business Week in Saskatchewan — Small Business Week in Saskatchewan — and yet while Small Business Week in Saskatchewan is on the minds of many people, it was not on the minds of the Premier or the government of the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, because not a mention in the Throne Speech about small business. Not a mention.

So in addition to no mention about housing or cattle and hogs or agriculture or forestry or other things that are critical to the future — the next year of people adapting to this changing economy, Mr. Speaker, not a mention — certainly no reference whatsoever to a plan or what the future might bring.

So Mr. Speaker, when it comes to, did this government lay out a plan that we as Saskatchewan residents can follow? No, Mr. Speaker, they did not. They did not give us a plan so that we can manage our lives in concert with the direction that the government wants to take.

Mr. Speaker, therefore some of the things that I've argued, I can argue very strongly, Mr. Speaker, that this government over the last two years has failed students. They've failed seniors. They've failed cattle and hog producers. They've failed forestry workers. They've failed the forestry industry in northern Saskatchewan. They're failing northerners. They're failing immigrants. Mr. Speaker, they're failing small-business people in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I know I've missed somebody in that list, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure they've failed more. But that's the list that I know of from The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker. Did this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, provide the people of Saskatchewan with a plan? No. I can therefore argue, Mr. Speaker, that this Throne Speech failed the people of Saskatchewan fully, Mr. Speaker.

I guess it's easy to understand why, Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech — the third year of the Saskatchewan Party government, one year before the next year-long election campaign which will probably begin with the Throne Speech next year, Mr. Speaker; the third Throne Speech, the third opportunity to plan for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — therefore a Throne Speech that had a lot of input from the Premier, Mr. Speaker. I'm not at all surprised because when we look at the Premier's resumé, Mr. Speaker, we know that his resumé is full of a lot of cheerleading, Mr. Speaker. There's virtually no evidence on the Premier's resumé of

success, Mr. Speaker, virtually no recognition of success on the Premier's resumé.

So, Mr. Speaker, I shouldn't be surprised one little bit that over the course of the last three Throne Speeches, the delivery of this government to meet the people of Saskatchewan, that if there's been failure before, there'll be failure after. Mr. Speaker, the Premier hasn't learned anything from his time outside of this place, Mr. Speaker. Therefore it's easy to understand why this Throne Speech and the plans, and lack of plans of this government, are failing and will continue to fail the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Assembly today. I wish to inform you that I will not be supporting the motion to support the Throne Speech, but I will be supporting the motion to support the amendment which recognizes the failure of this government to meet the challenges of the people of Saskatchewan in these challenging times. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate as we have the opportunity to comment on the Speech from the Throne and to discuss the vision of our government. Two words, Mr. Deputy Speaker: moving forward.

I would like to welcome the members who represent the constituencies of Saskatoon Riversdale and Regina Douglas Park who have recently joined this Assembly. In my relatively short time in this Assembly, I am of the belief that those who serve in this House do so for the right reasons. We serve in this House to serve the people of Saskatchewan, to serve the people of Saskatchewan and to improve the quality of life of all of the people of Saskatchewan. This Assembly should not be a haven for opportunists, for self-serving interests, or for self-promotion. I trust it will not.

My constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you are aware, is the constituency of Cut Knife-Turtleford. It's somewhat a unique constituency in that the way the boundaries were drawn, it completely surrounds the constituency of The Battlefords. The member from The Battlefords, who we just heard . . . I spend a lot of time in The Battlefords area because my constituency surrounds The Battlefords, and I have a little different take on what the view of the people of The Battlefords is than that expressed by the speaker prior to me.

It's kind of ironic that the Saskatchewan Hospital is now a priority of unproportioned dimension that's . . .

An Hon. Member: — It's in your constituency.

Mr. Chisholm: — Exactly. And it was mentioned the other day that it's 100 years old. Well two years ago it was 98 years old, and the minister of Health couldn't do anything about getting a new one.

It's also amazing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Highway No. 4 that was referred to, that the traffic count has somehow

multiplied in the last two years. I don't believe it has. But all of a sudden that is a priority of unproportioned, huge . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to take the opportunity to comment on a few of the initiatives of our government that we have undertaken and will undertake. A priority of our government is the continuing improving of the delivery of health care in our province. This government has committed to reduce surgical wait times in Saskatchewan to no longer than three months within a four-year period. This is a very aggressive goal, a goal that we are proud that our team has accepted and that we welcome the challenge. This means that people's loved ones will no longer have to wait for surgery for one or two or three years.

[11:30]

Our government believes our people deserve better, and we are going to deliver better. Our government is committed to recruiting doctors and nurses. We've implemented one of the most aggressive physician recruitment strategies in the country. Our strategy will increase the number of physicians working in the province by increasing training positions at the University of Saskatchewan and recruiting from outside our borders. Along with increased physicians comes an enhanced access to health care for all people in our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government's nursing recruitment is well under way. Unlike the NDP who decided that instead of recruiting nurses, we will just create such a stagnant economy that people will leave — thus creating a more equal ratio of nurses to the population — we on this side of the House believe that we should increase the number of nurses instead. And that is what we are doing. Our government has already recruited 560 of the 800 nurses that we promised to recruit. That's approximately seven-tenths of a nurse per day, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're also moving forward and creating more long-term care homes in this province. I would like to give an example from my own constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of a project that I think could serve as a template for addressing affordable housing in smaller communities and perhaps in larger communities. The example I would like to give is a project in my hometown, Maidstone, where in January of 2008 a seniors' home was rebuilt and attached to our long-term care . . . Our long-term care facility was attached to our hospital. So that left the former building vacant. It accommodated 28 seniors at that time, and the decision that was recommended by the former government would be that it would just be tore down.

So there was people with some initiative in our community that decided to address the absence of affordable home care for basically level 1 and level 2 individuals, that there was a possibility here to do something — not to request from the government that they do something, but actually an initiative that came from the community. And it went very well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The project kind of took to life about 18 months ago. The first thing that they did was secure the property from the authorities. The health district was co-operative, agreed with the idea.

On a Saturday morning, they had a charity auction to see if they could get this thing started, and they raised \$100,000. In the 18-month period, there's been in excess of 10,000 hours of volunteer labour go into the project. And as of today, the last three suites are being completed, and it will accommodate 14 residents in private suites — this all at a cost of less than \$12,000 per unit.

So this is an example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of what can happen in a small community when people pull together and use their own resources to make good things happen.

I'd like to speak just for a moment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on our government's position on being a leader in the new West. To this end our government continues to expand our relationships with our neighbours and our trading partners. In the summer of 2008 we, Saskatchewan, joined the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region. Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take a few moments to talk about this organization and our government's participation.

In a few short days, our province will host the fall/winter summit and the leadership academy of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region. This is our first opportunity to welcome the participants to our province. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all of those who have assisted in making this possible — the ministries and officials, our Speaker's office, the Lieutenant Governor's office, the private sector, and the PNWER [Pacific NorthWest Economic Region] executive.

Our Premier, in his invitation, summed up for our province our enthusiasm and our welcome for our visitors. And I will quote in part, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Saskatchewan has been warmly welcomed into the PNWER family. We are now enjoying new opportunities to work more closely and more collaboratively with other Canadian and US jurisdictions.

Now it's time for Saskatchewan to return some of the warm hospitality we have experienced from former PNWER forum hosts. I invite all of you to attend the PNWER Legislative Academy and Economic Leadership Forum. The forum is being held November 4-7 . . . in Regina, Saskatchewan, our capital city.

This forum is a tremendous opportunity to visit one of North America's strongest economies. Topics for discussion will include global competitiveness, responsible development of energy resources, agriculture and innovation.

I also invite you to use this event as an opportunity to visit some of Saskatchewan's world-class attractions and experience the warm welcome provided by the down-to-earth people who call this province home.

That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was of the greeting that we are extending, our Premier's extending to our neighbours. That to me indicates the optimism that we have that is shared by our neighbours.

Some of the notable speakers during the three-day conference

include Ambassador Gary Doer, the new Canadian ambassador to the United States; some former Saskatchewan patriots who have made their way in the business world, including Cal Nichols who's probably better known as the former president of the Edmonton Oilers; Brian Hesje from Fountain Tire; Doug Bloom from Spectra Energy; and our own Mayo Schmidt from Viterra. A number of people will be joining us over that period of time.

We also have, as part of the program, offered tours of the Tunnels of Moose Jaw, will be for Saturday morning. And we have arranged for opportunities for our guests to attend the Roughriders game on November the 7th, which proves to be a fairly important game for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my constituency, the two driving economic forces are agriculture and heavy oil. And we do have initiatives in these areas that I would like to address, and areas that I think need to be discussed.

On the oil, the heavy oil side, very recently — this week — Petrobank officially introduced the province's newest conventional heavy oil project, and our Minister of Energy has mentioned that in this House. What is really interesting with this project, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the technology in the heavy oil industry has increased dramatically in the last probably 15 to 20 years. Initially, if you were able to pull 5 to 7 per cent of the oil, that was getting close to what was possible. With different technologies, steam technologies, fire floods, a number of technologies have been experimented with, all with varying levels of success.

However this really is a new technology and the expectations of this project could increase the production from 5 to 7 per cent of available product to 60, 70 per cent. So it's absolutely a good news story and I'm very pleased that it's happening in our part of the world. This technology also will be available for the rest of the world, and that in itself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where heavy oil deposits are being discovered in other parts of the world, we truly are the leader in these technologies that can be exported throughout the world.

On the agriculture side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are committed to moving forward by making support for our agriculture industry a priority with reforming crop insurance, support for our cattle and hog producers, and improving service to our producers. A couple examples, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of just things that have happened in agriculture in the last number of months were changes that were initiated to the crop insurance program to make it more effective for the producers. These were not huge changes.

Probably the largest change is, we changed the direction of the former government which was to increase premiums and decrease coverage. That was the first change. But other modifications to the program have been made in recent months to adapt to this year's particular climate, this year's problems. So that's the kind of adaptability and practical solutions that our Ministry of Agriculture has been offering.

The other example that I think is worthy of note is the move of the AgriStability and AgriInvest programs from Winnipeg, Manitoba to Melville, Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, in my

former endeavours I represented a number of agricultural producers on both sides of the border, in Alberta and Saskatchewan. And the difference between the service that was provided for the Alberta producers, which was provided out of an office in Camrose, Alberta, and that service that was provided to Saskatchewan producers in Winnipeg, Manitoba — or Ottawa; you were never really sure who you were talking to — was really pretty significant.

And just one example of one of my clients, the kinds of silliness that happens in programs like these.

One of my clients farms 4 or 5,000 acres and it was a little bit of a late spring and there was some low spots in some of his fields that he seeded to oats just so that, you know, to prevent the weeds from growing. So at the end of the year when he reports all his crops, he reports that . . . And they were seeded late and they didn't turn out real good and that was all fine, but of his 4 or 5,000 acres and there was like one and a half or two acres of oats which were these small spots.

At any rate his application that year he had a claim, was held up for six months and was . . . We had to arbitrate the case because they claimed that his production of oats was somewhat less than the average and so they thought that he was either hiding oats or eating oats or didn't know how many oats he had. And the people in Winnipeg, we tried to explain that this was just an unique situation. He probably would've been better off not to report the oats at all, but for six months a significant amount of money that was owed to him was held up, and needless to say his accounting fees were probably ridiculous that year for the amount of time that had to be spent on trying to process his claim.

[11:45]

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think those are some of the topics that certainly affect my constituency. And, as I said, my constituency surrounds The Battlefords area. These are some of the practical things that the people of that area of the province are bringing to my attention, and then it's my pleasure to share with them. So I will be voting in favour of the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and against the amendment. Thank you.

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I hustle back to my seat and held up by the Minister of Education. I'm honoured, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to rise today to take part in this debate on the Throne Speech and voice my support of our government's vision to keep our province moving forward.

First and foremost, I'd like to thank my office staff: Raynelle, Sally, John, Selena, and Linda. They do help me a great deal keeping me informed and organized, and for this I am most appreciative. Also I thank my constituency assistant, Marie, and constituency president, Sean Quinlan, who both manage the daily affairs and inquiries, whether constituency-related or whatever, while I work on my ministry duties. The many constituency volunteers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, also deserve honourable mention and thanks for all they do when called upon.

During my tenure as Regina Police Association in my past life, I came to realize how very important good governance is to efficiency and well-being of an organization. I believe that good governance and good government are synonymous.

One aspect I want to address in my address here today is, what is good governance? UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization defines good governance as having eight major characteristics. The characteristics include that it is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law.

Good governance assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account, and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision making. Let me elaborate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on how our Throne Speech adheres to these characteristics of good governance.

Participation and participatory. This is something that no government should ever, ever take for granted — the participation of the people it represents. That is something I believe our government has taken to heart. Saskatchewan has some very big decisions ahead of it, partially because the province is growing quickly — and we welcome that — and our economy is ready to lead the country; partially because, in the issues facing our government, is because the previous government avoided planning for a future of growth. Instead we inherited a huge infrastructure deficit.

Highways were crumbling, schools had leaky roofs, hospitals need major investments in them. But I'm happy to report, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that our government has made a record investment in infrastructure, and over the past two years we have rebuilt and repaired over 3200 kilometres of provincial highway.

We have also invested nearly 300 million in pre-kindergarten to grade 12 infrastructure, the largest amount ever invested in building and upgrading Saskatchewan schools in a two-year period, as we continue to move forward with maintenance and repairs and building new schools.

Another problem was that the former government let the people of Saskatchewan down by not having a plan for the province's future energy needs. So what has this government done, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We have engaged the people of the province in the widest consultation our province has ever seen on the future of the uranium industry and nuclear power in Saskatchewan. We have asked for participation of the public. We welcome participation of the public. In fact the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies is undertaking public hearings on Saskatchewan's energy future and under our government. SaskPower will develop an electrical power generation strategy to meet our province's future needs.

We continually seek the input from the people of this province. Specifically last year we asked residents to weigh in on what they saw as priorities for the government to focus on. We listened and incorporated their thoughts into our plans. We are currently consulting Saskatchewan people respecting long-term care. And of course this is being undertaken by the member from Regina Qu'Appelle.

Another characteristic of good governance is effectiveness and efficiency. The UNESCO definition of effectiveness and efficiency says that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal.

I want to stop for a minute and address something said prior in this debate. The member for Regina Douglas Park said in his response to the Throne Speech that people are naturally social democrats in this province. And I quote, it's just a way of life. Getting groceries from a co-op and banking with the credit union are a normal way of life. They are normal in rural Saskatchewan; however what is not normal is our health care system.

Our health care system has let people down for many, many years. Any system which saw wait times for surgeries to be over a year long is not right and is much less than what Saskatchewan people deserve. And I think any credit union that made you wait in line two hours to speak to a bank teller would be out of business pretty fast, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And any credit union that made you wait for over a year in order to get a mortgage would be out of business just as fast.

The members opposite may like to claim that that's just the way things are done in this province, but this ideology has run its course. The opposition can continue to applaud and cheerlead the current downturn to try to scare the people of Saskatchewan into believing that things are all doom and gloom. They've been trying to do that for years but common sense will prevail, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that means finding ways to deal with surgical backlogs that has kept many people waiting — not just for weeks or months but for years.

We will continue to look for ways to increase efficiency in our current system. We are also going to look at new strategies. We are committed to utilizing the resources that may be available to us to fulfill our goal to reduce surgical wait times.

For the past two years we have worked effectively to build partnerships with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, our post-secondary institutions, and other stakeholders to reduce the shortage of health care practitioners, nurses, and doctors in this province.

We have also put funding in place to see our goals and our partnerships succeed. In 2009-2010 the Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority received a 12 per cent increase from the 2008-2009 budget to provide for general operating. This provides ongoing funding for 75 new full-time nursing positions established in 2008-2009. The region is expected to add 30 to 60 more nursing positions in 2009-2010.

I would also like to touch briefly on responsiveness as another characteristic of good governance. There are a lot of ways that we could judge responsiveness. I think most people in rural Saskatchewan would say there was no response from the former government for many, many years. But Saskatchewan does have a government that is responsive now, a government that has responded in a number of areas, for instance the environment.

We are moving forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister

Responsible for the Environment is away today to attend a meeting with her colleagues to discuss issues regarding our water supply and climate change. We are planning a new environmental regulatory framework and a comprehensive water management strategy. We are pursuing clean coal technology and we have built cross-border partnerships to see this go forward.

Immigration. We have responded to the needs of Saskatchewan businesses to find more workers. We are being told that skilled workers are needed to fulfill the many jobs that are available. We have made improvements over the last two years, but we know it is not enough and we are moving forward with a new goal of attracting 3,400 nominations through the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program. We will work to process these people through our system faster so that more people can start calling Saskatchewan home sooner rather than later.

In the area of agriculture, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I don't pretend at all to know very much about agriculture — however I believe I would be remiss in not mentioning agriculture in this address.

An Hon. Member: — That's okay. The other side never knew anything about it.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Oh, there you go. We have responded to the needs of agricultural producers. For years they were faced with a heavy burden of property taxes and for years the former government did nothing to help them. Our government did not need a tax rebellion to recognize the problem. Instead we responded with the largest farm land property tax reduction in Saskatchewan history. We have continued to make improvements to crop insurance. We've responded to financial hardship with over 70 million in direct support to livestock producers through the cattle and hog support program.

Last summer we asked Saskatchewan people what we should be doing with the increased revenues, and the three most common answers given by Saskatchewan people were debt reduction, tax reduction, and rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure. This year we don't have those increased revenues as evidenced by the significant decline in potash revenues. While this represents a serious challenge for our province, Saskatchewan's economy and finances are still in good shape, especially when we compare them to other provinces in Canada.

While proud of what we have accomplished to date, there is still more we can do. I believe we have to dream big dreams, and to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw, let us dream things that are not and say, why not? What this province saw for way too many years was a lack of responsiveness from that government. We were led by a group of people who were content to be mediocre, a former government that was content to be a have-not province, content with standing idly by while people left the province in record numbers, and all the while saying this is a good thing since that leaves more here for the rest of us.

Accountability. Accountability is paramount in politics of course. Each minister is responsible and accountable for the action of his or her ministry and each member of this Assembly is accountable to their constituents. Our government is proud of our record. When people go back and look at our platform from

2007 and the promises that we have in it, they will be happy with what they see.

If they look at it right now, only halfway through our current term, I think most people are pleased with what has been accomplished — over 100 promises kept so far, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I believe I can speak for the entire caucus in saying we were all behind each one of those promises because they were truthful. And despite our promises being bold, they were attainable and ethical. We are seeing a continuation of that with this year's Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

These are bold goals and we will have to work hard to attain them, along with the people of this province. Accomplishments such as the largest property tax reduction in Saskatchewan history. The largest income tax cut in our province's history which took 80,000 people, low-income earners, off the province's income tax rolls. And let us recall that we have increased assistance to low-income seniors by doubling the seniors' income plan benefit.

[12:00]

Another hallmark of good governance is equity and inclusiveness. UNESCO says that society's well-being depends on ensuring that all of its members feel that they have a stake in their organization. I'm proud to stand in this House today knowing that so many of my fellow members have worked tirelessly, listening to those who don't always have an opportunity to be at the centre of government's attention. And I do not just mean cabinet ministers who are meeting with stakeholders. I mean our entire caucus. Members who take the time to go meet with First Nations members on reserves and in their constituencies. I mean the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, who has been working very hard on the long-term care initiative to make sure thoughts and concerns are being heard by this government. I know that the Minister of Social Services has met with a great number of advocacy — easy for me to say — and stakeholder groups over the last two years in order to address the concerns of the least fortunate in our society.

Here is a list of what has been done as a result of listening to the concerns of Saskatchewan people. Increased the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement for low-income families between 36 and \$136 per month in August 2008, and an additional 6 to \$31 in February 2009, of course depending on the location. Increased shelter rates for 6,500 households on the social assistance plan and the transitional employment assistance, as well as the shelter rates for the provincial training allowance; 80,000 low-income earners will no longer pay Saskatchewan income tax.

Family-based exemptions are now the highest in Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker, more than double the maximum monthly Saskatchewan Income Plan benefit for single seniors and each member of a two-pensioner household. Increased income threshold for seniors to qualify for social housing. Increased shelter rates for 6,500 households on social assistance plan and the transitional employment assistance as well as shelter rates for the provincial training allowance. Increased the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement for low-income families between \$36 and \$136 per month. Minimum-wage increase from \$8.60 per hour to \$9.25 per hour.

The economic booster shot included 15 million for student housing at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], 12 million for affordable housing in Regina, 2.3 million for affordable housing for seniors in Prince Albert. And of course taking effect just this past October 1st, allowances provided under the Saskatchewan assistance program, transitional employment allowance, and the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement will increase due to indexing.

Since our government implemented changes in 2008, shelter allowances for our major urban communities have now increased nearly 12 per cent overall. For Regina and Saskatoon, the combined increases have been more than 25 per cent. The housing supplement will increase for more than 300 families and people with disabilities in urban communities. In recognition to the rapid rise in housing costs in Estevan, residents will now receive the same shelter allowance and benefits as the urban centres of Regina, Saskatoon, and Lloydminster.

Rule of law, another hallmark of good governance. Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of law requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force. As a police officer in Saskatchewan for 27 years, I have an intimate knowledge and an appreciation of how important fair legal frameworks are.

There were years when Saskatchewan would make annual headlines across the country as being the crime capital of Canada. That was a time when Regina and Saskatoon were taking top spots on crime statistic lists. People were not feeling safe, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have committed to increasing the number of police to 120, and 60 have already been hired. These officers are funded by the provincial and federal governments. And I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is still a lot of work to be done in this particular area, but I'm glad to see the statistics for our province are continuing to improve.

And as we are continuing to work towards improvements to our laws, not just through support to our police and judges, but through new responsive legislation: new legislation that will see the banning of texting and hand-held cellphone use while driving; new legislation to protect people when buying tickets to large events; and of course the trespass legislation, are but a few.

As the Minister Responsible for Government Services and the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, I like to think that we are following these principles of good governance in our own ministry. I have to thank the member from Cannington who was my predecessor as the minister of this portfolio. He laid the groundwork for much that we have been able to accomplish. But within the Ministry of Government Services and Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, we are not going to tie our hands by confining ourselves in a narrow, ideological view or bow to the pressure of any one single group when change means an improvement for the entire province.

What I can assure everyone here today is that our government is continuing to reduce red tape. We want to keep this province moving forward, and this means facilitating the expansion of

existing businesses and fostering the creation of new enterprise. In my ministry, we are seeing regulatory changes we made earlier in our term bear fruit. This has happened in a number of ways. One is the creation of delivery services for alcohol. It is a widely available service in other parts of Canada. This new service has been filled very, very quickly in Regina and Saskatoon. I know in particular in Regina more businesses are in the process of acquiring proper permits to get into this delivery market. And of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that means more jobs, more business, and more tax revenue for the province of Saskatchewan.

We also changed regulations to allow for U-brew and U-vin services. It does seem to me that this is long overdue, a common sense change. If we are going to have businesses sell wine kits to people, why not allow them to assist people in making their own wine and beer. This has meant expanding existing services for many businesses across the province. It's another example of what a simple change can have, a simple change can have this huge, huge impact on some businesses.

We've also seen the creation of specialty wine stores in the province. Our specialty orders at SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] stores jumped by 45 per cent in 2007-2008. I'm very excited to see the growth in the liquor industry that these new stores are bringing. It means there will be literally thousands of new products available to the consumer, and we are not done yet. In a relatively short time, we have managed to change many regulations that have deserved a common sense approach. I can assure all of you here today that more changes are coming.

Within SLGAs operations, we have seen growth in the last few years. Some of this has been renovations and a movement to bigger stores responding to the demand of the consumers of Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — A common sense approach.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Common sense.

Much of our growth has simply been a corresponding increase with the growth of the province. I do not just mean growth in population. Wages are going up in Saskatchewan giving consumers more disposable income. And this is good news for everyone.

We fully expect another strong year of revenue from liquor sales. And we will invest back into this province, back into our education system, back into our post-secondary students to train the future leaders and business people of our province, back into our hospitals and care homes, back into our social programs that care for the elderly and disadvantaged, and certainly back into the infrastructure investments in our province. We have seen our infrastructure investments helping to keep the economy moving forward, and this is going to continue. We will continue to address the infrastructure deficit our government has inherited.

I also have the privilege of being responsible for the Saskatchewan Capital Commission. This commission, Capital Commission, will highlight Regina as being home to the seat of government, home to the Territorial Building which was the

seat of the Territorial government in 1883. We have significant political history in our province, and we want to make this relevant and a source of pride for all within Saskatchewan and Canada. It will connect the dots of our past to the present and into the future.

And what is the end result of good governance? Well, I think that is what we are seeing here today — a healthy, vibrant, and growing province. And I'm able to see this first-hand in my constituency.

In Regina Wascana Plains, we have challenges in relation to the global economic crisis, but we've also seen some great successes. Regina has the second-lowest employment rate of any city in Canada. Saskatoon is the only city that has a lower rate. The CFIB's recent report on Canada's top entrepreneurial cities show that Saskatchewan had five out of the ten top cities on the list.

We are seeing the development of the global transportation hub just west of Regina. The member from Cypress Hills is heading the new transportation hub authority which right now is seeing the construction of new Loblaws distribution centre. That centre, which is already providing work to many of our construction and tradespeople, it will provide hundreds of more jobs when it is completed. It is a project that I believe is indicative of a change this province is seeing. Not just a shift of power from Central Canada to Western Canada because that has been going on for many years, but a diffusion of opportunity is occurring. People, companies, and other governments are recognizing everything is in place for Saskatchewan to lead the country.

And a growing province means a growth in services, both from the private sector and from government. In my constituency, we continue to see an expansion in child care services. The Awasis Child Care Co-operative has recently received funding for 55 new child care spaces, and the Regina Apostolic Church is developing 18 spaces for a child care centre. In the current fiscal year, our government has put funding in place for the development of 1,000 new child care spaces across the province. These spaces are needed and very welcomed as our province continues to grow.

The growth in my constituency is very diverse, and I think that speaks to the strength of this province as well. Many of my constituents are young families, professionals who are just starting their careers. Many are older couples retiring to the suburbs of the city. Many more of my constituents are immigrants to this country, who I believe were lucky enough to come to Saskatchewan and discover the finest place in this country.

I see the Saskatchewan spirit alive and well in Regina Wascana Plains. I see people doing amazing things. Our spirit is what defines us as a people. I grew up witnessing this spirit and I understand it, and the rest of Canada is now realizing there is something special right here. If I may take a moment, I would like to insert my family into this great Saskatchewan story. A chapter in a soon-to-be-published book, *Out of the Ashes: Cindercrete Products and the Tell Family*, starting with my great-grandfather, Jacob, illustrates how this company eked out a living in Saskatchewan without it being a boom province.

They did it, amazingly enough, by diversifying and creating partnerships and joint ventures.

It speaks to the tenacity of Saskatchewan's pioneers and the true spirit of this province. This spirit lives on today in Saskatchewan people and will ensure our province moves forward. I am proud of the record of our government and look forward to pursuing the bold goal set out in this year's Throne Speech. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not support the amendment, and I proudly support the 2009 Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to begin my address to the Speech from the Throne by thanking a number of folks. First of all, I'd like to thank my wife who is exceptionally understanding about the demands that we have on our job and the time I spend away in various places around the province and around the country. We've built a beautiful home in Prince Albert; we have great neighbours up there.

And the member from Indian Head-Milestone and the Premier seem very interested in my house in Prince Albert, and I've asked them to come up on a number of occasions for a cup of coffee or a barbecue, but they've yet to accept the invitation. And just the other day the member from Indian Head-Milestone was commenting on the length of my hair, and I'm beginning to wonder if he's been creeping on my Facebook. You know, it's a little scary. But I do live in a great place in Prince Albert right on the river, and we're certainly happy there. And I'd like to thank again, Michelle, for all that she does for me.

[12:15]

Now I have the great pleasure of working with one of the best, if not the best, constituency assistants in the province. Many of the members around me are talking about how theirs is the best, but I tend to disagree and think that Rose does just an amazing job in Prince Albert. She's active in the constituency, in the community of Prince Albert, and goes over and above whenever called on. So I'd like to thank her for the work that she does.

I'd like to thank the rest of my family for their support as well because with jobs like this they rearrange their children's birthday parties so I can be there — many different events in their lives are dictated by the work that we do in the legislature here. So I'd like to thank them.

And I'd like to congratulate my parents who, on the 1st of November, will have been married 40 years. And it is an even more astounding accomplishment when you consider that 37 and a half of those years they spent with me. So congratulations to them and best of luck on 40 more.

I'd be remiss if I didn't join in the congratulations for the member from Douglas Park and the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. Certainly pleased to see them in the legislature. I know that they will both do great work in here, and I'm inspired by the campaigns that they ran and by the work that they've already done in the legislature.

Also I'd like to congratulate the civic politicians, the newly elected and re-elected civic politicians in our province. I'd also like to congratulate the folks that put their name forward that weren't successful. It is a huge undertaking to run for public office — any public office.

Heather McIntyre ran a great campaign in Regina south and came up short. But you know, it's people like her that do this province proud. And again I'd like to just congratulate them for putting their name forward.

Now, a Throne Speech is supposed to look forward to the next year for a government. It's their big opportunity to announce what their plan is for the people of Saskatchewan for the next year. And it's ironic and unfortunate they spent three-quarters of the Throne Speech talking about all of the things that have been done in the past — re-announcements, things that had been done by the NDP, things that had been started by the NDP, and some of their own things.

And how is it that they take all that time to look at the past and spend no time looking at the future? They've been in power for two years, and it's not that they ran out of money, because that's obvious. It's that they've run out of ideas, and you have to think that the two are linked. It's bereft of any new ideas, except it beats up on people who are unfortunately addicted to drugs.

And they talked about, made some mention of wait-lists and reducing them in spite of the fact that, just a few days before that, they cut all the funding to surgical care centres in the city of Regina. It makes no sense. And now we find out today that they're going to take that money that they would have spent on a surgical care centre here in Regina, in Saskatchewan, and they're going to spend it in British Columbia instead.

And the only way you can access a surgical care centre in British Columbia instead of in Saskatchewan is to pay to fly yourself there, put yourself up, jump the queue, and come on back. So what kind of health care system are they creating, where if you can afford to fly to BC and back, you can get health care? But if you can't afford it, you wait in the back of their longer lines, ever-extending lines, for surgical care in this province.

Now with this government's incompetence over the last two years, my speech essentially wrote itself. I want to talk about, briefly, the \$1.3 billion potash boondoggle. They got together this group of women and men and decided that potash would bring in \$2 billion to the province this year. Now you have to ask yourself a couple of questions. Why was it off by this much?

And it speaks to motivation, Mr. Speaker. I think it was off by this much because they built their budget first. They got together in some backrooms and said, you know, which megaproject should we build in the Premier's name in this area and which megaproject should we build in the Premier's name in this area? And how much money should we spend at the Vancouver Olympics so that the Premier can brag and show off and wave his pompoms? And so you build a budget based on all those things but then you have to come up with a number to match the expenditures.

And so why do you pick potash? Well you pick potash because in Saskatchewan it's essentially unique to Saskatchewan in terms of their ability to manipulate the numbers.

If they would have picked to manipulate the value of the Canadian dollar versus the American dollar, you could have looked across Canada and said, well they're way out of whack with Ontario and New Brunswick. So we can't do that.

If they'd picked the price of oil, again you could have looked at several different oil producing provinces in Canada and said well, you know, why are they 50 per cent higher than anybody else?

But they picked potash because Saskatchewan's the only major producer of potash in the province. And so it's the only number that they could manipulate in their budget to satisfy the megaprojects that they're building for the ego of this Premier. Now I'll get back to potash a little later and we'll ask what the member from Kindersley's perspective is on it.

But you know, it is interesting, speaking this late in the debate, considering that virtually nobody on their side has referenced the Throne Speech. They've all gotten up or many of them have gotten up and spent some time talking about various issues.

The member from Martensville for instance got up and spent half her speech bragging about the '07 election — how she won and if she won and how many signs she had up. And you know they had a song that was sung after the Throne Speech called the "Man in the Mirror," and I think in this case the member from Martensville is the man in the mirror. All she could talk about is the '07 election in the 2009 Throne Speech.

So I find it sad that the Throne Speech was dead before it was finished being read. It has no vision. And in fact they must have sent it out for people to read beforehand because nobody showed up for it.

Now the member from Saskatoon Massey Place is extremely fond of education and ensuring that the students of Saskatchewan are properly educated so he invited 50 students from Saskatoon. That's the only reason that there was anybody in that gallery at all for the Throne Speech. So they must have sent out advance copies of the Throne Speech because nobody showed up, and none of them want to talk about it. They've raised everything . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order, order. I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Well the member from Moose Jaw North chirps from his seat that the reason that there was nobody here — and he admits that there was nobody here — is that people trust them. After a \$1.3 billion miss on potash, they think that people trust them. Sad and strange, but not surprising from the member from Moose Jaw North.

Now they spent time in their throne speeches talking about everything from cocaine to showering in the dark but they don't want to talk about the Throne Speech. Why is that? Because

there's nothing new in there.

Now I want to talk too about what wasn't in the Throne Speech because as a representative from Prince Albert, I looked very carefully at the things that were in there for Prince Albert. Absolutely nothing, absolutely nothing. They did make passing mention of some rooms that they made available at Woodland Campus, a project that was started four years ago. So they're not looking back to '06, they're looking back all the way to '05. Projects that were started by . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Now the Education minister wants to chime in and he wants to talk about all of the things that were done in Prince Albert. But none of them were in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, none of them.

And so the member from Prince Albert Carlton was interviewed prior to the fall sitting of the legislature and he was interviewed prior to the Throne Speech or just after the Throne Speech and he said, well essentially there's nothing new in the Throne Speech; it would all be in the budget. He also said that this fall he's going to make sure that the government keeps its promises to the people of Prince Albert. This is the same person who took out an ad that said "A vote for Darryl is a vote for the mill open and people working." He's going to make sure the government keeps their promises. It's unbelievable and truly unbelievable to the people of Prince Albert. They don't believe it and, you know, I talk to them every day.

Now it's sad that today was the best day ever for the former minister of Corrections and Public Safety, when he didn't say a word. The new Minister for Corrections and Public Safety has bungled his file so badly he makes the last one look good. It's unbelievable.

So what else isn't in this Throne Speech for Prince Albert? Well the bridge that the Premier promised in the run-up to the election when he stood on the bridge with Mayor Jim Stiglitz — at the time he was the mayor — and did a photo op saying that a second bridge for Prince Albert would be a great idea and I support that. Well he supports it in words but he doesn't support it in vision, and he doesn't support it with dollars. So he comes in and promises a bridge, and there's nothing for that in the Throne Speech. I was waiting for it in 2007, an announcement in 2008 and 2009 . . . They're running out of time, and certainly they've run out of dollars. But we're hopeful that the member from Prince Albert Carlton is right and we can expect something new in the budget in the spring.

Now you know what else wasn't in the Throne Speech? Airport improvements. The Premier flew into the city of Prince Albert unannounced and held a press conference at the airport and said, we're going to provide airport improvements to the city of Prince Albert. And they interviewed the mayor after and he said, well I don't know about that; we have other priorities we'd rather address, but if they're going to give us money for an airport I guess we'll take it. Well apparently it was simply a ploy to get somebody elected in Prince Albert.

I waited during the Throne Speech to hear, you know, we're going to make infrastructure improvements and improve the airport in Prince Albert. But I guess since they've gone as far as they can to kill the forestry industry and have added nothing of value in mining in Saskatchewan that they don't need an airport

to be improved in Prince Albert.

So again it's unfortunate that this speech is notable more for what's not in it than what's in it. Absolutely zero for forestry. It's the second Throne Speech in a row that didn't make mention of it. There are families in Saskatchewan on the forest fringe and in the North who have depended on this industry for years and years and years. And what has this government done to support it? Zero. They won't even mention it in the Throne Speech. Don't even give it passing mention.

The first thing that they did when they took office was to rip up an MOU [memorandum of understanding] that was signed in good faith with the government and Domtar. Now if you rip it up for ideology and have another plan to replace it, that's one thing. But if you rip it up with absolutely no plan to support those families that depended on those jobs, it's absolutely, purely political and shameful. But that's what they did. They had no plan.

Now the member from Batoche struck a task force, spent the people's money to run around the province and make a plan for forestry. And when we ask him what's in his plan, not only can he not name one point; he says it's for internal. I don't know for internal what, but he said it's for internal. Well did he eat it? How internal is it? But they had no plan even after they struck that task force.

Now we had a forestry centre that was developed to add value to the forestry industry in Saskatchewan, and these guys didn't like the name of it. So they thought, well we're going to make a big impact in forestry; let's change the name to ForestFirst. That'll solve all our problems. So they changed the name to ForestFirst, and the minister responsible is so proud of the change that he doesn't even go to the announcement. They put out 1,100 press releases in one year, and this isn't one of them.

So it was so important to them to do that, that a couple of months later they closed it down and they fired all the workers. So this is their support for the forestry industry in Prince Albert and area. More that's not in the Throne Speech.

[12:30]

What's in the Throne Speech for agriculture? Absolutely nothing. The Minister Responsible for Agriculture says that it was his policy in opposition to do and say anything to get elected. So apparently it worked. But where . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You know, he's chirping from his seat now. It's worked well four times, he says. But where is he on spot loss hail? And now he's silent. Now he's silent.

Where is he standing up for the hog producers in this province when this year alone there's a 33 per cent reduction in marketing hogs in Saskatchewan? Where is he for beef producers in this province when there's a 33 per cent decrease in heifers for slaughter in 2009 under his watch? He brags about having an enormous budget for agriculture. It's half what it was four years ago. Why is that? They took another \$20 million out of the programs last week.

The only thing they did include was moving some bureaucrats from one city to another and that's supposed to solve all the

problems in agriculture in Saskatchewan.

What's in the Throne Speech to add value to any of the industries in this province? Nothing for agriculture. We've got 20 per cent of the crops still in the field. Where is the help? Where is the program to help those farmers? Not a word from the Agriculture ministry.

What have they done to add value to the forestry industry of Saskatchewan? They've done everything they can to virtually kill the industry.

What have they done to add value to the mining industry in Saskatchewan? They struck such a harmful process with their UDP [Uranium Development Partnership] that it's actually hurt the industry. And what have they done to add value to diamond mining in Saskatchewan? What have they done to facilitate anything on that front? They haven't done anything.

What have they done for manufacturing in the province? Their policy is so stagnant when it comes to energy development that our own wind producing plant that produce windmills in Saskatchewan has to close. So they haven't done anything to add value to manufacturing.

And where's Enterprise Saskatchewan in all of this? Well the cowboy they had riding herd on that file rode off into the sunset long ago.

Now why is it that they talk about wait-lists in their speech — and that's the biggest part of the Throne Speech is wait-lists; it's what got all the media after — when just earlier in the week before, they cancelled \$3 million in support for a surgical care centre in Regina and now they're going to farm it all out?

So why is there nothing in this Throne Speech? Because they've got no money left. And because if they've got no money left, they ran out of ideas.

So where is the Energy minister at when they're building a budget that's off by \$1.3 billion on potash . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He made an analogy that they're just like farmers. Farmers do a much better job of budgeting than that group of men and women do. And he should've known better. And why should he have known better? Because it's his file.

He talks to folks on a daily basis in that industry, and what did he say at budget time? He says:

And in fact in the marketplace recently, the Russians have sold a significant quantity of potash to Brazil . . . for \$750 US per tonne . . . So our 556, when you look at comparables that are out there in the marketplace right now, is extremely reasonable. And in fact, we may see a significant increase in the amount of potash royalties for the province of Saskatchewan.

That's what he said. He said there could be more than 2 billion. They're off by 1.3 billion and he admitted that they were almost a lot more wrong than that. And he also said something that was interesting in his speech right after the budget. He said, "So I think as members on this side of the House all thought these members would know, these numbers are not just something

that is picked out of thin air." Well he ought to explain where they pick them from because there is a process. There's been a process in government for years and years and years on how to book potash and the royalties that you'll get from it.

And the Premier admits that he checked them once, twice, and three times, and they're sure they got them right. Well it's a good thing he didn't check them any more than that; they'd have been off by five billion. And I want to read a quote that's in *Hansard*, and it reads like this:

And the members opposite for some reason want to suggest that that just simply isn't going to be the case and we're on a fiscal train wreck, I think [this] is . . . one of the members suggested with respect to that, even though he was dead wrong in terms of the calculations of it. So you have to wonder a little bit about his credibility on the whole issue of potash taxes . . .

You know who said that? It was the Minister Responsible of Energy and Resources. Unbelievable. And, like, it's shocking that that's the industry he's responsible for, and that's what he says at budget time, when they're so wrong.

I just want to read a couple more points. And one is that he's talking about the sale of Crown land for natural resources. And this is how absolutely ridiculous his perspective is on this. They got potash that wrong, and this is how wrong he is on some other things. He says:

The October sale of Crown petroleum and natural gas rates has brought in \$32.4 million in revenue for the province, the largest sale of the year . . .

"This shows we continue to be on the right track," Energy and Resources Minister Bill Boyd said. "Revenue from the October sale is over double that received from the August sale."

What he fails to mention is that in 2009 to date there's \$83.2 million in land sales compared to the previous year, which was 1.12 billion. He's down by 90 per cent, and his quote is, "This shows we continue to be on the right track." Well I guess that depends where the train's going.

Now you talk to the folks from Kindersley about the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources, and this is what they say — they're referencing the Leader of the NDP — and they say, he could have gone someplace else and sent somebody in his place, but he chose to come here. And it looks good on him. And this person said that, adding "that it might work for them because Kindersley does not get much contact from MLA Bill Boyd." That's from his own paper. So it's shocking that, not only is he wrong when he's in here, he's never at home. Somebody has to explain just what he is doing on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Now you've heard about a few members on their front bench. What about the conductor of this foul orchestra, the museum-curator-turned-Premier? How does he fit into this? He brags about the debt and how much they've paid. And we want to know, one, if it's actually paid. We'll find out that in the mid-term report. But he doesn't talk about where he was when

they racked up that debt. He was supporting the men and women who increased the debt in this province by over \$1 billion a year for nine straight years. So he brags about paying off the debt that he helped the province incur. And you know whose money he used to pay it off? He used the money that was left behind from the previous administration. So I'm not sure why he'd brag about that.

He also brags about oil and gas exploration and development and how he's the big proponent of that industry. And you know what happens when you go to meet with folks that have significant operations in Saskatchewan? You know what they say? They say we're going to give the new government credit, and we're going to give them credit because they kept the regime where the NDP had it.

So how he goes around Canada — especially Alberta — and brags about what they've done for that sector . . . They know better. The folks there know better. And they never mention that they're glad that the Premier waves pompoms. That doesn't enter into the debate. What they want to know is, what's the regime and who set it and how long it's been there. And they're extremely pleased with the fact that it began in 1991 and it's been steady ever since. And so he goes around bragging about it, but really he's bragging about somebody else's policy.

He brags about carbon sequestration and how it's something new to the province of Saskatchewan. Well obviously it's not new. It was begun in the mid-'90s when the state-run oil company from Alberta got together with folks from Saskatchewan and decided that carbon sequestration might be a good idea. And the Premier brags about this like it's something new.

An Hon. Member: — Or that he did it.

Mr. Furber: — Or that it's something he did. But it's neither of the two. It was begun 10 years ago by the NDP government.

So it's interesting. People want to know who this Premier is. And we found out something this week, a little bit about him. He's scared. He's scared of the men and women in this province, mostly women, who come to the legislature to protest his policy peacefully. He's so scared he locks them out. Now I asked the Minister of Health, was it you that locked them out? And he said, you don't know how things operate in here. So he threw his Premier under the bus and said it was the Premier that made that choice. So how is it that the Premier of this province locks out the women and men who work in the seniors' care homes in this province, cleaning and cooking? Eighty per cent of them were women, and he locks them out of this legislature.

It's the people's legislature. We've had protests in here in the past where farming men and women in this province have come and brought sleeping bags. They were going to stay. Were they kicked out? No. We've had hundreds and hundreds of people ascend on this great building, and were they ever locked out? No. But when a few hundred women and men who work for that government want to protest their policies, come to this legislature . . .

The members opposite often refer to this legislature when they've got their friends in the gallery as, welcome to your

legislature. But it's only the people's legislature if you agree with this government. It's not the people's legislature if you've got a problem with this government. Then you'll get locked out, because the Premier's scared.

Now I look online at the Premier's resumé. He's got his resumé online and it says that he "worked in government." Well you should ought to ask what he did in government. Where did he work in government? He was a MA [ministerial assistant] for the Devine Tories. Why he doesn't want to admit that is probably obvious. And some of the things that he did there have been well-documented. Now what he did there was advise a group of folks who ended up driving this province into debt — some of whom were charged with offences, he worked directly for.

And who else did he work for? Well he worked for the Mulroney Conservatives in Ottawa. And he's talked about the past and the '80s and what people were doing and where certain members of this legislature have lived at different points in their lives and where they've worked. And he's afraid to admit on the government website that he worked for Mulroney in Ottawa, and I wonder why that is. And you begin to see a pattern when you check the website and look at what his history is.

It also says that he created small businesses. That's a quote — created small businesses. Well what it doesn't say is what happened to those businesses. And you know what else it doesn't say? That he only really created one of them, and the other one was a golden parachute to get out of this building when the rats were scurrying in 1991. Several of them ended up in Swift Current and that's probably the remnants of the 1991 Devine Tories. So he says he created . . .

[12:45]

The Deputy Speaker: — I'd warn the member to watch the language and to respect other members and other people that aren't here.

Mr. Furber: — Devine Tories is certainly a swear word in this legislature.

We'll continue to talk about the small businesses that were created. Now what small business was created by the member from Swift Current? He created, spent time getting a golden parachute out of this building with a \$150,000 grant to start a guitar museum in Swift Current. He took government money, taxpayer dollars to start a guitar museum in Swift Current, an area where I've danced in the bars to a lot of country music, and they love their George Strait.

Now the museum hired the Premier right after 1991 to run that organization. And he said, at that time, there'd be between 28 and 34,000 visitors a year to that facility. But the museum attracted just an average of 2,500 people a year for three years. So he was off on his projections for attendance at the museum more than he was off on potash projections this year. So you notice a pattern. He worked for Devine, he worked for Mulroney, but can't sell country music to people in Swift Current. And this is the part of the resumé he tries to hide. So in less than five years the museum went bankrupt. Taxpayer

dollars disappeared. They moved the museum, and that's the started businesses part of his resumé.

Now they want to talk about some other things that are going on in the 1990s, and during the by-elections they wanted to talk about the '80s and '90s and what other members were doing. Well we've got documentation. The Premier of this province was involved in a scandal that involved . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — I would ask the opposition members not to drown out their own member while he's speaking. I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now there was one other thing that was going on that the Premier's running from. He didn't put it on his resumé and everybody over there is afraid. They don't want to talk about it, and why would you? He was part of an organization, many of whom went to jail — well-documented — but what a lot of the people in Prince Albert don't know, he said he was glad to have been part of an organization that lost its way so he could learn the lessons.

But he wasn't a part of the organization that lost its way; he was a part of the process. He was a ministerial assistant in this building when more liquor was being taken out of the back door than was being sold out of the front doors of the liquor stores in Saskatchewan. So there is a certain amount of hypocrisy in the things that he said in the past when he wants to only go back to 1991.

I think we should go back a little further. And I want to read a quote from the former minister of Finance, Andrew Thomson. I'll quote from the *Hansard* from some time ago. It said, the minister pointed out the hypocrisy and dishonesty in the House saying:

I want to read into the record from Provincial Auditor's report . . .

I'm quoting from page 20 of a report from 1992:

The Liquor Board did not have adequate systems and procedures to safeguard its assets. The Liquor Board reported approximately \$19,285 of liquor was supplied to ministers' offices. The Liquor Board had no written request from the ministers or their assistants for this liquor . . . The Liquor Board does not have policies that authorize ministers and officials to take liquor for their own use. Accordingly there was a loss to the Crown . . . of \$19,285.

Now it's interesting to note that there is a few names on the requisitions for this alcohol, and one of them happens to be the now Premier of this province. And I'm not surprised that he wouldn't want to include that on his resumé. But here it is in black and white for everybody to see. And the reason it's mentioned is because many of the people of Saskatchewan don't know it. And they should ought to know who their Premier is.

So for that reason and many others, I'll be supporting the

amendment and not the speech from this throne.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Meadow Lake.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the House here today to speak to the Speech from the Throne.

Before I get into the meat of my remarks, I think I want to comment though on some of the remarks made by the previous speaker, the member for P.A. Carlton. And you know, frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think the personal vitriol coming from that side of the House since we've got back into this Chamber is, I think it's unbecoming of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. And we see that from the member for P.A. Carlton, the member for P.A. Carlton who comes across as a very angry young man, Mr. Speaker — a very angry young man which I guess is some contrast to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, quite a contrast with the Leader of the Opposition.

An Hon. Member: — P.A. Northcote.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Sorry. P.A. Northcote. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? I had the chance to look at the resumé . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Will the Leader of the Opposition come to order. I recognize the member of Meadow Lake.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I've heard a lot of talk about resumé's from the member from Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, and I actually had the opportunity to take a look at the bio that that member had posted on his website.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? We know that that member had worked in this building before, but it doesn't say for who, Mr. Speaker. Who did that member work for? Who did he work for, Mr. Speaker? Oh, we see a lot of people looking at their feet over there. I think it was probably the member for Regina Dewdney and frankly, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to admit to having worked for that member either.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker? I'd like to welcome the new members to the Assembly here today. The member for Saskatoon Riversdale, I think she's going to make a very valuable contribution to this Assembly in her time here, and also the member for Regina Douglas Park who is returning after a long absence as a Calgary big oil lobbyist. I guess we're happy to see him in the Assembly as well, Mr. Speaker.

And I've known that member for some number of years, for some number of years, and he actually referenced in his speech, and I'll reference as well, that his son, a fine young man, a fine young man genuinely, worked for me when I was a Tory Member of Parliament for two summers in my Ottawa office and in my constituency office as well. And I can recall over that period of time, recalling many interesting conversations with the Leader of the Opposition — many interesting conversations which we may have cause to relate at some point in the future.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do right now actually is congratulate, as the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the newly elected councillors and mayors right across the province.

Yesterday we saw a well-conducted municipal election from one end of the province to the other, and I would like to congratulate Mayor Don Atchison from Saskatoon, re-elected to office; Mayor Pat Fiacco from Regina, re-elected to office; Mr. Jerrod Schafer, newly elected mayor of Swift Current; James Wilson, a newly elected mayor of Yorkton; Ian Hamilton, newly elected mayor of North Battleford; Gary St. Onge, incumbent re-elected by acclamation in Estevan; Debra Button, re-elected in Weyburn; Gord Rutten, new elected in Martensville — the new city of Martensville, Mr. Speaker.

Meadow Lake, my very good friend, Darwin Obrigewitsch, acclaimed re-elected in Meadow Lake; in Melville, Walter Streelasky, an incumbent who was re-elected by acclamation; Jim Scarrow in Prince Albert who was re-elected; Glenn Hagel from Moose Jaw, newly elected; Jeff Mulligan from Lloydminster, newly elected; Malcolm Eaton, re-elected in the city of Humboldt; and Kevin Phillips, who was an incumbent, re-elected as the mayor of Melfort, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to take that opportunity to congratulate those individuals.

Also I would really like to congratulate Thomas Sierzycki, a young man elected at the age of 21 as the mayor of La Ronge, a great young guy, had served on my constituency executive in the past, and I know he's going to do a fantastic job as the mayor of La Ronge.

Also we had an interesting discussion with the member for Thunder Creek today, Mr. Speaker, who had a very scary incident happen this morning where he was attacked in an attempted carjacking, was cut in the hand and stabbed in the leg, still showed up for work, Mr. Speaker, and was able though to defend himself and his property with great effect. And, you know, one of the things I said, Mr. Speaker, is that member from Thunder Creek is the personification that the Sask Party is tough on crime.

But, Mr. Speaker, before I get into my remarks I'd also like to acknowledge my family, as other members have done in the early part of their remarks. My wife, Alaina, who has been with me since we've been about 18 or 19 and has been through about 8 or 10 moves in that period of time, Mr. Speaker, across the country from one end to the other, who is a fantastic partner, a brilliant political mind, and who I'm very proud to call my wife. And our new addition, my son, MacGregor, who is now nine months old. He has just learned how to crawl, Mr. Speaker, so nothing is safe in the house.

Also like to thank my mom and dad. My father, Tom, who continues to be a civil servant in this province — 37 years — working for the Ministry of the Environment, director in Meadow Lake, also a great political mind and a great adviser to me over the years. My mom, Lorna, also in Meadow Lake, where we've lived now for nearly 30 years, Mr. Speaker, where they've lived for nearly 30 years and I have as well. So I wanted to acknowledge that.

And also, Mr. Speaker, thank the people of Meadow Lake, the

wonderful people of the Meadow Lake constituency who saw fit to send me to this Chamber, and before that saw fit to send me to the House of Commons. A wonderful, wonderful constituency, a wonderful community, my home city of Meadow Lake which the Premier and I had cause to announce this summer. Probably one of the proudest days that I've ever had, Mr. Speaker, was announcing that Meadow Lake was now a city, so it really was a great day.

And in terms of, you know, this government really has been delivering for the Meadow Lake constituency as well, Mr. Speaker. Whether it be Highway 26, whether it be Highway 3, whether it be Highway 303, whether it be Highway 4, Mr. Speaker, we've done a lot of highways work. And I thank the member for Cypress Hills, grasslands for the work he did, and thank the member for Rosetown-Elrose for the work that they did in making that a reality.

And in terms of some of the projects that we've had occasion to announce, we have a brand new courthouse going up in Meadow Lake right now, Mr. Speaker, a beautiful building, three-storey building, which the Minister of Justice, myself, and the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan announced not that long ago. And already we can see the completion of the project in sight, Mr. Speaker. A new long-term care facility which is going in Meadow lake, and we look forward to that being completed as well.

The Deputy Speaker: — The time of adjournment having been reached, this House now stands adjourned until 1:30 Monday afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS	
Krawetz.....	3317
Taylor.....	3317
PRESENTING PETITIONS	
Forbes	3317
Brotten	3317
Morin	3317
Iwanchuk.....	3317
Taylor.....	3317
Wotherspoon	3318
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	
Lieutenant Justin Garrett Boyes	
Wall.....	3318
Kindergarten Students Visit Constituency Office	
Atkinson.....	3319
Trick-or-Treat Proceeds for African Children	
Weekes	3319
Prince Albert Hosts National Council of Women Convention	
Furber	3319
Habitat for Humanity Key Ceremony	
Ross	3320
Results of Municipal Elections	
Higgins	3320
Ottenbreit	3320
QUESTION PERIOD	
Public Safety Procedures	
Yates.....	3320
Huyghebaert.....	3320
H1N1 Pandemic Planning	
Junor	3321
McMorris.....	3321, 3323
Belanger.....	3323
Health Care Options	
Junor	3322
McMorris.....	3322
Energy Issues	
Wotherspoon	3323
Boyd	3324
ORDERS OF THE DAY	
MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Not Debatable)	
Return No. 1	
Weekes	3325
Return No. 2	
Weekes	3325
SPECIAL ORDER	
ADJOURNED DEBATES	
ADDRESS IN REPLY	
Taylor.....	3325
Chisholm.....	3330
Tell	3332
Furber	3336
Harrison.....	3341

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