



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
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, 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
Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. 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
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. 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
Ottobreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, 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
Wyant, Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

**EVENING SITTING**

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Gantfoer, seconded by Mr. Wyant, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Broten.]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — This House is now in session. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was in the midst of talking about oil fields near Kerrobert and the lack of facilities, and talking with people in the community of Kerrobert, Mr. Speaker, where they were at that time, this summer, health care workers who had been without a contract for two and a half years, were getting quite well versed in what essential services legislation meant to them and to every other health care provider in the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, entering into the . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, and going into the Kerrobert facility, they had all their plans. The architect had drawn out all the plans. They were on the wall. People were quite proud of this coming. They were talking about fundraising. I think I was talking about fundraising that all of these workers who live in the different communities, the amount of time that they spend with their families fundraising for their facilities because they know how important it is to their communities. Often the lifeblood of the community is built around the health care centre.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they told us the stories about how they were fundraising. And then we told them about Saskatoon and the Amicus deal. And as I was saying, that now the Amicus deal is in the Throne Speech and it's one of the models, but the people in Kerrobert never heard about it. They never heard about it. And so as I was saying before, I am glad it's in here now because now I can go and show them and say, this is what we were saying about . . . They're now using that model, and you were just not on their list of getting built.

And as I further went on to say that it was also a difficulty for the Minister of Finance, who doesn't look all that well these days when money is mentioned because he understands the mess that the government has got itself in. And with all the needs of the province, with all the 13 on the list, 13 facilities that need to be built, and Kerrobert, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is one of them. And people need a facility there. And there is not much happening. There's not much happening.

So these people stood around and talked about . . . We talked about them for quite some time about the amount of fundraising they had done, how they worked for their communities, how important that was. And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, each one of these people would come back and they would talk about

changes to *The Trade Union Act*. They talked about changes, about how the employer could talk directly to them. There was questions raised all across the province about a letter from the Minister of Health that went out encouraging people to vote on a contract, yet at the same time in this very Assembly or in this very Chamber, the minister would stand up on a daily basis and say the government does not get involved in negotiations, does not get involved. So over, over time people were feeling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the workers and all people associated with health care were beginning to feel betrayed — betrayed, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So there was one further letter that also came out. It was a letter regarding overtime, sick leave, and WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] where the government was instructing employers to do cutbacks. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in many of the places that we went where there were cutbacks, and of course the facilities did not have the proper lifting, the ceiling tracks that were not up there, and as we all know when we go into those facilities, no doubt we've all been in there to see the lack of that and the injuries that result.

And then with the government cutting back, obviously the workload was not getting any lighter because there were waiting lists for people to get in. And so this was not exactly greeted with a lot of appeal, the letter that was . . . Because in fact when you are now working short and then being told you have to cut back on sick leave and you have to watch your WCB, when if you're understaffed at the same time, has seemed kind of ludicrous the government would take this position.

But again the Minister of Finance has gotten himself into a bit of hot water, probably more than hot water when you don't have money and here we are cutting sort of a thousand cuts out in rural Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on, but I would like to also move on to some other comments. And the comments, I think, on something else that's important in our province, and that is potash.

And I do want to start . . . There has been some discussion about positions, and I just want to perhaps read in again into the record, it was from our leader's speech on last Thursday where one of the first paragraphs he said was:

So today is a day to celebrate, and we'll all try to take credit. And good for the member from Swift Current. And we'll take what credit we can take. That's how politics works. But it's a day to celebrate. But it's also a day to review and reflect on the way we go forward with all the resources of the province, not only here, but right across Canada because I think that is going to be one of the fundamental issues that people in Canada vote on when they go to the polls in a few months here in Canada and for sure here in the province of Saskatchewan in the next election.

Mr. Speaker, also went on to talk about what happens in Norway and Brazil, and gave following examples like countries of Norway and Brazil who don't hesitate to say that they need

to maximize royalties, taxations, and they have no restrictions on companies coming in. And then explained that when you go to Norway there's a long process of how you get into the offshore oil. You have to prove your human rights record is impeccable, and if it isn't, you can't come in. And that's why many companies, you know, and that's why many companies don't drill for oil in Norway. In fact they ask them on their labour record, do you support unions, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And now some people will argue, some people will argue perhaps that this has forced business away from Norway, and in fact the opposite is true. The opposite is true. And what does Norway get? Norway gets a percentage, a percentage in the oil companies when they come to drill there. And that's important, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's important to know that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other thing that was raised is the amount of share options which . . . We've heard that the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, that he has over \$500 million in share options in the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Now it would strike me that if you have that much money, perhaps a little bit of that money could stay in Saskatchewan. It could stay in Saskatchewan. So there's a lot to me . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's an important issue. And there's a lot of questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in fact have not been answered.

But I think we must remember, because what the people of Saskatchewan told us is that they remember, that the people own the potash in this province, and we own, Mr. Speaker, we own the potash in the ground. And neither the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan nor BHP Billiton own that potash, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the corporation, the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, thanked the people after it received the no from the federal government in fending off the hostile takeover bid. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the key point would be now, the key point would be now is what is our Premier doing, and how is he going to maximize the revenues from potash, How is he going to maximize these revenues for potash for the citizens of this province?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we own the potash. We own the potash, and the people of Saskatchewan own the potash. And our question is — and I hear this on the doorstep from my constituents — is that when I went out to find out what people were thinking about this, they told me, don't sell. Don't sell this resource. They said, don't sell this resource.

And they, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm not sure they knew that the CEO of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan lives in Chicago or that he has particularly \$500 million in share options. Mr. Speaker, that is important that people should understand that. They should understand what is happening here. But one of the things that they know is that they have a valuable resource, and they want to have a say in that resource, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a year or so ago, potash workers were on strike in this province to try and achieve a fair collective agreement, a fair collective agreement for themselves and their families. And they went on strike, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They went on strike and they had to sacrifice their pay, and their families suffered to

achieve a fair collective agreement. And the question I would ask is from a company which can afford to pay a CEO the amount of \$500 billion — or \$500 million; pardon me, Mr. Deputy Speaker — in share options, surely there should be some money for potash workers. Potash workers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in fact live in this province. Live in this province, raise their families, and work here.

And perhaps one of the other things, one of the other things that the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan management has is they extend benefits after they retire to the management. And the question would be: would the Premier be negotiating that as part of the deal? Would he be negotiating that as part of the deal for these workers who live and raise their families here in Saskatchewan?

And I guess my question to the Premier would be is: what has he done so far and what is he going to do? He's known about this deal since mid-August. Who has he approached and who has he talked to? And I guess the questions that people would like to know is, they would like to know will there be a sovereign fund like the people of Norway have. I mean where you have a few, several million people there and billions of dollars in a sovereign fund. Will that be what the Premier is thinking of doing for Saskatchewan? And they want to know how he'll manage that fund. I mean these are questions that we need to know.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the key part here is that the people understand that they own the potash resource, and they want a say in how that potash resource is handled and what return they should get. And they tell me that time after time. When I talk to them, they tell me loud and clear that . . . They said, don't sell. Don't sell the potash. Don't sell it, they said to me. Don't sell the potash. And now they're telling me that it's a valuable resource, and they want a say in what happens to it.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the key, the key things to remember here: we have over 53 per cent of the world's reserves of potash, and it's a multi-year supply — a multi-year supply, if not hundreds of years, Mr. Speaker.

So why not have the Premier negotiate a deal for us? Negotiate a deal for the people of Saskatchewan and say, here's what we've done. We've done for you what the government in Norway has done for their people. We've set up a fund. We've negotiated a deal, and that fund will be used for all those things that I spoke about before — for all those things.

How about that children's hospital that keeps being reannounced? How about reducing the shortage of doctors in rural Saskatchewan? How about no waits for health care services? How about not cuts for health care services, whether they be ambulance or labs or all the other things that we've talked about? How about better care for our senior citizens so we don't have to talk about Saskatoon getting a deal out of Amicus that the people did not get otherwise?

We shouldn't be talking about cutting services. We should be talking about setting up a fund for the people of Saskatchewan so that they get their share for themselves and their families into the future from this valuable resource. We have a resource that the world wants and it's right here in Saskatchewan. We came

on the centre stage, became centre-stage players in the world.

So just think of it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all the things that we could use this money for. So again, my question: when will the Premier be negotiating this fair deal for Saskatchewan? When will he get on with it? Because if we wait, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm afraid that this money will start flowing to Chicago, that all this money will flow out of the province to Chicago, right by us and our children and our future children and our grandchildren. It will go straight to Chicago.

And when will he tell us how he plans to manage the fund that he will set up, what it will be used for? I think we need to see a plan. We need to see a vision because that is what is lacking and, as I mentioned earlier, even the Robert Frost poem won't save that Throne Speech because there is no vision in it. There's nothing that says, here's what we're going to do. There's reannouncements there, and we all know that the Minister of Finance has money problems. We all know the government has money problems.

So we've known about this since mid-August. We've known that this is happening. We think it's only fair that the Premier come forward now, particularly that the Assembly's sitting, particularly that we have a 30-day window, and tell the people of Saskatchewan that, here is the position.

We've heard from the opposition that they're meeting, that they've got discussions going on, but what about a plan? What about a plan of how we're going to take this valuable resource and own a percentage of it? How about that? When are we going to hear from the Premier that? Because that's what the people are saying. This is a valuable resource and we want, we want to own a part of that. We want a say in that resource, in what happens. Because it just hasn't been happening, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On closer examination, that's not what's been happening here.

So people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, trust that their government will get them the best deal. However unless perhaps the Premier has a problem . . . Because as we all know, he was the part of the crew that sold off the original Potash Corporation, the Crown Potash Corporation — sold it off. And we all know about that deal.

Now since becoming a hero of saving companies against hostile takeover bids, we would hope that he would see and take the next step and listen to the people of Saskatchewan who are clearly saying, we own this resource, we want a part ownership of this resource, and we want to see what deal you are getting for us. Be it, as I said, those benefits for the retired potash workers or . . . and a fair deal so that we can build the seniors homes across this province.

[19:15]

We need to know where this is going. And particularly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to know from this Premier when this will happen — a clear plan, a clear vision. Get up and take a bold step and do the right thing here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's what should be done.

Further in this Throne Speech, there was the whole issue of the

photo ID [identification], the photo ID. We've had the issue of this party, the government, meddling in the Chief Electoral system, which we have . . . that has not come through for us. They now appear to be meddling again in democracy, and in fact with this some people have said that this will actually hurt voter turnout. And it is the most vulnerable — usually — people in our society that would be impacted by the ID.

I want to read a news article from the *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 19, 2010. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this was because earlier, or last year, I presented a Bill in the Assembly here, a Bill that would allow . . . *The Blind Voters Act* would allow people who are blind to allow them to vote and be allowed to vote so when they would go in, they wouldn't have to take somebody else in there. So perhaps instead of trying to reduce voter turnout, what they should do is have a look at this. So this is from the *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 19, 2010, and this is about:

The upcoming federal byelection in Winnipeg North will be the nation's testing ground for an automated-talking voting device that helps the blind and disabled vote without pencil and paper ballot.

A Parliamentary committee approved the device Monday, with approval from the Senate expected shortly.

The use of the technology will be a first for any Canadian federal election, although some cities already use it in municipal elections.

The electronic assistive voting device is aimed at getting more to vote in federal elections, Elections Canada spokeswoman Maureen Keenan said.

"We are always looking for ways to increase the accessibility of the vote," she said. The push for the device comes after disappointing voter turnout in provincial and federal elections [Mr. Deputy Speaker]. Only 58.8 per cent of registered electors voted in the last federal election. It's designed to help people with a visual impairment or who are illiterate mark their ballot by following step-by-step voice instructions delivered via headphones.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker], CNIB president and CEO John Rafferty said the organization looks forward to the roll-out of the technology nationwide. "The ability to cast a ballot independently and confidentially is a cornerstone of modern democracy," Rafferty said. "Proven technologies that make the voting process accessible must be introduced now to empower Canadians who are blind, partially sighted or otherwise print-disabled to exercise their democratic rights on election day."

Now perhaps what the government should do is take a page out of that, and instead of trying to reduce voter turnout they should, in fact what they should be doing is increasing, looking at ways to increase voter turnout. Increase that voter turnout because that's what's important for all of us.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to turn a bit into, particularly into a topic that's very near and dear to me, and that is

occupational health and safety in my critic area. And I guess after the summer and going out and seeing our health care facilities, is it any wonder that health care is the leading in injuries in the province, as the employer in the province of Saskatchewan? And again, what is the government's reaction to that, other than to send out a letter and say in fact that you should reduce overtime, sick leave, and your WCB? To the people there, this is in fact an insult, an insult to them.

In some cases, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've had people hired to monitor sick leave — actually taking money, creating a position to monitor sick leave or taking some other people off to do this so that this would be handled. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a way, if somebody is abusing sick leave . . . And I'm not here standing and saying that that does not happen. If there is somebody, then there are procedures to deal with that issue. You deal with that issue there.

I think this is in fact the government's way of looking to blame somebody, to blame somebody to take the heat off of the financial mess that they've created in the health care system by not funding it properly, by not funding the system properly and creating this mess. And all across the whole piece as you go, you can hear the amount of deficits in each of the health regions that are there. And now the crunch will be coming because they have to handle those deficits. And what will they be doing?

This will be very interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when that happens because of course, as we know, that government is short of money because they've mismanaged the funds that they were left. And that's the sad, sad truth. The other sad truth is that . . . I often talk about this when I talk to people about the Premier talking about, while he was in the opposition, the red tape and regulations foisted on the business community by the NDP [New Democratic Party] through Workers' Comp have in fact driven jobs out of the province.

Now I've had the opportunity to attend a funeral or funerals, and attended to some of the mines in the potash industry where we've had workers killed over this past year. And I guess the actions from the occupational health and safety, and I would say that we're in a bit of a disaster there, no matter what people say.

Now I'm not saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that people intentionally don't care. But you know, if there's things that are happening when you say that there are 53 miners killed in 53 years in the potash industry, you would think that that is something maybe that should be looked at.

You and I come here. We've been here years. We don't expect that one of us will be killed. Surely the numbers here are less, and I don't imagine that that is the same. But we have to pull up our socks, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have to do something, and the government cannot simply look the other way when this happens.

And now we're looking forward because we have a new minister in charge. We would hope that he would take it seriously, take all of this seriously. Life and death is a serious issue. Life and death for those families is a serious issue. And they look at this and they wonder what it is that is going on here. What is it that's going on in terms of the death of these miners? The miners were here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this

legislature, talking about this. And it's an unfortunate situation in Esterhazy and the more recent death of what we have happening here.

And you know, what is the plan? What are we doing? What are we doing about this? The other day, yesterday I think it was, in Cory, somebody fell off a scaffold. Again in the Cory mine one of the contractors working at the mine, one of the workers fell. Another injury. I understand he'll be being released from hospital, so thank goodness for that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that all, you wouldn't say turned out well, but perhaps . . . because I don't know all the details yet.

But the idea that the government's response to this would be a letter about overtime, sick leave, and WCB and creating efficiencies doesn't cut it. It doesn't cut it at that level, and people are concerned. The Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, or the potash workers' council that were here and brought their issue forward, it's an important issue, and a good many months have passed. And we see we're not certain where the action is on this. Where's the action on this? And the miners are concerned. And they want to know what will be done and are waiting for the new minister to do something, to do something. Or do we wait until there's another death?

Now I want to end by talking about the new minister and the Labour portfolio. The new minister came out, the member from Saskatoon Southeast came out to a CBO [community-based organization] conference last Friday. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the workers quite enjoyed that. They quite enjoyed it.

What a breath of fresh air it was compared to the person before, the member before who was, who was there and in fact was . . . I must say there wasn't a lot of respect for the things. A lack of total understanding — never showed up. I think it was years here when people came and he never introduced anybody in the House. He just basically hid under his desk. And so I think that they thought this was a breath of fresh air.

We hear, understand he met with, the new minister met with Larry Hubich, president of the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour], some other folks there. They had a good discussion. And again that was, you know, that seemed to be a positive step. And I guess what I would say, I was with them on last Friday and I look forward to many more meetings of being there and seeing him there participating. I know people asked questions. You know, I might be a bit biased and say he didn't answer that well, but I think was received that he was there. And everybody acknowledged that. So again I tell them I look forward . . .

Now I hope he doesn't get cut off like I saw in the Chief Electoral Officer issue where he seemed to come up with a good decision with the rest of the committee, then went back to his own caucus and they kind of grabbed him and said no, you know, you shouldn't have done that. That's not the right thing to do. So I look forward to working in this area and seeing him at many functions that are held, and I'm sure many people are.

So I think overall, as I started out, I would end that I don't think that even Robert Frost can save this Throne Speech. It just simply doesn't pass. And I would be, will be voting against that and for the amendment. Thank you.

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

[19:30]

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to enter into the debate on the Throne Speech that was delivered just a short few days ago. Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to be able to take my place here on the floor of the Legislative Assembly and speak on behalf of the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Speaker, before I talk about the content of the Throne Speech, I do have a few remarks that I do want to make. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to join with I think every member of the House who has welcomed our newest Member of the Legislative Assembly, the new member from Saskatoon Northwest. Mr. Speaker, I know, I think I can speak perhaps for the member of the excitement of entering this House during a by-election. Members will know that's how I came to find myself in this place. And so, Mr. Speaker, I just want to wish the member a very long, and I know it to be a very successful time, in this Legislative Assembly. And I look forward to getting to know him better, Mr. Speaker. And so I want to welcome him to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to I think like most members, thank a number of people. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to also, I think, follow on what some other members . . . And I think it was a good reminder for all of us. I think the member from Estevan and the member from Regina Rosemont noted in their speeches that Remembrance Day is upon us, Mr. Speaker.

And I think this is a time of year for, in our family, to think about a couple of special individuals in our family, Mr. Speaker. My Great-Uncle Tuck, who is my grandfather on my mother's side, Grandpa Tracey's brother, who has passed now. He was a veteran of World War II. And also, Mr. Speaker, my great-uncle, Fred Duncan, who really was more like a grandfather for us when we were growing up. My father's . . . my dad's dad passed away when my dad was a young boy, and so his brother Fred looked after the farm. And, Mr. Speaker, he passed away a number of years ago but he was one that, you know, we always liked to visit, especially this time of year. And later in life, he lived in the Mainprize Manor in Midale, and so we'd go down on Remembrance Day.

Uncle Fred, Mr. Speaker, like so many other veterans, never spoke a lot about his experience in World War II. I had the opportunity in high school to visit France, and part of our time there is we visited the beaches of Normandy. And so, Mr. Speaker, one of the memories of Uncle Fred that will stick with me for my entire life is, when coming back and visiting Uncle Fred with my dad and showing him some of the pictures that I took of the area, the Normandy beaches and the main Canadian cemetery at Beny-sur-Mer. And about partway through, Uncle Fred couldn't look at the pictures any longer. He was so overwhelmed with emotion — and from a man who didn't really talk much about his experience.

Mr. Speaker, Uncle Fred survived Dieppe, the raid of Dieppe, and he also survived D-Day landing in Normandy in 1944, and returned to Canada and continued farming. Mr. Speaker. And so this is the time of year that I most often think of them.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting . . . Mr. Speaker, I do want to add a few other thank yous. First of all, to my constituency assistant, Marcie, who has been working for the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Weyburn-Big Muddy for 11 years now, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure other members have constituency assistants that have worked various lengths of time. I'm certainly very well served and the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy are well served by Marcie and her over a decade working in that office.

People have come to know that she's the first contact when you call the office. And she does such a capable job especially, Mr. Speaker, with my duties of being a member of the cabinet and not always being in the office like I once was. So she does a fantastic job.

We have another lady that has come on board to work in the office on part-time work, Mr. Speaker. And Sheila is doing a great job, and she has just come into the role very ably, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the staff that works here in the Legislative Building for me, Kelly, Krista, Drew, and Cam, Mr. Speaker. And they do such a wonderful job for me. It was a big adjustment for me to become Minister Responsible for the Environment and other portfolios, and so it's a relief to know that there's people there like that can provide assistance.

And I want to thank also the ministry staff, Mr. Speaker. I'm served very capably by women and men in the Ministry of Environment, and also in Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, SaskWater, and SaskEnergy. And I've had the opportunity over the last few months to visit some of the staff here in Regina and also in Moose Jaw at Watershed Authority and SaskWater. And it's a great opportunity to meet the people that ensure that the business of government, outside of this business, is conducted.

Mr. Speaker, I want to of course thank the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy for giving me the opportunity. This is the last Throne Speech before the next election. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the endorsement of the members of the Saskatchewan Party in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency for the next election and I look forward to hopefully returning to this House once the election is concluded. And it has, regardless, Mr. Speaker, it has been for the last four years an incredible honour and a privilege and a humbling experience to know that for this set amount of time I am one of 58 people that can stand on this floor and say my piece on behalf of them, and so I thank them for that.

Mr. Speaker, of course I couldn't . . . Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I probably couldn't come home if I didn't thank my family, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not going to forget that. And I want to thank the House Leader for his reminder.

Mr. Speaker, it's been a . . . I am supported by not only my immediate family, but my extended family. It's been a very exciting few months in our family, Mr. Speaker. My sister, the youngest in our family, was married just over Thanksgiving and so that was a happy occasion, Mr. Speaker. Her and her husband live in the Lloydminster area and the member from

Lloydminster knows that he has some support from our family in his constituency, and I think a campaign worker if we're able make that work, Mr. Speaker.

And my parents are certainly very supportive of me being here, Mr. Speaker. They always . . . They knew from a very early age that I had an interest in this place, Mr. Speaker, and they were always the first to encourage me. And my brother as well, Mr. Speaker, who, like many people, Mr. Speaker, moved to Alberta a number of years ago and has found himself residing in Alberta; however, being back in Saskatchewan because in his industry, Mr. Speaker, frankly this is where the work is. And so it's good to have him back. We're hoping he can convince his Alberta family, Mr. Speaker, to pick up their roots and move to Saskatchewan. We're certainly doing our best to encourage that, Mr. Speaker. And so I want to thank him for his support.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, last but certainly not least, I want to thank my wife Amanda who has been my biggest supporter in not only this endeavour but everything that I've done. We have been married, Mr. Speaker, for 11 years, and it's gone by extremely quickly, Mr. Speaker. But we are, I think, just each other's biggest supporters.

Mr. Speaker, many of the members will know that my wife is a musician. And frankly, Mr. Speaker, if I can say, she's very talented. She is a very accomplished singer and songwriter, Mr. Speaker. She's a very prolific songwriter. She has written dozens and dozens of original pieces of work, Mr. Speaker, and is now embarking on a point in her career where more people, frankly, are listening to her and are having the opportunity to do so. She's had a very busy summer with engagements at the Gateway Festival and Craven this summer, Mr. Speaker. And I know there's a trip to the United States that's just around the corner, and I'm looking forward for her to have that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, any time I think of her and think of the incredible talent that she is, there's a phrase that comes to mind, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to quote it, and it is, "She wasn't where she had been. She wasn't where she was going, but she was on her way." And, Mr. Speaker, she certainly is on her way.

Mr. Speaker, this has, as I think I said in earlier parts of my comments, that this has been a very busy summer, obviously, with the changes in responsibilities. And one of the areas that being responsible for, Sask Watershed Authority, obviously with all the rain that we've been receiving all across the province, that has taken a lot of time to understand all the issues and all of the challenges that are out there, Mr. Speaker. I read just not long ago a line about water that went . . . goes something like, there's nothing that transforms a place like water. And I think we're certainly finding that out in many, many areas of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through the summer, I think like any or all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], we get a chance to get out and around our constituency. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency. I do want to, with the . . . Mr. Speaker, I think with the permission of my good friend and my colleague from Estevan, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about her constituency, mainly, Mr.

Speaker, because my hometown, the village that I grew up in, is actually just on the other side of the boundary between Weyburn-Big Muddy and Estevan. And, Mr. Speaker, that is, I think members will know — I've talked about it before — I'm talking about the centre of the universe, Halbrite, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Halbrite is a . . .

[Applause]

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Well we've got one fan at least. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that on the way back and forth from our farm, Mr. Speaker, in the Midale area, Halbrite is one of the routes that you can travel to get there. And over the course of a couple of trips, I took the opportunity to just stop in Halbrite and have a look around.

This is the first time, Mr. Speaker, in probably over the last two or three years, with my folks no longer living in Halbrite and my Grandpa, my Grandpa Tracey, Bob Tracey, moving to Weyburn, Mr. Speaker, this is the first time since the days of my great-grandfather where nobody in our family has lived in Halbrite. So there is not always the opportunity to get back to Halbrite like there once was. And so I think though why I am bringing this up, Mr. Speaker, I think what we are seeing in Halbrite, which is a community of about 100 people, maybe 90 people, what we are seeing there is I think reflective of what we're seeing in a lot of places in the province, Mr. Speaker.

I couldn't get over the number of new houses that have been built. And when you are talking about less than 100 people, it's not, you know, there's not a lot of houses to begin with. But it seemed like every single empty lot that we used to play football on or baseball on, Mr. Speaker, there's now a house. And I think that's, that's certainly indicative of the strength that we are seeing in the economy in the province, the optimism that we are seeing.

I had an individual come up to me that's very, very much in the know about the local economy and about in particular the oil industry, who stopped me on the street on Friday just to let me know that the number of employees and number of people that he's hearing that have moved from Alberta over the last number of years and now are working in our province, the number of them that have expressed to him that they have really no intention of ever going back. Once the Alberta government gets things squared away with their royalties that they've been changing that have had an positive impact for this province, Mr. Speaker, that many have relocated here and their plan is to stay. And I think that's great news.

Mr. Speaker, it's been a very, very busy and a very exciting summer for the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy. We've had a number of centennial anniversaries in a number of our RMs [rural municipality]. The RM of Brokenshell celebrated their 100th anniversary over the summer. This weekend I'll be in Ogema for the 100th anniversary of the RM of Key West, celebrating that important milestone.

Mr. Speaker, in Coronach not long ago, Coronach celebrated over the past 30 years of course the Poplar River's power plant has been operating and coal has been excavated out of the ground and used to operate that power plant, produce electricity for the province of Saskatchewan. And this summer they



celebrated the 100 millionth metric ton of coal, and so there was a significant celebration in Coronach over the summer.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that in Weyburn the . . . I'm very fortunate to, we're very fortunate to call Weyburn our home. It's a very civic-minded community where people are always interested in the issues of the day, and that's why we have a very busy office, I think, in our constituency.

It's a very beautiful community, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday Amanda and I took the opportunity to go for a bike ride around Tatagwa, the park, the Red Coat Trail system that surrounds the city of Weyburn. We're almost to the point, Mr. Speaker, where the entire . . . it's a walkway, a path, almost circles the entire community. There's just one leg left to do and I know that the parks committee is working hard to do that. And it was a beautiful afternoon I think as everybody in the province probably experienced, and so it was a great opportunity for us to get out and enjoy the outdoors and enjoy just how beautiful a city that we live in, Mr. Speaker, and to see the amount of growth that we're experiencing in our community.

Mr. Speaker, like many communities, the United Way had their major fundraiser just not that long ago and I want to congratulate the United Way, Mr. Speaker, for raising over \$155,000 during their 33-hour live telethon. Mr. Speaker, the entire board of the United Way worked so hard on this. This year the president, C.J. Mainil, who is one of the most dynamic people that we have in our community, Mr. Speaker, she was the chairperson and just did a tremendous job. Their goal was 127,000 and they exceeded their goal while still on the air. And I know that that money will be put to very good use.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, in our community we're seeing a lot of growth. The number of building permits issued this year compared to last year is higher this year and in fact the dollar amount is almost twice as much for this year so far, Mr. Speaker. And really good news for our community.

When you talk about challenges around housing, certainly we're seeing that in our community, Mr. Speaker. One of the positives though, Mr. Speaker, is that frankly we are seeing people that are seeing the values of their homes appreciate. For a long time, the value of a home in Weyburn really didn't change all that much, good if you're trying to get into the market, Mr. Speaker. But perhaps if you're retiring and looking to downsize, Mr. Speaker, that always . . . frankly, it wasn't a great thing for that individual in that family.

[19:45]

And so, Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing is, this year alone, lot sales in the community, in the city of Weyburn, are 10 times what they were last year. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that that means that houses are going to be built. We have some apartments that are going up which is good news, Mr. Speaker. And so a great job, Mr. Speaker, to the city for seeing that growth and managing that growth.

You look around Weyburn, Mr. Speaker. We have the RM development of Evanson Park just on the south end of the city. Mr. Speaker, that is I think fully subscribed which was basically barren land not that many years ago near the landfill and now

has shops that are being built and are being operated out of, Mr. Speaker. We see residential developments increasing, and we're really seeing that across the constituency.

And I'll talk a little bit about the importance of the oil industry in our constituency, Mr. Speaker. But one of the important things or I think one of the good signs that we're seeing is, as the Bakken development oil play is being pursued, the boundaries of it are being pushed further out west. And so now we're seeing activity pick up in areas like Minton and Ceylon and all the way down to Bengough, Mr. Speaker, and so that's a positive development.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I talk about the constituency and the city of Weyburn, I do want to for the record note, Mr. Speaker, how proud we are of one of our hometown heroes, that being Graham DeLaet, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to, for the record, put on that this is a young man that grew up in Weyburn, Mr. Speaker, was born in the Weyburn Hospital. He was a good athlete growing up — a few years younger than I, but I knew his name as he was growing up — Mr. Speaker, a very good golfer, went on to a scholarship in the United States to golf and, Mr. Speaker, just in the last couple of weeks officially was notified or basically . . . Because of the schedule that's left, Graham is going to be able to keep his PGA [Professional Golfers' Association] tour card next year. And, Mr. Speaker, nearly \$1 million on the money list, the highest Canadian, more money earned this year than Mike Weir and Stephen Ames and anybody else, Mr. Speaker — and so congratulations to Graham.

Graham has already indicated — Mr. Speaker, Graham is very much a community-minded young man, Mr. Speaker — even though he and his wife make their home in the United States because obviously for travel reasons and for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, Graham's already announced that he's going to come back to Weyburn in the summer and host a tournament to raise monies for a new hospital in Weyburn. So congratulations to him.

Mr. Speaker, in talking about the Throne Speech, first of all agriculture is an important part of the economy in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency. I think that we can never discount the fact that agriculture continues to play an important role.

Mr. Speaker, I think frankly for this government and the Agriculture minister that we've had in this province for the last three years . . . I think there was a tendency over the last 16 years before this government that if you were the Agriculture minister that was kind of the kiss of death politically, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there wasn't a lot of success when it came to re-election of Agriculture ministers. Lots were defeated, Mr. Speaker. Some moved to Alberta, Mr. Speaker. But I think this Agriculture minister, one of the finest Agriculture ministers we've had in a long, long time, Mr. Speaker, has done a tremendous job.

When you look at the fact that, Mr. Speaker, the Agriculture budget in this province is estimated to be the highest that it's ever been in this province, 360 million for excess moisture program . . . Mr. Speaker, the work done by the member for Rosetown-Elrose, the Highways minister a few years before,

has led us to the largest education tax reduction in Saskatchewan history. That is good news for the rural communities, good news for farm families across this province, Mr. Speaker. A province-wide water program, Mr. Speaker, that started out as a response to things that were happening in the Southwest. The response was great, Mr. Speaker, but I think obviously the members of this government and the Agriculture minister realize that this was a good program for all our farm families that wanted to access it, Mr. Speaker. Support for cattle and hog producers that were going through some difficult times over the last couple of years — the list goes on and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I was at our chamber of commerce in Weyburn, a business community but knows the importance of agriculture in our community, and every year they host an appreciation for our farmers. Every year they give away the Golden Sheaf Award to one producer in our area, Mr. Speaker. And I have to say, based on the work of this Agriculture minister and this government, Mr. Speaker, this event that was held just in the last week, it was a pretty happy crowd, Mr. Speaker. They realize the work that this Ag minister has done on their behalf and, Mr. Speaker, proves that this government and this party certainly have not forgot where we have come from, Mr. Speaker, and we will keep working hard for the people of rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I know I offered congratulations to some people at the beginning of my speech, but while I mention the farmer appreciation night, I do want to pass on congratulations to Keith Kaufmann who was this year's recipient of the Golden Sheaf Award, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Kaufmann has a ranching operation in the Radville area, Mr. Speaker. He's also one of the founders and currently the president of Border Line Feeders which is a very important agricultural company in our constituency, Mr. Speaker. Border Line Feeders just recently won the Community Involvement Award at the ABEX [Achievement in Business Excellence] Awards, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Kaufmann has served for many years on his local RM council. He's been very involved in his regional park, in his Lions Club, 4-H Club, Mr. Speaker — a very deserving recipient.

Mr. Speaker, as the article in the *Weyburn This Week* talks about, Mr. Kaufmann believes in being a steward of the land. He farms. His farm contains 37 quarters of native prairie land, Mr. Speaker. He diligently reports all of his ground owls to Nature Saskatchewan and has been awarded for improving piping plover habitat, and he works with Ducks Unlimited, Mr. Speaker. And so again congratulations to Mr. Kaufmann on this very, very deserving recognition.

Mr. Speaker, I want to, I do also want to talk about some of the areas that I think are areas that certainly I have some responsibility in, in terms of the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. And I do want to correct . . . I think there was a comment perhaps from the member from Coronation Park, and I think it was an omission, but I don't think there was any malice towards it.

But on talking about the Sask rate decrease that we're seeing, SaskEnergy rate decrease that we're seeing in this province, Mr. Speaker, the member compared it to Manitoba and their rate decrease. But I believe he was comparing the overall

system-wide rate decrease in Manitoba to the residential decrease in Saskatchewan. And I just want to clarify that, Mr. Speaker. The system-wide decrease in Saskatchewan is nearly 13 per cent. When you look at the residential, it's 7 per cent. In Manitoba the system-wide is about 12 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and only a 5 per cent decrease residential. So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure that people that are watching at home aren't confused by the information that was put forward by the member opposite, that we're dealing with apples to apples when we're looking at the comparison in rates, Mr. Speaker.

But that is good news. It will help people during this winter heating season, Mr. Speaker, as we can lower the rates going into the time of year when people use a lot of natural gas.

Mr. Speaker, I do also want to say that I am so pleased that we are going to be working on important areas to the environment like the Great Sand Hills, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be working as the Ministry of Environment with the stakeholders in the area, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be working with the affected RMs in the area, Mr. Speaker, and with the planning commission that has been doing some work for many years, Mr. Speaker. The same with important areas like our northern boreal forest lakes, Mr. Speaker. We know that there is development interest in parts of northwest Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Now some of that work may be, may be being put on hold a little bit, Mr. Speaker. But we know that we need to have a responsible and a sustainable development plan in case some of that work does happen that could have an impact on some of our pristine areas in northern Saskatchewan. So that's an area that we will be moving on, Mr. Speaker.

We also talked about the recycling program. I've had the opportunity to talk to municipal leaders across the province, people that are involved with stewardship organizations, Mr. Speaker, and we're working to bring forward a province-wide program in the near future. And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that Environment can contribute in a positive fashion to the Throne Speech.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do want to, I do want to highlight two other areas. One is the fact that this government is pursuing the STARS [shock trauma air rescue service] program. Mr. Speaker, I think that this is a positive development when you look at some of the challenges in this province in terms of development — specifically development, Mr. Speaker — when you have oil and gas operations spread out in different parts of the province, you have forestry in the northern part and mining operations, certainly very much which could be, in some ways, dangerous jobs, Mr. Speaker. But we want to make sure that people are safe on the work site, Mr. Speaker. And I commend the Minister for Labour on the things that he's doing, Mr. Speaker. But I think, Mr. Speaker, that this is a very positive development. It's something that people in rural Saskatchewan certainly see the value of.

I want to commend a company that has a very large presence in our constituency. Crescent Point Energy have stated that they will be committing \$5 million over the next four years to the STARS program. And that shows . . . And that's just the first, Mr. Speaker. And that's just the first of these types of announcements that I think we're going to be seeing a lot of, Mr. Speaker. Over the last 30 years or so, the STARS [Shock

Trauma Air Rescue Society] program in Alberta has been funded in a large part by the private sector. And we're going to see, I think, that same type of involvement in this province. And so I want to congratulate the member from Melfort in all of the work that he's done on advancing this file within our government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the last section of the Throne Speech that I do want to talk about, Mr. Speaker, an area that I have I guess a little bit of knowledge of and one that is still close to mind, although not related or responsible for, and that's the areas that relate to Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. And I do want to say, just to preface these comments, how privileged I was to serve as the minister over the last year and to work with the people of TPCS [Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport] and all of the stakeholder groups. It was certainly a very, very exciting time for the ministry and for that important sector of our province, Mr. Speaker.

And so I'm very pleased to see that the ministry and that Sask Sport will be working hand in hand to develop a program for high performance athletes, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity to meet with Olympians from Saskatchewan because there were training sites set up there out of the province, Mr. Speaker. And one of the issues was always raised . . . was the fact that the Alberta government — if you're training in Calgary at the winter Olympic training centres in Calgary — the Alberta government funds Saskatchewan athletes. And yet the province really, when they reach that elite stage, funding through other programs was not always there. And so, Mr. Speaker, the Premier, I think rightly, noted the fact that maybe we should be helping out our athletes. They come from Saskatchewan. They have to leave the province to train at such a high level. And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see that the minister is going to be moving forward on that initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to meet — obviously with the involvement with the Olympics — with a number of Olympians. Mr. Speaker, I do want to say for the record, I want to congratulate and wish well, well wishes to Colleen Sostorics from Kennedy, Saskatchewan. A mainstay in the women's hockey program for a number of years, Mr. Speaker, over a number of international games and the Olympics, Colleen has decided to retire, Mr. Speaker. She's going to be a big loss for the hockey team, Mr. Speaker. I've had the opportunity to meet and visit with Colleen on a couple of occasions, and so I just want to congratulate her and wish her all the best, Mr. Speaker. But it's people like Colleen that give us a lot of pride in our Olympians.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do want to congratulate . . . The Premier's Awards were just handed out for service in the public sector, Mr. Speaker. When the announcement came out some time ago, and I saw on the list was the team that was brought together to work on our Olympic pavilion. And they were one of the groups that were honoured, Mr. Speaker.

[20:00]

And so, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that it was . . . of all the very interesting files that I had the opportunity to work on, certainly the Olympic pavilion and the work that went into that took a great deal of time. But, Mr. Speaker, first of all I think it

was well worth it when you look at the reputation of the province was enhanced by our participation. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that this award is very deserving.

It was a privilege to work with the likes of people from the ministries, Mr. Speaker, because I know TPCS was just one piece of that enterprise, was also a part of that. Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, people from the Office of the Provincial Secretary. Jeremy Morgan, the former CEO of the Arts Board was instrumental in the cultural side of the pavilion.

And people, Mr. Speaker, outside of the civil service that were brought in to work on this — people like Dr. Don Clark, Mr. Speaker, who was just a tremendous privilege to work with, who I think affectionately became known as uncle Don to most of us that worked really close with him. Don and his wife, Ann, just were fantastic to work with and really were instrumental; Dr. Clark was instrumental in the success of the pavilion.

People like Trent Fraser, and Nancy Hubenig, Joan McCusker, Candace Phelps, Ian Cook — Sask Sport past president Ian Cook — Dale Holmes were just so instrumental in making sure that this was the success that it was. And so, Mr. Speaker, I just want to offer my congratulations to the Olympic pavilion team for their recognition. Very deservedly so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just close. I think I want to — I think like everybody — talk about potash, Mr. Speaker, and just say, like so many other members, how pleased and how proud I am of our Premier and the national attention that he has brought to this province, not just on the potash issue, but well before that, Mr. Speaker. When he can go to places like Toronto and Washington and New York and tell the Saskatchewan story in a way that I think obviously attracts people to the province in terms of wanting to relocate here, to find work here, Mr. Speaker, I think it's always interesting.

Probably the basic, one of the basic indicators of competence of a government is a very simple question: are more people trying to get out of the province or are more people trying to get into the province, Mr. Speaker? And I think in relation to the experiences of past NDP governments, we're certainly very successful on that front when you see the record level of population in this province. Mr. Speaker, the highest level of population in our province's history; growth, year over year, like we haven't seen in 50 or 60 years.

And so I want to just, for the record, say for as short or as long as my time is in elected politics, Mr. Speaker, I know that I'll look back on this particular debate with a great deal of pride in knowing that just to be part of this team — not just the Premier but the women and men of the caucus and of the cabinet, Mr. Speaker — so it's been an absolute pleasure.

Mr. Speaker, members will know, as I conclude my remarks that I'm a student of history. I enjoy history. I like looking back at the history of this building. I think it's important. I think it matters. I think what we say on the record has significance down the road, Mr. Speaker.

I think it can't be argued that last Wednesday was a very historic day, Mr. Speaker. I think when all sides can agree that we would recess to watch the announcement of the federal

minister. Being back with about a dozen or so of my colleagues and waiting patiently for the federal minister to step in front of the microphones, Mr. Speaker. And then many of us rushed down to the radio room to listen to the Premier address the nation and talk to the media.

And then, Mr. Speaker, we returned back here. And it was interesting because the member from Saskatoon Nutana was talking prior to the House recessing. And one of the things that she, I think, was admonishing this side of the House is she was claiming that we were taking the low road when it came to debate in this House, Mr. Speaker. And so the House came back into session, the member from Nutana continued her speech.

And the Premier came in after all of his media, Mr. Speaker. And on a very historic day, where I believe, very appropriate that the Premier put on the record his remarks, Mr. Speaker, his thoughts on such a historic day. And, Mr. Speaker, he asked for leave to make a personal statement. And what happened, Mr. Speaker? Well the members opposite — not all of them — not all of them because there were a few, Mr. Speaker, I heard a few say yes. But it took at least one member to say no. And one member said no, Mr. Speaker.

And so the shame of all of this, the shame of all this in the historic record of this building when the Premier probably should have had an avenue to comment on this very historic decision, Mr. Speaker, and to thank the people of Saskatchewan and the people of Canada that rallied to this province's defence, Mr. Speaker. What is on the record from the Premier? On the record is, with leave to make a personal statement, Mr. Speaker. And the answer is no. And I think that is a shame, Mr. Speaker, and I think that is a disgrace, Mr. Speaker, that that would have happened, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, maybe that was good news because the Leader of the Opposition was in Ottawa, maybe you know plotting electoral strategy. Because one of the things I remembered, Mr. Speaker, is when I came back into this House with all my colleagues — and supposedly we're all on the same side as the members opposite, and we all voted in favour of the motion — and you look across the way, and it looked like somebody died, Mr. Speaker. On a great day for this province, and they looked dejected and disappointed. And it was very telling, Mr. Speaker.

But it's probably a good thing that the Premier didn't speak until the next day because, of course, who speaks after the Premier? Well, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker. And that's probably a good thing because he's . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member from Qu'Appelle Valley is right. He spoke and he spoke and he spoke, Mr. Speaker. He talked about raising royalties. He talked about nationalizing parts of important industries in this province, Mr. Speaker, and including the oil industry.

And, Mr. Speaker, it made me think of another important debate in this House. It made me think of Bill 42 in 1973. And I think I've probably talked about this maybe once or twice in this House, Mr. Speaker. But I think that's an important, an important piece of Saskatchewan history, Mr. Speaker — Bill 42, 1973.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have a Bill in front of me that was introduced in the House by the Agriculture minister. It's Bill 148. It's *The Animal Protection Act*, and it's probably a very important piece of legislation. I think it is. But, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the important work in this Bill, I'm not sure 35 years from now people will know, when they hear the words Bill 148 back in 2010, they probably won't know that this is it.

But I guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, that people in my constituency, all you need to do is say the words — if they had any interest or any involvement in the oil industry back in the '70s — all you have to do is say the words Bill 42 in 1973, and they exactly know what I'm talking about, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, my grandfather who has worked in the oil industry is retired now, but he's worked in the oil industry in this province and in Alberta and in other provinces his entire life. He's been to the Legislative Assembly building twice in his life, Mr. Speaker. The second was when I was sworn in as a member in September of 2006. The first, Mr. Speaker, the first time he was ever here was when Bill 42 in 1973 was introduced by the NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

There was a rally outside of oil workers, Mr. Speaker, that knew of the consequences of a Bill like this, Mr. Speaker, the same things that the members opposite and the Leader of the Opposition — the so-called junior oil executive from Alberta, Mr. Speaker — the same things that he is talking about now, Mr. Speaker. So the more things change and the more time goes on, the more the NDP stays the same. It's good to know, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition's 10-year experiment with capitalism is now apparently over, by his own words, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, so when the members opposite, when the members opposite talk in I think a very flippant way about, well we'll just raise royalties. We'll just maximize taxation, Mr. Speaker. That's what the Leader of the Opposition said. That has a very, very, very, Mr. Speaker, a very serious effect on investment into places like Estevan and places like Weyburn and places like Lloydminster and places like Alida. And as more development happens across this province, it's going to affect more places, Mr. Speaker.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I know that the members opposite, they're going to talk more about this, Mr. Speaker, about how we just raise royalties. We become more like Norway, which, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the Leader of the Opposition, to go into Norway to drill for oil, you have to prove that your human rights record is impeccable. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure there's a problem. I haven't heard of a problem with the companies that are investing in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. Do the members opposite believe that there's a problem with the human rights records of companies like Sonova and Crescent Point and Aldon Oils, Mr. Speaker? And Encana, Mr. Speaker?

I'm not sure what the members opposite are trying to get at, but I think that that's just fine. The more they want to go down that road, Mr. Speaker, that's a debate that we'll have in places like Estevan and Alida and Weyburn, Mr. Speaker.

And on that note, I think I have more than exceeded my time. But, Mr. Speaker, it's been a great privilege and a pleasure to

speak. I will be voting against the amendment and voting for the motion put forward by the member from Melfort. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am honoured and pleased tonight to stand and make a few comments regarding the fine constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook and to talk about how this Throne Speech impacts on the people living within that constituency.

But before I get into my comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to pass on some thank yous. And as every member has, I'm no exception. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank first of all my two CAs [constituency assistant] in my office back home in Spiritwood: Jody Henderson, who's been there for over seven years, almost eight, has been with me for a long time; also Patty Heisler's been there for four years, coming on five. And both those two ladies do an awesome job in covering for me and doing the work that I can't do when I'm not there. As many members have said, your CAs are the first people that make contact with your constituents — whether it be on the phone or whether it be in person. And I've got two, I think, two of the best ladies in the business looking after my constituency.

The next ones I want to thank, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is my family. My wife, Sheila. She's been with me all through every one of the years I've been in the legislature and that is coming 12 years. And without the work she does for me and the support she gives me, I could not do this job. Right now, because I'm down here because the legislature is sitting, there's still farm work to do, cattle to look after. And my wife's at home doing that right now. And so I say thank you.

I also want to thank my three sons, Newton, Deny, and Micky, and their families for supporting me in my endeavours to be a politician. Many people don't realize the amount of hours a politician has to work. It's not an 8-to-5 job, I can assure you. And the phone doesn't ring just at those hours. It rings after hours or any hour, even on Saturdays and Sundays. So I want to thank my boys and my wife for putting up with the things I have to do when I can't be there for them.

I also want to thank my three grandchildren, Shalyn, Courtney, and Brooke, who a lot of times are the reason why I'm here. I want to leave leading this constituency in a better place for kids like them, or other kids within my constituency. And that's why, when things get tough, all I've got to do is think of my grandchildren. And they give me the inspiration to go forward and keep doing what I'm doing.

I also would like to thank my mother, my mother of 82, who has been with me and supports me 100 per cent. And there's lots of times I couldn't do this job without her support. Some people say she's a hard-nosed politician, and that's kind of putting it bluntly, but sometimes she's like that. But that's what I need to keep my thinking on the straight line and continue to work for the people of the Rosthern-Shellbrook constituency.

I want to tell a little story about my mother. And of course she doesn't get this channel so she can't hear me speak, and I won't

send a copy of it to her. But not that long ago my mom was telling me that my brother Robert was out doing things in the area, and so she was left at home, and the dogs started barking. And so she went out a couple of times and told the dogs to quit barking, to shut up. And they just kept on barking, and the hair was standing up on their back. So my mother of 82, who's in a walker — she's had some health problems; she was in a walker — she decided she was going to take her walker and walk out to the yard to see what the dogs were kicking up a fuss about.

[20:15]

So she went out. She got out to the yard and she's looking around, and underneath the big bale wagon in the yard, there was some animal underneath it. It was a big black animal. So her first thought was, the reason the dogs are barking, it's a bear. So what does my mother do? She walks back to the house and she grabs a big rifle. She comes all the way out with her walker. She gets out there and she's looking at this thing, and then she thought well maybe it's not a bear; maybe it's a wolf.

Anyway, the animal slinked out from underneath the bale wagon and took off, and she couldn't get a shot at it. So I said to mother, I said, that was a real good thing, Mother, because if you would have fired that rifle at that animal, whatever it was, that thing would have kicked so bad you'd have landed on your butt. You maybe would have broke something, your hip or whatever. And she said, well that may have happened, but she says, I guarantee one thing: I may not have hit him, but I sure scared the heck out of him, anyway. But that's my mother. She's there to protect her property.

I also now want to welcome to the legislature the newest member of our caucus, the member from Saskatoon Northwest. The member worked hard in a by-election to achieve that goal and he's here with us, and I know he will enjoy himself and do a fine job representing the citizens of Saskatoon Northwest.

One of the things I want to mention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about a by-election — especially this by-election because it was in Saskatoon — but a by-election, it is a place for the parties to gather support to show, if you're an opposition member, to show that the government's on the wrong track, but for the government, which is us, to show the members that we're on the right track.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member worked hard to prove to people that we as a government, and the Premier, is on the right track. And I can guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, the people there agreed with that because he not only garnered more support than the last member that was here, he garnered a lot more to prove to the opposition that we are on the right track, and that the new road that we are taking is the right road to take. Again I want to thank the member for doing a great job in his constituency to prove to the people that we are on the right track.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also now want to talk about the Throne Speech. And I like the heading of the Throne Speech. The Throne Speech is "The New Road," the road less travelled. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that was chosen because the old road was a road full of potholes, never looked after because the old road was the NDP road.

Now we've known for some time that the last 16 years have built that road, and that's the old road. Now why would you want to take an old road, especially with the Premier we have and the government we have today that are looking to brighten up this province and get it moving forward? Then we need to go the new road, the road less travelled. In regards to that, Mr. Speaker, I want to first talk about health care and how health care is working in my constituency — not just the province, but in my constituency.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things I think is most prominent in this Throne Speech and that is with the new province's children's hospital. Now remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members from the opposition now said that they were going to do it, that they were going to get around to do it. Well it never happened, Mr. Speaker.

Under this government, we are going forward with the children's hospital. The people of Saskatchewan have wanted it. It should have been built a long time ago, but now we're moving forward. Why, Mr. Speaker? It's moving forward because we have a progressive government in power, a government that sees things that need to be done that was totally neglected by the members from the opposition side. But now the government is moving forward.

I also will make comment on the Minister of Health, and that is in regards to the target of 800 new nurses. Now I remember the former NDP minister of Health, the member from North Battleford, who said it's no use looking at targets because he knows that we can't keep them anyway.

**An Hon. Member:** — Are you talking about me?

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Well the member from North Battleford said, are you talking about me? And I said, yes I am. But the new . . . The minister we have today from the government decided to put a target on 800 nurses, and we filled that. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have overfilled it, all in three years. Our mandate was to do 800 nurses in four years, but we've recruited 800 nurses in three years, Mr. Speaker. That's what a progressive government does and that's what this minister has done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to talk about the creation of a new health ombudsman. The new health ombudsman has been something our government has been saying needed in this province. And with the minister and the government of today, we've gone forward with that and it's welcomed by everybody. I know in my business to my constituency they've said, it's about time that a government took health care seriously, and in order to do that is to make sure that we have an ombudsman, a health ombudsman in place, and we do. And I know in the years to come he will do excellent work, not only for this government but for the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only with the 800 nurses that we've recruited — we've also put in place 170 new nursing training seats which is added on top of the 130 previous seats that were there before. Well, Mr. Speaker, it goes hand in hand that in order to attract 800 nurses, you need more training seats. And we have looked at that. And we've done a very good job of recruiting nurses and also recruiting nurses through the new

training seats that we have set up in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things that our Premier has stood out loud and strong in regards to health care and that is with the MS [multiple sclerosis] liberation clinic trials. Now I know, Mr. Speaker, he's one of the few premiers in the provinces that have said that they are going to look after the MS treatment trials. And it brings back memory in my own community of Spiritwood where there's a few people there that have MS. In fact, the province of Saskatchewan has the highest number of MS patients in the country.

And I remember talking to one lady from Spiritwood who has MS. She's had it for a long time. And she said one day she got a phone call from Vancouver to go to Costa Rica for an operation for MS. And she was so happy that she was chosen to go. And even though she didn't have the money to go, people raised money or actually her uncle raised the money and sent her there.

Well she was there for just over a week, and what a noticeable change when she came back. And I have talked to her a few times in regards to the rehabilitation that she needs in regarding to make her dream come true. And that is to be able to walk just like a normal person because she's in a wheelchair. But just her attitude and the change in her attitude — it's just enlightening.

And so her, along with other members within the constituency, have said, I'm glad that the Premier took the side and decided to look at MS on a serious note. And I tell you, when that Premier made that comment, I couldn't believe the amount of phone calls I received in my office from people that were just so positive about this government, this Premier, on what we're doing. That alone resonated with people that the Premier is a very caring person. He cares about people, all people. And it shows. And this announcement he made about the MS treatment is one of those reasons why the people of my constituency believe in the Premier, they believe in this government, and they believe in what we're doing.

Another comment I want to make about in regards to the Health portfolio and that is the establishment of the physician recruitment agency, and the announcement that the Health minister made in regards to IMGs, international medical graduates. Now I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that won't come into effect till next year, January 1 of next year. But it's something that we need to look at in order to bring the recruitment of doctors, especially to rural Saskatchewan. I remember the NDP said that they were going to do what no other government could do, and that is rebuild the rural health care in Saskatchewan. Well as we know after 16 years, and even with the former minister from North Battleford, nothing got done. They were going to do it, but just never got around to do it.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at IMGs and bringing in foreign doctors to the province, places like Hafford, places like Shellbrook, places like Spiritwood will benefit from this. They will benefit immensely from this. Right now Shellbrook Hospital has been closed for a few weeks because of the doctors there having to go and write their exams through the CAPE [clinicians' assessment and professional enhancement] system. Well now they're back and they just reopened the hospital. But

there was no emergency care on the weekends there simply because the doctors were off studying for their exams.

Well Shellbrook takes in a big area, Mr. Speaker. Because there is no doctors in Spiritwood, people from Spiritwood were going there. So when that happened, Mr. Speaker, it caused many problems. Now this IMG system that we have in place today is going to help fill some of the vacancies in Shellbrook for doctors to come and work there. And we'll bring Shellbrook back to capacity they want to be to look after the citizens around there.

It will also help in Spiritwood where we have a brand new hospital and we don't have physicians. It would help there, Mr. Speaker. And there's a group there called the northern lakes recruitment agency. And the president of that, or the chairperson is Tracy Schira-Parker, and she is doing an unbelievable job, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in raising money for recruitment and talking to people, talking to the medical association about recruiting doctors and how can they go about recruiting doctors to Spiritwood to get that hospital open so that we can fully look after the people around Spiritwood.

We're an hour and a half drive from Meadow Lake, from North Battleford, from P.A. [Prince Albert]. There needs to be some kind of health care in there to stabilize the population of people around there. And I remember talking not that long ago to members from Chitek Lake and Leoville in regards to for them to come to Spiritwood, it's a half-hour drive. Never mind going to Shellbrook where they will see a doctor. That's an hour and a half.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there needs to be something in Spiritwood. And this group and Tracy's working hard to look at getting some doctors into Spiritwood to help open that facility.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to also . . . In fact I'd be . . . [inaudible] . . . if I didn't talk about agriculture in my constituency. When you look at the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook, it is made mostly up of agriculture people — farmers, ranchers, you name it. There are business people there too, but the thing of it is all works around agriculture. And the Minister of Ag . . . And I'm so glad and happy that we have a Minister of Ag that has grown up with the system, who's a farmer. He understands it, understands it head to foot. He knows what farmers are going through, and this year, with all the rain we've had, you couldn't wish for a better minister who knows what farming is about than the one we have today. So kudos to the Agriculture minister that we have here today.

Mr. Speaker, this year was devastating to the farmers and ranchers in my area. Even though this spring, many of the farmers got a lot of the seeding done, they seeded it in very, very wet conditions and it didn't grow very good. Haying alone was unbelievably terrible. You'd cut the hay and before you could get it up, it probably had 5 or 6 inches of rain on it. So there was lots of hay, there was lots of produce there, but it was of very, very poor quality.

And so the farmers and ranchers there dealt with very severe conditions to get it up. I, as a farmer alone with cattle operation, know this very well. I was lucky. I held off until the rain actually quit, or somewhat quit, so I could get my hay up in

somewhat decent condition. And with the supplement of pellets, the cattle will do well.

[20:30]

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the agricultural system that we have in place today looks after the people of Saskatchewan. They have for a long time. And some of the announcements that the Agriculture minister has announced, like the \$30 million to restore and repair the infrastructure that was so damaged by the former government, the Minister of Ag has done that. We've put money into cattle operation where we see \$50 a head being paid to cattle producers on the west side of the province, the ones that were devastated last year when there was no rain, absolutely none. That infrastructure program helped the farmers and ranchers in that area.

We again brought out money this year for the farmers and ranchers and land producers when they, coupled with the federal Ag minister, announced a \$30 an acre. And when you add the \$30-an-acre infrastructure money that came to the people plus the crop insurance, \$50 an acre, many people in the province that suffered from not getting their crop in took benefit, at least of looking after some of their expenses, by those dollars coming forth. And it's because we have a Minister of Ag that understands farming and fights for farmers. He fights for rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to talk a little bit about our fiscal responsibility as far as our debt. Now, Mr. Speaker, there are many members on that side of the House will stand up and say that when they took over some 16 years ago, the government was broke. Well according to the Minister of Finance — and I put my faith into the former minister of Finance, the member from Melfort, and now the member from Canora-Pelly — that back 16 years ago when they took over, yes, there was debt. There was provincial debt, I think to the tune of, say, 15 billion.

Now everybody knows that of that 15 billion, 8 billion of that was left by the Conservative government. Well where did the other 7 billion come from? It couldn't have come from the Conservative government because they did 8 billion. But where did it come from? Well I bet it came from the Blakeney government, which is the NDP. Now you hear members on that side continuously stand up and say how bad they had things when they first took over. But they never, they never ever mention the debt they accumulated. Never.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member from North Battleford said I'd better check my figures. Well I've checked with the Finance minister, I've checked with the former Finance minister, and I guarantee him, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe both of them long before I believe any member from that side.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Rosemont when he was up speaking talked about the surplus money that was left when we took over in 2007. And he can't figure out where that money went. We blew it. We, the Sask Party government, blew it.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to say where we blew the money. How about bringing the debt down? The debt, I believe, was 6.8 billion. Well, Mr. Speaker, we brought that debt down

to 4.2 billion. In fact, we did that in the first year of our mandate. We brought it down to 4.2 billion. That's where the money went. Or maybe the members from the NDP don't want us to spend it there. Maybe they would like debt because they accumulated a 7 billion debt and thought there was nothing wrong with that. But we like to look after our debt, Mr. Speaker. And so that's why we put money toward our provincial debt and brought it down to 4.2 billion. That's why.

Another thing that we did when we took office, Mr. Speaker, is we looked after property tax relief. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know the members opposite get a little irritated when we talk about property tax because it's another thing that the NDP were going to do it; they just never got around to do it. But we looked at it and we said, no. In rural Saskatchewan, we're paying too much tax. So the minister at that time decided no, we're going to look at it seriously. And we came up with a plan, Mr. Speaker. And we dropped the amount of tax paid in the first year — or second year, pardon me — immensely through property tax. And we're not done. We've got more to accumulate on that debt, but we're going to look after it. Something that the Saskatchewan Party promised to do, and we're going to do it.

There was also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, things like infrastructure deficit. What about the roads? The highways? I made mention, Mr. Speaker, about this Throne Speech being a new road that we were travelling, not the old road. Well we wouldn't want to travel the old road; that was a NDP road, one that was full of potholes. And when the Highways minister took over, we put the highest amount of money into the Highways budget ever in history.

So that's where some of the money went, Mr. Speaker. Does that mean that the NDP say we squandered it? Because I can guarantee it, every constituency in the province of Saskatchewan, they're glad that we looked after the priorities of this province, and that is with roads. That's where the money went.

If they want to use the words squandered the money, fine. I think the people of Saskatchewan are happy we squandered the money in the right way, the right areas, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I could go on where other money was spent, but the member from Rosemont continuously said we squandered it. Well I think we squandered it in a good way, very good way . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Rosemont is speaking. He had his chance to speak on the Throne Speech.

And maybe didn't get around to saying that, but we are doing our job as government to look after the people of the province. We're looking after all the constituencies in the province across the board because the Premier and this government is a progressive-looking, forward-thinking government. And we have brought this province back in a short period of time — three years; we have a year left in our mandate — but in a short three years I can guarantee you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have done more in the three years of being in government than those members did when they were in 16 years — a lot more, and we still got a year to go, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this Throne Speech is any

indication as where the government is going and what we're planning on doing, we are going to be sitting on this side of the benches for a long, long time.

The last little bit I want to talk about, Mr. Speaker, and I mentioned my constituency is a lot of farmers. And farmers need fertilizer to grow their crops, and fertilizer comes from potash. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, last Wednesday was probably the highlight of this government, when our Premier stood in his place and told the federal Prime Minister, the answer is no to BHP taking over potash.

And I remember some of the comments made by members opposite, especially, especially the Leader of the Opposition, who used his political ways as an opposition to travel on that Wednesday down to Ottawa to talk to, not the Prime Minister about the BHP takeover, but talk to Jack Layton, to align himself in the political arena. Maybe he went down there for another reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Maybe he went down there to talk to Jack Layton about his future plans. Maybe he has other interests, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I mean we know too well about the member, the opposition member about ducking in and out of the province. I mean it happened not that long ago when he ducked out of the NDP government and moved to Alberta. All of a sudden then he comes back again.

Though I'm sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he reads the polls. He knows what's happening. And when your polls of popularity slip to unheard records like they are now, maybe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he went to Ottawa to see if Jack Layton is planning on moving on with something else and that would align him to step in and maybe take over as the leader of the federal NDP. As I said before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he did it once. Nothing stopping him from doing it a second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's why the people of my constituency in Rosthern-Shellbrook agree with what the Premier, the government is doing for them and what the Premier and the province is doing for the people of Saskatchewan.

The popularity of our party is growing by leaps and bounds, Mr. Speaker, and we've only been in power three years. Three years and look at what we've done. Right now, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are happy. I can guarantee you the Premier would say it first; we haven't done everything for this province, but we have done a heck of a lot. And there is more to do, and we are continually going to do that.

I want to leave, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by saying that this Thursday will be Remembrance Day. And the last two Remembrance Days I've spent in my home town of Spiritwood. The reason is I want to pay tribute to the war veterans, but I also want to say tribute to a family that lost their loved one in Afghanistan.

Some short two years ago, a gentlemen by the name of Dustin Wasden lost his life in Afghanistan. He was over there fighting for our freedom. He was fighting for our freedom of speech. He was fighting for democracy. And the last two years, the Remembrance Day service has been huge. It's been overwhelming, but it's brought members of the Legion and Spiritwood together because they lost a young one — a young one that left his family, a young child, his family there. And so



on the 11th, I will be there laying a wreath on behalf of the government. But I want to say to the family of the Wasdens, your sorrow was not alone. We all think of him, and we miss him.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can say that the Throne Speech that was brought forth here on October 27th is a great Throne Speech. It brings new ideas to this province as to what this government and this Premier wants to do. It's a Throne Speech a year in advance before the next election, and it will be the only Throne Speech before the election. But I can assure you, members of the Rosthern-Shellbrook constituency are behind this government. They're behind this Premier, and they're behind me.

On that note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech, but I will definitely not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have an opportunity to respond to the recent Throne Speech. But first of all, I want to extend my congratulations to the member from Northwest for his victory in the by-election. I have no doubt that the member from Saskatoon Northwest will serve his constituents well. I'm quite happy to abdicate the role of the newest MLA to him, too.

Before I begin my remarks on the Throne Speech, there are a few very important people I want to acknowledge. I have exceptional staff who have served the constituency of Saskatoon Riversdale very well. Thank you, Yvonne, Tammie, and Chris, for your hard work, your commitment to the people of our constituency and for helping make my job so much easier.

As a mom with young children, I would not be able to do this job well if I didn't have such a strong support network. My parents, both of whom are almost 80 years old, spend one day a week with my preschooler. Ophelia really is the most amazing little girl, but she's also a bit of a tornado, and is more often than not completely exhausting for everybody around her.

**An Hon. Member:** — A special girl.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Very special girl. But for my parents who are, as I said, advanced, getting older and older, but still incredibly spry, for them to commit a day a week to spend with my daughter, it means a great deal to me. I think it's pretty special for them, pretty special for Ophelia, and it's also incredibly appreciated.

My sister Michelle, who actually says I should stop making so many thank yous and I should keep my speeches a bit shorter, she's one of the people that I also want to thank. She spends tons of time with both my girls and makes a pretty darn good substitute for me. In fact Ophelia had her first night away from me just a couple of weeks ago and fared incredibly well, thanks to Auntie Mich.

[20:45]

So Michelle's point is well taken that quite likely not everybody wants to hear how thankful I am for all the people in my life. But because of the way this job is structured and because my long-term goal is to see this legislature far more reflective of the makeup of this province, I believe I need to draw attention to the fact that this job really needs to be a team effort, especially if you have care responsibilities. This legislature and this work currently aren't the most family friendly, but I believe this could and this should be very different. And while I'm here, I will strive to initiate changes I think could make it easier for those with care responsibilities of either children or elders to serve as an MLA or to even just contemplate putting their names forward to run.

I want to thank my children, Hennessey and Ophelia, for putting up with the past two years of our crazy lives. There's been some ups and downs, and it's been a period of adjustment for all of us. And both Hennessey and Ophelia have been real troopers, and they also continue to be my inspiration or the reason why I put my name forward to do this job in the first place.

My husband Blair has put his own career on the back burner to be home with Hennessey and Ophelia. Although women have done this for their political husbands forever, it is a rarity to find a man willing to put his children and his wife's needs before his career. I can't emphasize enough how much this means to me. Honestly, as the person who was home with Hennessey, my oldest, for almost seven years, Blair being home really is the piece that has created the space in my brain to be able to do this work. I can do this job confident in the knowledge that the girls are in the care of someone who loves them as much as I do, so thank you, Blair.

Last but not least, I want to thank the good people of Saskatoon Riversdale for giving me the opportunity to be their voice in this legislature. I'm working hard to ensure they know they made the right choice in the by-election last year. It really is a privilege to be their voice here in this legislature. I couldn't think of a better job in the world, so thank you.

With my thank yous completed, I think — I hope that I haven't missed anybody, but I'm sure I possibly have — there are a few things . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Seatmate.

**Ms. Chartier:** — My seatmate, thank you to the member from Regina Rosemont for being a good mentor along the way here. I think that's all the thank yous.

I'm going to talk about this government's approach to women in leadership positions and the lack of the necessary perspective around the decision-making table, this government's less than auspicious record of financial mismanagement and its impact on the people of this province, the government's Throne Speech nod to the need for picture ID in order to vote, and finally some of my perceptions of the reality and the spin that has gone on in this place recently.

It was hard not to notice this past spring when the Premier embarked upon a cabinet shuffle that saw two women leave the cabinet and one woman enter, for a net loss of one female from

around the decision-making table. I think one of the most telling signs of this government's perspective on women was the removal of the member from Martensville from her role as the minister of Environment and her subsequent placement in the very backbenches of government to the seat as far away from the Premier as possible. There is no doubt *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* was a poor decision. But we all know this really wasn't this minister's legislation, that it was in fact at the behest of the Ministry of Agriculture that this legislation went forward. The former minister did not handle this file well, but she has also taken the fall for her Sask Party government.

There has been no shortage of ministerial mess-ups in the past three years, including the former Finance minister's \$2 billion blunder on potash forecasting and the former advanced education, immigration, and labour minister's complete inability to engage with working people. However the Finance minister stayed in place until he decided to leave on his own terms, and the Advanced Education minister is still sitting very close to the Premier although the Labour portion of his portfolio has been removed from his responsibility.

Don't get me wrong. I don't think you could call me a fan of the member from Martensville. In fact last spring in the debate on sitting extended hours, I was the subject of vitriolic heckling from many members across the way when I argued that sitting 8 a.m. to midnight is one of the many deterrents that keep good women from putting their names forward to run for nominations for any party. Both the member from Martensville and the member from Estevan, two women I might add, were particularly small-minded with their heckles and completely off base, I might add. I recall these women pointing out that this job is 24-7, 365 days a year, among other things.

Well though I would agree that it is imperative MLAs remain responsive and available in a timely fashion to constituents to deal with their concerns, I think one of the reasons my constituents elected me is because I'm doing what so many of them are — trying to balance work and family. Like so many of my constituents, I'm working hard to be a good employee — their employee — and still remain an engaged, connected parent. In fact I think my dual role helps make me a more effective MLA, better equipped to understand the needs and concerns of my constituents.

All that said, as someone who wants to see more women elected, because I know diverse voices around the decision-making table make for better public policy, it is distressing to me that the Premier has removed a young woman wholly and completely from this table.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not use this opportunity to discuss the Sask Party government's financial mismanagement and its impact on the average person in this province. In this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, we got to hear all this government has done previously and very little about what they will do going forward on the so-called new road. Well first of all, I'm still pretty new here, but I have always understood a Throne Speech is supposed to detail a government's vision for the future, not its memory of its past. While listening to the speech, I couldn't help but think that all these past accomplishments took place while this government was ripping through the more than \$2.3 billion they inherited from the

previous NDP administration. It's easy to govern when you have buckets of money. But when finances get a bit tighter, it's not quite so simple.

It amazes me that in this past budget the government has made cuts and told organizations and individuals that we will all have to do our part and tighten our belts. Mr. Speaker, for the past two years, our province has taken in more than \$10 billion in revenue — \$10 billion, Mr. Speaker. This is billions of dollars more than any NDP administration ever had to work with, billions of dollars more. The Sask Party government has run deficits two years in a row, has expected us all to pay for their mismanagement through harmful, misguided cuts, and has projected provincial debt to rise by more than \$4 billion in the next few years.

Having lived through the 1990s here in Saskatchewan where the Romanow government inherited a province on the brink of bankruptcy and how tough times warranted incredibly difficult decisions, and particularly as a mother of two children, I'm worried about my children's future here and our collective futures as citizens of this province. I'm worried that if we stay on this new road, it will lead us right back to where we started after the Premier's mentor, Grant Devine, lost his last election in 1991. That would be in a deep financial hole that will take a very long time to climb out of.

Hennessey is only about five years away from university. Although her dad and I have been putting a little bit of money away every month for her education since her birth, I'm beginning to worry that with escalating tuition costs, it's still not going to be enough. I know from experience that it can be difficult to juggle employment, to pay tuition, and to rely on inadequate student loans. I don't want this for her. I don't want this for any Saskatchewan youth. I want Hennessey to be able to focus on school and not have to graduate with crippling debt. I want her to have the option to pursue whatever education she needs to in order to create the future she wants and to not be hampered by finances.

I have known far too many people who graduate with student loans well over \$30,000. Coupled with exorbitant housing costs, Mr. Speaker, young people graduating from university with this kind of debt or more cannot dream of owning a home any time soon.

I met a young couple on the doorstep a little while ago where they both had student loans and were renting an apartment. Their rent had recently gone up by 30 per cent, which seems to be about the average increase in rent people have faced in my constituency in the past couple of years. This couple has a daughter who was nine months old when I met them.

Sadly they told me about not being able to use the full year of parental benefits under employment insurance because 55 per cent of one of their salaries wasn't enough to make ends meet to cover all their costs. So instead of getting to be home for that first year of their daughter's life or even one of them being home, they both had to return to paid employment. Complicating matters, they had a difficult time finding child care, so they decided to tag team and schedule their shifts so they would never have to use child care. This is great for their little girl, but it means this young couple rarely gets to spend

time together. Not only are they strapped financially, but their relationship has added stress and strain. If this is the new road, Mr. Speaker, I don't want my children travelling on it.

I see in here on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker, how this government is failing many people in my constituency of Saskatoon Riversdale. For example, in my constituency there is a wonderful not-for-profit seniors home that should be well supported by government. This one home serves about 10 singles, mostly women, but there is an increasing demand for the organization to build a second facility that would create the same home-like environment but this time for couples. Unfortunately this organization is not in a financial position to build this second home and is feeling the pinch in operating its first home.

The board and its volunteer executive director that oversee the home have done their best to keep rates to the residents affordable as possible so people from our community can actually live there. But with the combination of residents on fixed incomes, increased property taxes and utility rates — this organization just had their first electricity bill, over \$1,000, Mr. Speaker, in August — keeping the lights on and the doors open becomes increasingly difficult. In a time when the demand for affordable housing for everyone including seniors has far outstripped the supply, government should be coming forward and supporting such projects.

A regular call into my constituency office is that of individuals: what can be done about their rapidly increasing rent? Rent has continued to go up, sometimes even by a few hundred dollars in one shot, Mr. Speaker. If people facing increased rent could find suitable accommodation for less money, they would move in a heartbeat. However this is often next to impossible, and instead we have people making a choice between paying rent, buying food, or sometimes going without needed medication. This is a reality, and this is simply unacceptable in a country like Canada and in a province like Saskatchewan.

In this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, we heard about the new housing program that will build 1,000 new homes in the next five years. As a proponent of home ownership and believing that good housing and strong roots for families make for healthy communities, I will commend the government for committing to this and look forward to its implementation. However this is just a drop in the bucket and will do little to ease the housing shortage around the province.

Like my colleagues, I spent a large part of my summer travelling to communities outside our province's larger centres. It doesn't matter where you go in this province, Mr. Speaker; affordable housing is an issue. It might look a little bit different in various communities, depending. It could be oil workers in southern Saskatchewan, or seniors who have nowhere to live so they're staying in homes that they can't handle. Meanwhile there's young families who would love to purchase their home. So it looks a little different around the province, but it's an issue everywhere, Mr. Speaker.

The government needs to put a serious, long-term plan in place to meaningfully address this housing shortage. They boast of the increased population numbers but have not put their money where their mouth is, ensuring all residents have a decent and

affordable roof over their heads. Rather we see a lack of vision that translates into actions like mean-spirited cuts in the last budget to a community organization that has helped put many families into homes in my constituency. Mean-spirited cuts, that's what this vision is of this government, Mr. Speaker.

In this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, there was no plan for a much-needed rent control. There was no mention of policy around affordable tuition. There was no mention of help with increasing electricity bills. And there was no new commitment to child care, either in creating spaces or ensuring there's enough trained staff for these facilities, Mr. Speaker. There was nothing in this Throne Speech that would address the concerns of the young family or the seniors I mentioned earlier. There are thousands of people out there like them who are working hard to make a good life here in the province or who have contributed greatly to this province over the years. But they need support, Mr. Speaker, real support.

A few days ago, we heard the Social Services minister tell us how well individuals who require income support are doing under this government. There is no doubt this government made some positive changes for those on social assistance when they were first elected, but I might add these changes were all made when this government had a huge pot of money to work with. I can tell you, now that they have mismanaged their finances and now that money is tighter than when they took office, people on social assistance are paying the price.

I've only been in this job for a year, but I have the benefit of having an assistant who served Premier Calvert since 2001. Yvonne is the front line for all the calls and concerns we receive in our constituency office. Aside from serving as a constituency assistant under both the NDP and the Sask Party government and seeing how individuals who are having difficulties are treated comparatively, she also has another perspective — a before and an after the 2010-2011 budget view. Yvonne was off for eight months this year receiving treatment for breast cancer. From her departure last fall until her return this summer, times have changed for those on social assistance, she says, and it is apparent ministries have been directed to cut costs wherever and however they can, no matter what the consequences.

There have been Social Services ministry policies that have changed in the past few months which appear to be directly tied to saving pennies here and there on the backs of the most marginalized citizens of our province, Mr. Speaker. For example in the past if a client received an overpayment, they would of course be expected to pay it back. However a client could point to hardship and make smaller payments over a longer period of time — \$15 off a cheque perhaps rather than 25, where an extra \$10 can mean a bit more food in their children's bellies, Mr. Speaker. This hardship clause is now gone.

[21:00]

Another area under Social Services in which there seems to be a change is around the special diet program which provides additional money for people who have concerns like diabetes. People have been denied additional support for their special diet or have seen money for it reduced for no apparent reason.

Away for eight months, Yvonne says the difference upon her return is profound. We have had people come into our office looking for help who are desperate but completely apprehensive to be there as they've been told by their workers not to come to MLAs' offices. Yvonne explains that she and other constituency assistants have always had good working relationships with supervisors in Social Services and could in the past deal directly with them to try to resolve issues. Now supervisors are also hesitant to talk to opposition CAs. Instead Yvonne finds herself having to go directly to the minister's office to attempt to resolve issues for clients.

This nickel-and-diming on the backs of our poor citizens is not about legislation that we can all read and debate here in this Chamber or grand policy announcements for the media. Rather this is about internal policy that is hidden from view from most of us except for those who are impacted by it. These consequences of these internal policies mean the difference sometimes between food on the table or a decent roof over one's head. This is all happening under a government who has squandered our collective future and tries to claim it's the champion of the most marginalized.

I have spent a great deal of time in this speech speaking of what was noticeably absent in this Throne Speech. Now I want to address one item that cuts to the core of our fundamental right as citizens. This is the Sask Party government's proposal to require voter identification in order to vote. The first question one must ask is, why is this even necessary? The government might answer this is to address fraudulent voting, which would be a good response if the Sask Party government could illustrate this really is a problem here. According to the Acting Chief Electoral Officer, David Wilkie, he is not aware of any recent election where the issue of identification came into play. Not a problem here.

My next question would be, is this really, is this really the most pressing piece of legislation the Sask Party can produce for the people of the province? I can tell you people are not flooding into my constituency office or stopping me at events to discuss the need to address voter fraud. Rather they're talking to me about the need for support to pay their rent or mortgage or about the huge wait-list for affordable child care or of their struggles with health care and the rising cost of living. Those are the issues people are talking to me about. And I suspect they're probably talking to people all around Saskatchewan about those issues.

Aside from voter fraud being a non-issue here in this province, I have to comment on how this will impact many people who live in Saskatoon Riversdale and across the province, for that matter. The Minister of Justice made the comment that people would have time to get their affairs in order to get ID, and he also pointed out that for seniors, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] issues picture ID for free.

He seems to say, what's the big deal? This is no big deal. But it is. First of all, the member from Saskatoon Southeast and this government clearly have no concept, not a clue, of the kind of challenges some citizens face here in this province on a daily basis — that sometimes basic survival, putting food on the table, getting kids to and from school, and getting to work or to school in a day is more than challenging enough. And add to

that the bureaucratic shuffle of getting photo ID, of getting your affairs in order, this is going to be the last priority of marginalized citizens who will continue to remain marginalized, especially if they cannot vote.

This minister clearly has no idea what some of the barriers to obtaining ID can be. Although finances do come into play and it's good that at least seniors have access to free photo ID, there are a whole host of other issues. For example, if you have a driver's licence, you are okay. You are in good shape as you already have picture ID along with your document with your signature, so you can prove who you are. However, if you don't have a driver's licence, this is where the problem would occur. And I would encourage the Minister of Justice to listen to this.

You need to have two pieces of ID to get photo ID, including one piece with your signature to prove who you are. Everyone has a health card and that has a signature. However the other piece of ID that people can obtain is a birth certificate. In order to get a birth certificate, you need two pieces of ID. Most people are able to get or replace a health card but the other piece is harder to get so it becomes a vicious circle. It can be even tougher for someone who doesn't have the correct spelling of his or her parents' names. That happens, Mr. Speaker. That happens when you might have been in the foster care system for most of your life. You might not know how your parents' names are spelled on the birth certificate. So it becomes increasingly difficult, and getting this ID does still cost money, Mr. Speaker.

If this sounds complicated to you, try being the individual attempting to obtain that picture ID. And this, Mr. Speaker, is what our Sask Party government wants us to do to be able to practise our right to vote. This is shameful, and completely not necessary.

On a final note, I just want to talk a bit about potash and how these past few months have played out. When the news of this hostile takeover first broke, my leader and my party took a strong position early on. We've been advocating that no matter who owns the companies that mine our potash — doesn't matter who: PCS, BHP Billiton, or any other possibility — the people of Saskatchewan need to get a better deal for our potash.

This hostile takeover opened the door. This is a great opportunity to talk about royalties, to talk about taxes, to talk about equity shares, and to talk about a company's commitment to this province. This is about guaranteeing these resources do what we need them to do: ensure all the people of Saskatchewan have the right mix of programs, services, and taxes to live our best lives possible and to fulfill our potential. Ultimately this is what the potash file is all about.

It's absolutely amazing to me that the members opposite could ever say my leader and my colleagues gave up — and myself for that matter — gave up on Saskatchewan, the line they were using last week in this Chamber. This is all Sask Party spin and absolutely reprehensible, as nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. The opposition NDP and our leader are, and have been all along, pushing this government and this Premier to get what we need for our resources since the emergence of this issue, providing real leadership.

The people of Saskatchewan deserve a plan. Where is the Sask Party plan to secure maximum benefit for our resources? We haven't seen any sign of a plan yet, despite asking repeatedly during question period in this Chamber for the past few days, and despite the fact time is still ticking on the final Industry Canada decision.

It would be amusing, if it wasn't so sad, that the only reason the Premier took his position over the past couple of weeks and came out, at least on the surface, looking like a leader, was simply because his attempt to receive a one-time \$1 billion payment and some infrastructure money for a domed stadium failed.

When he botched his negotiations with BHP Billiton, or as these negotiations have been referred to by the media, a tawdry shakedown, and BHP Billiton called him out on it, that's when he chose to don his Captain Canada cape, take the NDP position, and see the light about social democracy, Mr. Speaker. And power to him. He appears to have done it well, at least for a week or two. There is no doubt our Premier is the master of the spin.

We are all pleased on both sides of the House thus far that Minister Clement has not approved the Billiton offer. But we want the Premier to shore up our province's position and to encourage PCS [Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc.] to help us to do so by putting its seven-point advertising pledge into a real document with real signatures and real consequences for failing to live up to it. A pledge in a newspaper is not enough, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd be remiss actually if I didn't set the record straight today, Mr. Speaker, when the member from Meadow Lake, among other members from across the way, have made some incredibly disparaging comments about my leader today. Mr. Speaker, I'll say it here — and this is not news to anyone who knows me — the member from Douglas Park was not my first choice in the NDP leadership race. But I have had the opportunity this past year to get to know him, to see his incredible work ethic, and to see first-hand why my fellow New Democrats chose him as our leader. I respect him immensely and believe his leadership qualities have shone during this potash debate. It is my leader's knowledge and his approach to the potash debate that has helped bring the Premier to the place he is today.

I had one of my proudest moments as an NDP MLA last week when my leader, the member from Douglas Park, spoke here in this Chamber about how we should be tackling the issue of our natural resources, how we should be having a debate and discussion about this. My leader is thoughtful, knowledgeable, passionate, and most importantly, guided by social democratic principles — that we should all get to share in the wealth of this province.

Mr. Speaker, given the choice between my leader or our current Premier when it comes to qualities of leadership, experience, and depth of knowledge on just about any issue, there is no question. The member from Douglas Park is a clear choice. I will spend the next year ensuring people in my constituency and throughout this province see my leader as I have had the chance to get to see him.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment. I will be supporting . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They're awake over there, Mr. Speaker. They're awake. I will be supporting the amendment, and I will not be supporting the motion put forward by the Sask Party government. I'm glad to see they're awake over there. They were pretty quiet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina South.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well I'll begin my remarks by congratulating the member from Saskatoon Riversdale on not supporting the amendment — wise choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a wise choice indeed.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honour for me to rise and provide a few comments about this year's Speech from the Throne.

I'd like to begin by commenting on the special importance of this current week. Mr. Speaker, this is Veterans' Week in Canada. And all across our country, Canadians are pausing, each in their own way, to acknowledge the enormous sacrifices made every single day on our behalf by Canada's regular forces and reserve military personnel as well as RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] members stationed overseas. Whether it is armed intervention from World War II and the Korean conflict in earlier decades, to Iraq and Afghanistan in today's era, or peacekeeping assignments from Suez and Cyprus to Bosnia and Rwanda, these courageous women and men have placed themselves in harm's way — far too often at great personal cost — to protect Canadians at home and oppressed peoples around the world.

Mr. Speaker, we owe them our freedom and our cherished values and our eternal thanks. I'd like to add my sincere and abiding thanks to that of all Canadians and certainly all members of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, speaking from a personal perspective, I want to offer my thanks to the people in my life who make it possible for me to participate in politics, most of all the residents of Regina South, the constituency that I have the honour to represent in this Assembly, and especially to them for taking time to share with me on an ongoing basis their views, their opinions, their ideas, and their concerns. It's greatly appreciated and extremely helpful in the discharge of my duties on their behalf.

Thanks also to my constituency assistant, Kyle Leonard. He helps me stay in touch with my constituents, schedules appointments. And not only that. He's a great website administrator, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is a very fortunate thing because I am definitely not.

Thanks as well to my ministerial staff here in the building: Darin Banadyga, Kim Jalbert, Heather Howell-Shiplack, Bob Krawchuk, and Margaret Huntington. They do a splendid job. They support me extremely well. They do scheduling of correspondence and research on a very wide variety of important issues.

My wife, Jocelyn, of course is a source of enormous support and encouragement to me in my work here. She understands the

demands of public life herself and devotes a great deal of her time and expertise to civic issues in her role as a member of Regina City Council. Jocelyn and I are both tremendously proud to be citizens of this great province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I have to say that I have never been more proud to call Saskatchewan my home than I was last week when Saskatchewan's Premier and its citizens were at the centre of world news for having shown the courage to say no. Our Premier said no to a potential takeover of one of our most precious and strategic resource industries, Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. And last week he was backed up by federal Industry Minister Tony Clement at Ottawa who agreed that the BHP Billiton offer presented no net benefit to Canada.

Our answer demonstrated that while we are most definitely open for business, we will make good, sound business decisions based on the best outcome for our citizens. And that means that we reserve the right on occasion to say no to transactions that have the potential to jeopardize job creation, capital investment, and authority over natural resources that have national strategic value.

I'd like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Regina area MPs [Member of Parliament], Ray Boughen, Tom Lukiwski, and Andrew Scheer for their support on this very, very important issue. At the local level, my constituents have expressed their overwhelming approval of our stance on this matter and their strong desire that we continue to stay the course on their behalf.

Now regarding the Throne Speech itself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan on behalf of its citizens has chosen a new road to pursue. The new road on which we are travelling is an exciting one indeed. The level of economic activity in our cities and towns, our RMs, and northern communities is unprecedented.

[21:15]

In my constituency and nearby, we are experiencing an unprecedented number of construction projects, housing starts, and employment opportunities. Most notably, construction continues on the Global Transportation Hub, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a new intermodal inland port that will soon become, I predict, one of Regina's and indeed Saskatchewan's most important economic engines.

The provincial government is contributing by building new all-weather highways connecting this vital hub with the No. 1 and No. 11 highways. The Lewvan interchange is proceeding right on schedule despite setbacks with wet weather this year and is going to make an enormous difference in the safety of that intersection that connects the No. 1 Highway and our very busy south end. Again funding from the province is helping to make this dream become an important reality.

Harbour Landing is already a bustling centre, providing our city with new stores and services that they have previously only seen in larger centres in addition to a whole new and very exciting residential community.

These are indeed remarkable times for the city of Regina and

for our province. People all over the country are now not only aware of what potash is, they are also aware that we have the strongest economy in the country and that we are leading the nation in economic growth and with predictions saying that we will see a GDP [gross domestic product] increase of 3 or 4 per cent, which is truly amazing, Mr. Speaker, given the circumstances that prevail elsewhere in the country.

Our population is now at an all-time high, over 1.045 million citizens. Our employment figures show that we have more than 5,000 more people working in Saskatchewan than one year ago, setting an employment record for the month of September. And our unemployment rate is now at 5.5 per cent, almost the lowest rate in Canada.

The housing start figures for both Regina and Saskatoon are incredibly strong. In fact they have increased by some 60 per cent over the same period last year — 60 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And building permits for commercial construction continue at a record pace.

Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the entire country is taking notice of our province, Saskatchewan.

A few comments with respect to tourism, Mr. Speaker. Just a few days ago, our friends from Tourism Saskatchewan visited this legislature and spoke of the increased level of visitation that we experienced last year despite a significant downward trend experienced in many other neighbouring jurisdictions. The fact is that tourism contributed over \$1.6 billion in total traveller expenditures to our provincial economy in 2009, an increase of almost 3 per cent over the previous year. And that's remarkable indeed. It is in fact the number four industry in our province's economy, and it employs some 62,000 Saskatchewan residents, an increase this year of 14 per cent over 2009. Again, remarkable statistics, Mr. Speaker.

The Saskatchewan Party government understands that the new road will include an even greater profile for the tourism industry, and consequently we have been investing resources into event hosting, a very important aspect of tourism revenue. Successful events such as the World Junior Hockey Championships in Saskatoon and Regina, the World Women's Curling Championship in Swift Current, and the Back to Batoche Festival showed the world that we host world-class events and that these events serve to showcase our beautiful province to everyone else.

Our continued investment in tourism is showing results. Regina will host the World Men's Curling Championship in 2011. And Saskatoon, we were happy to announce recently, will host the Canadian Country Music Association Awards the following year in 2012. Our province and these two great cities will once again be on the national and indeed the international stage.

This government, along with municipal and corporate sponsors, took Saskatchewan to the world stage in Vancouver recently for the 2010 Winter Olympics and again in Whistler in March for the Paralympic Games. We shared the Saskatchewan experience with over 120,000 people who visited the Saskatchewan pavilion. This dramatically exceeded all expectations. I welcome this opportunity to thank our good friends at Sask Sport whose staff managed the pavilion so well, together with

personnel from Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport — my ministry — who dedicated an enormous number of hours making sure that Canada and the world learned about Saskatchewan and what we have to offer.

Mr. Speaker, a final reference on the tourism file is their support for the great work that Tourism Saskatchewan and its CEO and her staff do each and every day on our behalf. The previous NDP government had a commitment to Tourism Saskatchewan of some \$8 million. This government has increased funding to Tourism Saskatchewan to \$11.8 million. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's nearly a 50 per cent increase to support an agency that is in fact representing the fourth largest sector of our provincial economy.

**An Hon. Member:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Hear, hear, indeed. So says the previous minister for Tourism and Parks.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the NDP had the very best of intentions in this regard. I'm sure that if you ask them, they'll tell you that they really, really wanted to do it. And they certainly intended to do it. They just didn't get around to it. Well, Mr. Speaker, we did get around to it. We did it, and we're proud of that fact. We supported the tourism industry as it deserves, with a larger grant and a stable event-hosting pool of funds with which to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, members may be aware that we have participated recently in a comprehensive review of the tourism industry itself. Our tourism review, I'm happy to announce, is well under way. The participants in the process are very supportive of this consultation, and we look forward to a stronger, improved system of supports once the review is in fact completed.

Mr. Speaker, speaking briefly about parks, if I may. Many of the visitors travelling to Saskatchewan come to enjoy our beautiful parks. Today, on the new road of this province, our provincial parks are more popular than ever before. We've experienced record visitation in the last three years. The statistics are remarkable. Demand is exceeding supply for our campsites, and that's a trend that we fully expect will continue into the foreseeable future.

This government sees the new road as an opportunity to create a better visitor experience in our parks. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have invested, in the first three years of our mandate, over \$65 million in our provincial and regional parks for capital projects, improved programming, and increased operating grants. This amount of investment is 70 per cent more than the previous NDP government did in their last three years. Mr. Speaker, a 70 per cent increase, and that's the new road for Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government cares for the parks of this province. And we're willing to invest in them, and the statistics prove it.

Our promise to electrify 1,000 campsites is we're doing better than expected; in fact, we're ahead of schedule. As of present day, we have electrified nearly 850 sites with more to come next year. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we expect to exceed the target of 1,000.

**An Hon. Member:** — Good news.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Good news indeed, as the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy reminds me. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a reminder to members here, especially, the members opposite on the NDP side, the last eight years of their park management saw electrification increase by a paltry 340 sites. A dismal record, Mr. Speaker, amounting to about 40 sites per year.

**An Hon. Member:** — Forty. We could do that next week.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Absolutely you could. No planning for the future. No planning for the recreational needs of our province. No planning for tourism and growth, further evidence of the lack of vision for our provincial parks and our province. Mr. Speaker, that's the old road of planning — not for growth, but decline. That's giving up on Saskatchewan. That's giving up on Saskatchewan people, and that's not good enough.

**An Hon. Member:** — Shame.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Shame indeed. The new road of parks investment took us to Buffalo Pound Provincial Park this summer, located in the beautiful constituency of Thunder Creek, where I had the pleasure of opening a brand new campground. This, Mr. Speaker, is in fact a big deal. The Trails End campground was the first new campground in a provincial park in more than 20 years. Twenty years, surprising as that sounds. More than 20 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. With 76 new sites along with a fully accessible new service centre, accessible campsites. Beautiful indeed. A children's playground and other washroom facilities located throughout the entire campground.

Mr. Speaker, improvements to our parks are happening all across this great province. In fact I have a little bit of information to illustrate this fact.

**An Hon. Member:** — It's all highlighted.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — It's all highlighted, absolutely it is, as the member from Kindersley knows full well.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more information than we'll have time to recite this evening, but I thought if I just tried to pare it down to some of the basic facts, perhaps we could squeeze in some of the most important facts here.

Buffalo Pound, as I just mentioned, a brand new campground, the first one in 20 years. Remarkable, first one in 20 years. Candle Lake, Sandy Bay water treatment plant upgrade; very important, safe, clean drinking water, Mr. Speaker. Cypress Hills Provincial Park, a brand new maintenance building, much needed and much appreciated. Upgraded electrical service at 69 campsites at the Rainbow campground. Danielson Provincial Park in the Diefenbaker area, electrical service to 44 campsites, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Nearby, Douglas Provincial Park, electrical service . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It's a great park indeed. I've seen all the parks in that area; they are all fabulous parks.

In fact I've actually taken the time so far to see more than one-third of the provincial parks in our entire system. We are blessed. There are 34 in total, 34 in total.

**An Hon. Member:** — Have you been to 13?

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Absolutely I have . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . All right, well we're pretty much matched in that regard then. Douglas Provincial Park, electrical service has been added to 51 campsites, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now on the other side of the province. Beautiful Duck Mountain Provincial Park, new electrical service centre for the Birch campground. Echo Valley Provincial Park, electrical service has been added to 123 campsites, Mr. Deputy Speaker, remarkable achievement. Meadow Lake Provincial Park, an update of the Murray Doell campground service centre. And Moose Mountain Provincial Park, new roof on the staff residence. Various locations all around the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, new picnic tables and barbecues. And that's just 2010.

I was just wondering, for the member from Biggar, do I have time for a couple of more details?

**An Hon. Member:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — I do? Then I'll be happy to continue. Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's move on to 2009, the year just past. Anglin Lake, a water system upgrade, very important, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Buffalo Pound, Trails End campground development, 76 new campsites, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Candle Lake, a service centre replacement at the Sandy Bay campground. Duck Mountain Provincial Park, sewage pump replacement, also very critical, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Douglas Park, beach shoreline cleanup. Emma Lake, a new entry kiosk. Greenwater Lake, vehicle bridge replacement. Meadow Lake, electrical expansion at Sandy Beach, Murray Doell, Greig Lake, Waterhen campgrounds and 145 new campsites, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Also we're not through yet: campground electrical upgrade, Kimball Lake, 53 campsites and Greig Lake, 37 campsites. Again all of these improvements at Meadow Lake.

Moose Mountain, Fishcreek north service centre replacement and also Fishcreek south service centre replacement. At Narrow Hills, Lower Fishing Lake outlet control structure replacement. Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, Mr. Deputy Speaker, campground renewal and electrical expansion, Sagebrush and Bearpaws campground, 74 new campsites.

This is why we're actually ahead of schedule with campsite development, Mr. Speaker: all of these developments in all of these provincial parks are going ahead.

And finally at various locations, the National Trails Coalition trail development and upgrades, heavy equipment upgrades, new equipment and repairs, and as well playground structures in a number of different locations around the province. And that's 2009.

I'll ask the member from Biggar: do I have time to review the 2008 details?

**An Hon. Member:** — No.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — I don't? Probably not? Why don't we just . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I would ask the member to direct all his remarks through the Chair.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — You make a compelling case, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Absolutely.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, improvements to our parks are happening all over this great province.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss, I would indeed be remiss, in remiss if I didn't mention this government's commitment to our sister parks organization, the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have so far delivered over \$2.1 million to this valuable organization in the first three years of our current mandate, well on our way to meeting to the \$2.4 million commitment that we mentioned. And there's more to come.

Once again I remind the province of the previous NDP's three-year spending on regional parks — a paltry \$425,000, Mr. Speaker. Shameful really when you consider all the good work that these fine people do on our behalf. Again, Mr. Speaker, that's the old road. We've abandoned the road. We're pursuing a new road for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, last week one of the NDP members of this Assembly mentioned a fact as he understood it that operations funding for Wascana Centre Authority, right here in the capital city of Regina, while held at zero increase this year was perhaps, with inflation in consideration, some kind of a decrease to core funding.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish NDP members would do their homework before they offer opinions. I wish they would come prepared. I wish they would come to this Assembly ready to do a day's work for a day's pay. That would be a welcome change, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately it isn't the case.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the numbers tell a vastly different story. I'm happy to have this opportunity to clarify the facts. The NDP funding for Wascana Centre — and I remind members this information is budget information, freely available for anyone in the province to see at their convenience — that amount was \$2.7 million in fiscal year 2003-2004 and was held at zero, no increase at all, for three years. And then on the eve of the provincial election, was increased at last to \$2.8 million, on the eve of the provincial election, Mr. Speaker.

[21:30]

Now using Bank of Canada inflation statistics, we find that the NDP fell short of even covering inflation costs, Mr. Speaker. Not good enough. That's the old way. Not good enough for the new way, Mr. Speaker.

In contrast this government's very first grant to Wascana Centre in the 2008 budget was \$2.835 million; an increase, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the subsequent increases to \$2.948 million in both 2009 and 2010 have exceeded the rate of inflation. That's the new road for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.



Let me also remind the members opposite that additional investment of \$1.2 million in recreational infrastructure was made. Now that includes the brand new, beautiful Broad Street pedestrian bridge; upgrades to the playing surface at Leibel Field to support the activities of the soccer and football teams, minor sports; improvements at Candy Cane Park; and also a brand new accessible playground structure for the children at Wascana Rehab Centre. All of these things were done, Mr. Speaker.

In addition \$4.7 million in engineering infrastructure. And that's road repairs; sidewalk, curb, and gutter repairs; light standards; mechanical work — all manner of engineering infrastructure, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As well, increases to the legislative precinct, enhancements from the Capital Commission budget totalling \$1.2 million. Now altogether, over three years, that represents over \$7 million invested by this government within Wascana Centre for infrastructure.

Now as stated in the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new road for Saskatchewan will lead through new provincial parks. As this government has committed, we will be planning for growth and planning for an increased quality of life for residents and for those that visit this great province as tourists. My ministry accordingly will begin the process of identifying potential park areas and starting a public consultation process that will include local communities, municipalities, First Nation and Métis residents, and other interested groups.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this past February, we felt as a nation and as a province a new level of pride in our athletes as we watched and cheered during the 2010 Vancouver and Whistler Olympic and Paralympic games respectively. In this Throne Speech, announced only a couple of days ago, the new Saskatchewan Party government, choosing a new road along with our partners at Sask Sport, announced the first-ever high performance athlete's funding program for Saskatchewan. A great advance. This program will invest \$350,000 annually to support the new Saskatchewan program for athletic excellence. This new program will provide carded athletes up to \$6,000 per year as well as developmental carded athletes up to \$3,600 per year.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this support program provides a natural continuum of support as athletes move from the local and provincial systems to national and international levels of competition. The program for athletic excellence is amongst the best of its type in Canada. This athlete funding will work hand in hand with the Sport Canada athlete assistance program, with the ongoing support and encouragement of our good friends at Sask Sport. Mr. Deputy Speaker, with this new program, we will guarantee that we feel the pride once again for our sons and daughters in Saskatchewan as they take their place on medal podiums for years to come.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's also recall that new money is also being made available to increase opportunities in sports for athletes with disabilities and also at youth risk as well — other important areas where we thought significant improvement was needed and very appropriate.

Further, this government's new five-year lottery agreement, signed by my colleague the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy in his tenure at TPCS, has allowed Sask Sport to enter into

long-term funding programs that meet the needs of more sport participants in our province than ever before while providing their associations with stable, predictable funding. And that assists planning activities.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to culture and heritage, we are also tremendously proud of the accomplishments of our artists and our cultural and heritage communities. They are definitely travelling on a new road to greater opportunity and prominence than ever before.

Just this spring, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this new government introduced a comprehensive policy. It's called the pride of Saskatchewan: a policy where culture, community and commerce meet. Its creation was the culmination of very extensive consultation with dozens and dozens of cultural and heritage groups over the course of 14 community dialogues held last year. The policy emphasizes the development of co-operative and productive relationships among the number of arts, culture, and heritage organizations that exist in our province in order for them to achieve a greater number of common goals.

One of the goals of the new policy is to increase the economic potential of the cultural sector. This is very important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of ensuring that our artists and our cultural workers are able to earn a living in their home province pursuing the business that they love and do best, which is capturing the beauty and the essence of our home province and expressing it to the rest of the country and to the world at large.

One of the actions of our new government is to improve the commercial status of our artists through the proclamation of *The Arts Professions Act*, which came into effect this last June, Mr. Speaker, a welcome development indeed. No question about it. This new Act serves to better promote commercial practices through requiring written contracts between engagers and artists. The outcome will be improved protection of intellectual property and greater economic benefits for all of the artists of our great province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another excellent program introduced by this government is the active families benefit, which was made effective in January of last year. This incentive program offers a tax benefit to families who enrol their children in all kinds of cultural, recreational, and sports activities. Parents can receive an annual refundable tax benefit of up to \$150 per child when they enrol their youngsters in art classes, drama classes, dance lessons, piano lessons, language lessons. All kinds of cultural learning opportunities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are included.

Now just this past spring we also initiated the community vitality program through the Community Initiatives Fund. Now this important new program which can be accessed by arts and cultural organizations will have \$9 million allocated to it over three years for their use.

In April 2011 our artists will once again be showcased nationwide through a national arts festival called the Prairie Scene. It's going to be fantastic. The festival will take place at the National Arts Centre as well as numerous other venues throughout Ottawa, and will feature artists from all across Saskatchewan in a wide variety of genres. And also Manitoba

will be included as well. In fact, Mr. Speaker, on November the 18th there will be an announcement regarding this important event, outlining the details and revealing some of the selected performers. It's going to be an exciting day. I can hardly wait.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to point out that the Sask Party government has in its first three years increased the funding to arts and culture — and this is very important, Mr. Speaker — to just over \$61 million. Now that's an \$11.3 million increase over the funding allocated to arts and culture by the NDP, Mr. Speaker, in its last three years — an \$11.3 million increase. Again a very stark contrast indeed between the new road that we are following today and the old road that we were obliged to follow before.

Now as for funding to our heritage sector, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our record is similarly strong. We have increased funding to that sector by almost \$6 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Once again that's Saskatchewan's new road. We believe in Saskatchewan.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wholeheartedly endorse the message in the Speech from the Throne. Saskatchewan is most certainly on a new road to a strong future for our province. We will continue to forge a path to great new places the province hasn't been to before, places the NDP government couldn't even imagine going in the first place.

I'm very proud to be travelling on this government's new road, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud to support the motion to adopt the Speech from the Throne.

Now, Mr. Speaker, at this point, at this point I will sit down.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to address the speech, the reply on the Speech from the Throne. This is the fourth Speech from the Throne for this government, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, November the 7th, was the third anniversary of the election of the Saskatchewan Party. And in the period leading up to that election, it was like the people of Saskatchewan were holding their breath. And once the election was held and the ballots were counted and the Saskatchewan Party had won, the people of this province said, yes, we can go now. And that's certainly been the case across the province.

I was at home for a funeral last weekend, Mr. Speaker, and my cousins hadn't been down to the Cannington constituency for a while. One of them's from Kuala Lumpur. And so driving down he says to me afterwards, boy, your roads are sure busy. Under the NDP, when he lived here previously, there was no traffic on the roads. They never fixed them; that's part of the reason why. But now there was so much business going on in our area that the traffic on the roads are constant — constant, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

For myself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just celebrated my 19th year in this Assembly. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm just starting. I'm still very young, and I've got a long ways to go, Mr. Speaker. So I

would like to thank my wife for her support over the years. And, Mr. Speaker, she's prepared to help me and assist me to go perhaps even for another 19 years.

Mr. Speaker, other members have been talking about their constituency assistants. I have the same constituency assistant that came to work with me 19 years ago, Mr. Speaker. And I know some people might say that's because nobody else wants to work for me but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Jeannie is an excellent constituency assistant, Mr. Speaker. And I also have another lady that works for me. She's been there now for a number of years — Bonnie — and does a very good job as well. And they have different skills, Mr. Speaker, and it works out to be complementary. They don't have the same skills, but they work together quite well.

Mr. Speaker, there is a number of issues that I want to discuss this evening. One of the issues that I want to talk about is the weather, Mr. Speaker. We have had an excellent fall. Because of the nice warm weather, the farmers have managed to get all their crops in. Mr. Speaker, because of the nice warm weather, the hunting season has been very good. I was out on Saturday hunting, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the things that you'll notice with the weather, over the summer we had lots of rain. Down at Alameda dam, Mr. Speaker, I had a few fishermen complaining to me that they weren't catching fish in the normal spots they were at. The problem was the dam was full and the water levels were up, and so the depths had changed.

Now the Leader of the Official Opposition said he was going to walk across that dam, Mr. Speaker, because there would never be any water in it. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of my past colleagues gave the Leader of the Opposition a Little Mermaid fins and snorkel because we didn't believe he was going to be able to walk across it and that he would need a little assistance. Well, Mr. Speaker, after looking at the polls this past weekend, he needs more than assistance at crossing the Alameda dam, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have many things that I want to say about this Speech from the Throne and about the Cannington constituency, but I think that needs to wait for tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move that we now adjourn debate.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Mr. Speaker, I move we now adjourn the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved to adjourn the House. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 21:44.]



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