



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

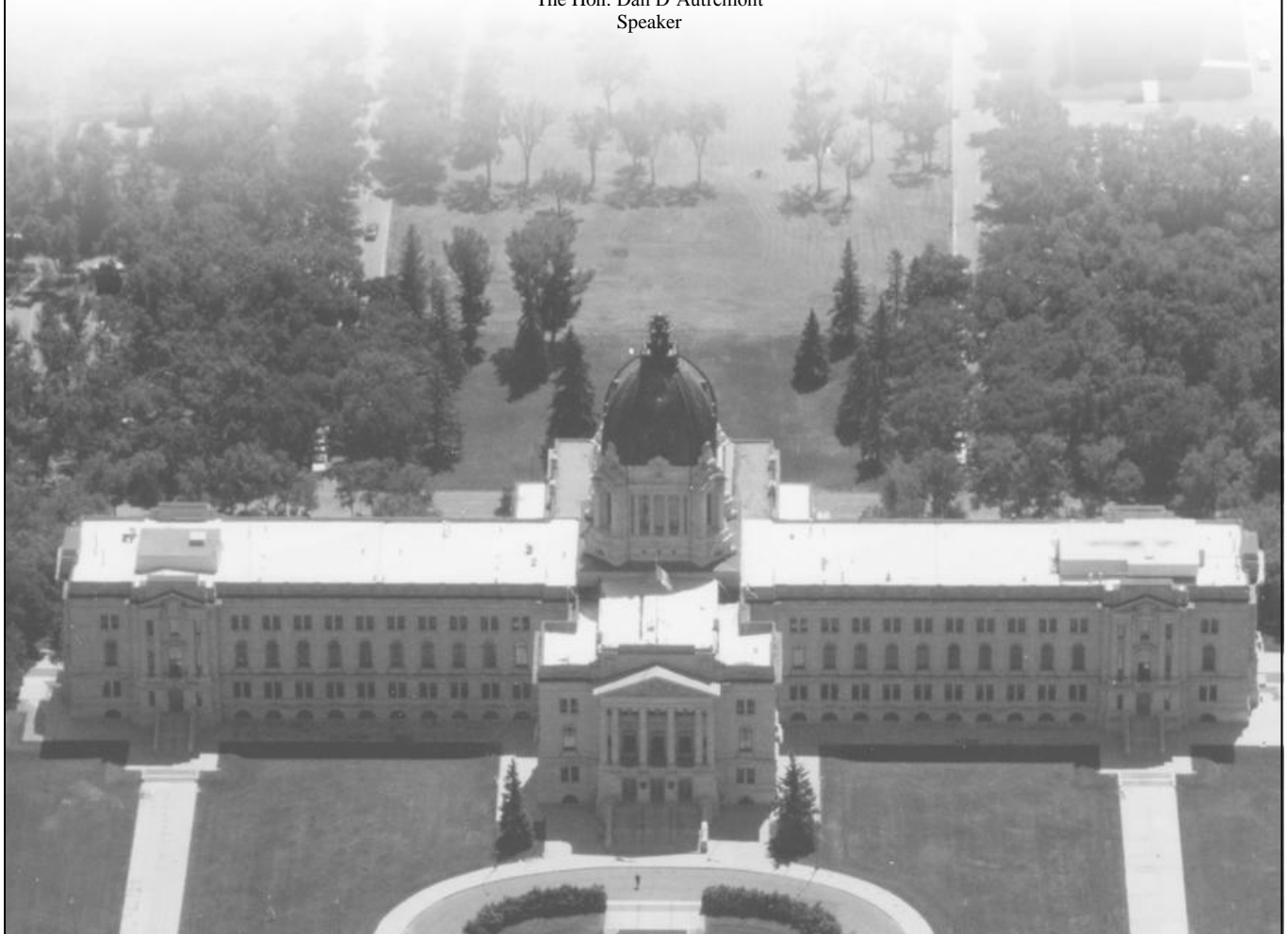
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — John Nilson

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Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
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Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
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Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
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Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
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Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
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Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
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Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
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McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
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Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
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Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Speaker: — It now being 7 p.m., debate will resume. I recognize the member for Regina Dewdney.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure to enter into the debate on the Throne Speech on behalf of the people of Regina Dewdney. There's a few thank yous I'd like to do just before I get into the substantive part of my comments, Mr. Speaker. Us in the back benches don't get a chance to speak often.

And I'd like to of course thank my family. My wife, Tami, she's stood by me through a lot of ups and downs and through a steep learning curve here as a new MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. And we're certainly getting used to it. And obviously the people of Regina Dewdney for putting their trust in me and to represent them here in this beautiful building. And again, as I mentioned, this past year has been a real good learning experience for myself, and I'm working hard to try and continue to earn that trust.

A new CA [constituency assistant] in our office, Mr. Speaker, and Brittany came to work with us this summer. She's done a great job on behalf of the people in our constituency. And I'm very thankful to be named Government Deputy Whip. Now I understand — I'm learning this role as well — I know there is quorum you have to worry about, and that's 14 people have to be in the House, I'm told. Some in the building were concerned that I did get this role. I might not be the best qualified; in the past, I've had a tough time counting up to 13. So we'll see how it goes.

Just briefly, Mr. Speaker, what's happening in Regina Dewdney. Of course the Victoria East corridor, there's lots of businesses — they're thriving businesses. You can tell by the traffic on that street and No. 1 Highway. There's lots of traffic there. There is businesses coming up all the time. It surprises me every time you drive through there. Lots of shopping, lots of restaurants, new restaurants.

You notice, when you walk around and you go door to door, there's a lot of people that put a lot of money into their houses there. They're doing a lot of home renovations. They're doing infills in some of the older areas, and I think that speaks to the economy we have in Saskatchewan. People are confident. They want to put money right here in Regina and Saskatchewan. That certainly does help our economy.

We have a new care home going in on Heseltine crescent there. There's a high school in my constituency I'd like to talk a little bit about. The high school is called Cochrane High School. It's actually transitioned now though, Mr. Speaker, to Campus Regina Public. And what's happening there, previously Cochrane had been a school for kids that socially and academically were struggling a little bit, so they were sent to that school. It's transitioning now to a skills and trades centre, and it's a pretty exciting pilot program they got there. This year is the first year. The grade 9s aren't there anymore. The year after that, grade 10s won't go there, regular grade 10s, and so on.

What they're transitioning to, Mr. Speaker, is they're going to have, in the afternoons to start, kids go to their regular school in the mornings; in the afternoons they go to this new campus and they learn trades basically. They learn aesthetics. They learn plumbing. They learn computers. They learn how to make apps. And they're partnering with businesses in the community. Welding shops want to help out and SaskTel is bringing people in, expertise to help with some of the classes, Mr. Speaker. So those are certainly innovative approaches that they're taking at Cochrane. The kids, it gives them a chance to get apprentice hours while they go to high school in the mornings, like I mentioned before, and in the afternoons they get to go over to the new campus. And it gives a chance for kids to get hooked into the trades.

Of course, as we know, in Saskatchewan there is a dearth of plumbers, electricians, carpenters, etc., and we could use certainly more of those. Let's get them early; let's hook them into that. There's a health sciences part as well. So it gives a chance for kids, when they're 17 or 18 years old, to see if they in fact do like that, if they do want to become a nurse, they want to become a doctor, they want to become a carpenter, etc.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that's a real good innovative program. The school board's put some significant dollars behind it, and we think that's an interesting program. And we'll certainly be watching that closely to see how it goes.

But I think that points to what growth is able to afford, Mr. Speaker. This government's put 125 million into capital projects just in Regina alone since 2007. That's a significant amount of money — 6.5 increase in operations just this past year, Mr. Speaker. So that's what growth does, okay? It makes it certainly very much easier to pay for these upgrades at Cochrane and to have students achieve more success.

Now I'd like to talk certainly a little bit more about what growth can afford and what it means for us in our great province, Mr. Speaker. And of course I'm an educator, so I thought I'd look at that specific part. My colleagues have done a great job in talking about different parts of the economy and what this growth plan aims to achieve.

One of the things, Mr. Speaker, in here is the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship. And that helps all high school kids in Saskatchewan. They get \$2,000 to attend a university — U of S [University of Saskatchewan], U of R [University of Regina], SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] — any post-secondary institution. And this past

year 4,000 kids received that. That's a significant investment in our kids and in our future. And we think that's a good thing. It piggybacks on the graduate retention program, and that's been part of our government's . . . what we've done . . . sorry, \$20,000. If you want to stay here in Saskatchewan after you've gotten your post-secondary degree, contribute to our economy, you'll earn back \$20,000 in taxes.

And something else that's very important for affordability for families and kids going to post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker, is the savings grant. It tops up the RESP [registered education savings plan] program by the feds by \$250 every year per kid. And I know in my family I want to start early because I know those expenses can add up later on. And with my kids at the ages they are, if we start now, and I'm sure we plan to, \$250 doesn't sound like a whole lot when you compare the whole cost of a post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker. But if we just start this year, \$7,500 will come to my family, and that's before, hopefully, any gains that will be when it's invested. So that's a significant amount and certainly it will help families out there here in Saskatchewan.

The provincial assessment that's being brought in, Mr. Speaker, you know, I think that's a good program. It assesses where we are, where we need to improve, where we are doing well and we might not have to spend as many resources or time on, Mr. Speaker. I think each school board used to do this, and there was great examples out there and they had their own thing. And that worked fine for them, but I think they wanted some direction from the ministry so there was sort of standards throughout the province. And so this is a good program.

And we've set a very aggressive goal, I think, Mr. Speaker, of having the highest graduation rates in the country by 2020. Now that's certainly a tall order, and we're not afraid of going after those targets, Mr. Speaker. And we know when a community or a province, when we have more people graduate, that means better incomes, healthier people. Maybe, you know, generally a better life on the whole. I think when you have people that are able to graduate, more and more people, that leads to a better economy. Getting post-secondary education certainly helps with that as well.

And these are aggressive targets, and I'm proud of this government. We haven't shied away from aggressive targets in the past, and in this document there are significant targets that we plan to meet. And when I think about some of the other ones we've done, Mr. Speaker, I think about nurses. We wanted to have 800 nurses, and we've surpassed that, Mr. Speaker. Surgical wait times, that was seen three or four years ago as a very aggressive target, when we had the lowest number of surgery, the highest waiting lists in the country, Mr. Speaker. And so that's a good thing and we're wanting to strive for those targets. And that's something; I'm really impressed by this government.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, they never did this. They didn't do that. And it was very telling, I think it was one of their ministers that famously said, that famously said they're not even going to bother with goals, and I believe in this case it was nurse recruitment or it might have been doctor recruitment as well, something in the health care field. We won't even meet that target. We're not even going to try,

Mr. Speaker.

Now if I was on a team and I had a coach that came into the locker room and said, you know, guys, it's going to be real tough to win this game. I don't know if we're going to try too hard, might be too tough. You know, that would be a pretty bad attitude, I would think. And you know, I give that member credit for stating that, for admitting that they really had no plan. They had no, no goals. They had no goals set and, you know, I think that's very telling as to the results they had while in government.

And you know, I know, Mr. Speaker, we've done, we've done fairly expansive consultations on this, as a lot of my colleagues have mentioned. We had MLAs going throughout the community in Regina here. I know we did door knocking and we met with stakeholders and met with a lot of . . . And that happened all across the province. And so this is, this isn't from . . . You know, this is definitely bottom-up, Mr. Speaker. So I caution the NDP [New Democratic Party] when they want to criticize. And sure, that's what they do. They're the opposition. They're there to criticize. But this is truly, I think, for the most part, a sort of a grassroots approach — what the people of Saskatchewan want to see from their province in the next several years. So I think that's good.

You know, I can see why . . . You know what, Mr. Speaker? I definitely want to have several of my colleagues have a chance to speak tonight, Mr. Speaker. I think I'll conclude my remarks there. Certainly there's a lot of meat in this document and a lot to look forward to for the people of the province of Saskatchewan, and certainly look forward to the growth that will happen in this province. And I'm very happy to be part of this government on behalf of the people of Regina Dewdney. And on behalf of my constituents, I certainly am going to support this Throne Speech when the vote comes later this week. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand in my place today to speak, to address a reply to the Speech from the Throne. I just want to thank a few people. You know, I was elected in 1999, and my children were fairly young back in those days, and so I thank my wife for looking after the children while I was away. And so it's been quite an experience, being in politics, and certainly it's been very rewarding. And again I just want to thank my wife and family. My children now are young adults, and my son is working for a construction company in Saskatoon. My youngest daughter is going back to university in Saskatoon as well and my eldest daughter is working in Regina and lives with me here. So it's nice to see that they have found jobs and making their careers and their life in Saskatchewan.

Obviously I'd like to thank the constituents who re-elected me again in the past election. I have a new constituency assistant. I'd like to thank Janet who's been with me for about 10 months, who's doing a great job. And also I'd like to thank my staff in my office, Megan and Selena and Theo.

Our Throne Speech is all about growth and the plans for

growth. And you know, I don't have to necessarily look at the whole province, I just look at Biggar constituency to see the type of growth that's taken place in my constituency and in and around my hometown of Biggar.

There's manufacturing companies have expanded and started up in the town of Biggar and in Landis and many other communities in and around the constituency. They're hiring skilled labour — there's really a shortage of skilled labour — looking for welders and those types of people with those types of skills. And we have a high influx of immigrants into the constituency, in particular Biggar and Landis, where many people from the Philippines have come to work in those manufacturing firms. And their spouses are working in restaurants and also in various other businesses, grocery stores, and in and around the communities, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the businesses that are expanding have, you know, really improved the business climate in Biggar and the Biggar constituency. Our whole plan for growth obviously is about growth, and that's going to continue under the leadership of our government and our Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I was very honoured when the Premier asked me to serve as Minister of Rural and Remote Health earlier this year. And I'd like to speak a bit about my role as Minister of Rural and Remote Health and the items in the Throne Speech that address some of the challenges we have in health care, especially in rural Saskatchewan.

I've lived in rural Saskatchewan all my life. I know the unique issues that patients in rural areas face when it comes to receiving timely access to health care, Mr. Speaker. I spent the entire summer, about four months, touring around the province. I visited 40 communities in rural and northern Saskatchewan, met with dozens of doctors in rural Saskatchewan to hear first-hand some of their challenges. I also met with other staff, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, lab and X-ray techs, mental health and addiction workers. I saw some exciting innovations that are taking place in rural Saskatchewan.

[19:15]

I visited the primary health care clinic in Meadow Lake, saw them using a team-based approach to provide medical care. I was in La Ronge to see how Northlands College has launched the first remote technology robot to be used for nursing education in Canada. I was able to work with the robot, and it was very innovative and unique type of technology that is being used. I also toured the new hospital in Humboldt, and got to see progress that's being made on the hospital in Shellbrook as well.

Everywhere I went, Mr. Speaker, I met health care providers who showed great dedication in providing quality care to patients. Everywhere I went I saw community leaders and local fundraising committees who are proactive and taking the leadership to find solutions to their own unique health care challenges.

I would like to just take a minute to thank everyone at the Ministry of Health and from across the health regions who helped to organize and facilitate the tour. Forty tour stops was a big undertaking, and a lot of people contributed to making our

visits a success. I would also like to thank everyone who attended the meetings, and the health care staff, the physicians, and especially community leaders and fundraising groups. We had some great discussions and I'm so glad that I got to hear some — first-hand — some of the unique challenges communities in rural and remote parts of the province are facing. Our government is also committed to working with those communities and our health regions to address those challenges. And the Speech from the Throne highlighted some of the things that this government is doing to alleviate some of those challenges.

As an example, some of the . . . one very innovative work that is being done is the collaborative emergency centres. And we know that rural physicians can get burned out. When they have to be on call around the clock, it makes it very rough to recruit and retain physicians in smaller centres. And this is why we're looking at Nova Scotia's collaborative emergency centres as a way to alleviate some of the challenges of providing 24-7 emergency services in rural and remote communities. These collaborative emergency centres are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are staffed by a primary health care team during the day, and a team that includes a nurse and a paramedic with physician oversight by telephone or Telehealth during the night.

I had the opportunity to visit two collaborative emergency sites in Nova Scotia. I would like just to thank the Minister of Health, David Wilson, from Nova Scotia, and the health care workers and their administrators for their hospitality, their generosity, and their eagerness to share their experiences with this program.

Just last month we had the honour of hosting some of the health officials from Nova Scotia who came to a knowledge exchange day here in Regina. We had over 200 people from the health region, from RMs and towns, from professional associations and unions all attended to learn about the potential CECs [collaborative emergency centres] have with Saskatchewan, and we hope to see an innovation site earlier in the year, Mr. Speaker.

Many of the other innovative things that we're looking at is forming a new locum pool, building on the locum pool that is . . . that the Saskatchewan Medical Association is working, having a rural locum pool, and also continuing the great work that's being done that was set up under the former minister of Health, and one of the very innovative programs is the Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment or SIPPA. The SIPPA program is a made-in-Saskatchewan solution to assess foreign-trained doctors, especially family physicians, which is exactly what we need more of in rural Saskatchewan.

Previously Saskatchewan only accepted foreign-trained doctors from six countries and now we're recruiting doctors from all around the world. Last year when SIPPA was launched, 37 foreign-trained family doctors have successfully completed the assessment, and over 90 per cent of those physicians practise in rural or remote communities. In the coming year, the Ministry of Health and Saskdocs will be working closely with the College of Physicians and Surgeons to get a full complement of 30 doctors in each of the three annual intakes. Mr. Speaker,

that's going to be very good news for rural Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan as a whole to have that many number of new doctors be coming into Saskatchewan, and most of them will be working in rural Saskatchewan.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of being at the inaugural flight of STARS, which is the shock trauma air rescue service that has been running in Regina for some time. I went to the inaugural flight in Saskatoon, and it's a very innovative form of providing emergency service to Saskatchewan residents, almost exclusively in rural areas. And so this is another thing that we do through our health care, through the province with our corporate sponsors and fundraisers to help with emergency here in this province.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the 2012 Speech from the Throne highlights our government's plan for growth: why we seek growth, how we sustain growth, and how we will meet the challenges of growth. The Throne Speech sets both targets and outlines some of the tools that are needed to reach these targets. I'm very proud to support the Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh in on the debate here this evening and address the 2012 Speech from the Throne. Just before getting into it, as many other members have taken the opportunity, I'd like to recognize my family and my wife, Stephanie, who is an incredibly hard-working schoolteacher in Regina but also someone who is totally involved in our life in the community, in our political life, and certainly extends her care and support throughout the community and throughout our province, and someone that I'm so lucky to have on this journey and involved in the political life as well, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank Gloria Patrick as well, our constituency community office assistant who serves our constituency with such sincerity, integrity, incredibly hard-working, is focused on finding solutions, putting forward the proper advocacy on behalf of our constituents, and really does do important work for the people of our constituency. It's my pleasure to work with Gloria and to see in many ways how she goes over and above and beyond on so many different fronts, and to sit down with her and to go through the files on a daily basis or a weekly basis of the matters that are coming in through the office and her care to ensure that we're finding the sorts of outcomes and solutions that need to be there.

Also in many of those conversations and then many of the follow-up discussions with constituents, we're often collectively frustrated by some of the hard and real circumstances that so many are facing that simply aren't solutions that are going to be able to be brought forward in a timely fashion — changes that require some structural change and changes that require a change of priorities on behalf of a government. But I certainly would like to thank Gloria for her attention and her care both to constituents across our community and also her work directly with myself.

My constituency is one of hard-working individuals and

families, a diverse constituency that consists of young families and pockets of seniors in various different senior living facilities, Mr. Speaker, but incredibly hard-working people who I think embody and represent Saskatchewan people in a very strong way — that dedication to hard work, that spirit of co-operation, that sense of compassion that they have. And certainly it's reflected throughout the community. And maybe just as a mention it's, you know, our community associations take such a key role in guiding the activities of a community and focusing on common interests. And I'd like to extend my sincere appreciation to all of our community associations — whether it's Prairie View or Normanview West or Dieppe or McNab or Mount Royal and Rosemont, Mr. Speaker — and the key people that come together at those tables and in many ways are conduits back to the community and have a real strong sense of community needs and a strong sense of how we must work together to address some of the challenges that we face.

I would like to highlight maybe specifically the work of McNab's Community Association who have taken on ambitious renewal within their community, and the renewal of the park which includes a significant tree planting program, a new walkway, new planters, and have had the whole community involved in this process. And it's been wonderful both to watch the engagement of the community and many members that hadn't come out and been engaged in these sorts of activities, but also the community pride that is put forward by such activities. And they just do such a fine job of coming together as an association and as a community and celebrating some of that success as well, and I was sure pleased to join them just a couple of weeks ago at their volunteer service awards. A very special group of people working to better their community.

We have, of course, vibrant schools throughout the community, many of them growing. Certainly there was disappointment with the closure of Dieppe School in this last year for the community of Dieppe, a community going through some demographic changes and with some opportunities for renewal with the Global Transportation Hub just on its doorstep, and with quality infrastructure that existed there at Dieppe School.

And I've stated repeatedly in this Assembly my frustration with the provincial government, the current provincial government in its constraint that they've placed on school boards, in many ways hamstringing school boards and forcing school boards to make some very difficult and tough decisions with limited resources at a time when we should be supporting and investing in education. And certainly I think Dieppe may be a hard reality or a hard example of that constraint. And disappointing, as I say, infrastructure that's in good shape and that should have continued to serve our community into the future.

When I'm looking at some of the other schools, we do see growth at Martin Collegiate; in fact we see growth in population this year and we see an incredibly diverse student body, new Canadians and newcomers to Saskatchewan that have chosen to build and better their lives here in Saskatchewan, a strong First Nations and Métis population, strong population from all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and a real special spirit within the halls of that school and some exceptional parents and community members that come together and work together to see great student success out of

Martin Collegiate, along with the exceptional educators that enrich the program there on a daily basis. And I would like to highlight Martin Collegiate as a very special institution, Mr. Speaker.

When I think of my constituency and I think of the stories and I think of whether it's the outreach in the community or the door knocking or those that are contacting me with challenges and concerns, it's in part utilizing that that I reflect on the Throne Speech. And I look at the demands and pressures and challenges for so many of those families, whether it's access to adequate quality child care, whether it's in access to housing and the pressures for so many, Mr. Speaker, the challenges of planning towards post-secondary education or trades or apprenticeship programs, or just a whole host of pressures that families are facing as they're organizing, or individuals and seniors sometimes alone, Mr. Speaker, are facing, looking at making that step towards a dignified quality circumstance for living for many of our seniors across this province.

And these sorts of examples that I review and draw upon when I'm analyzing how this Throne Speech meets the needs, the challenges, the opportunities of my constituents, Mr. Speaker, and when I look at that and I do a scan across the piece, Mr. Speaker, I'm challenged to find much that truly addresses those challenges and those opportunities — a Throne Speech in many ways that's scant in addressing those challenges and in fact pursues agendas and priorities that are inconsistent with many in my constituency.

You know, I think in many ways, and we believe on this side of the Assembly, that the foundation of a strong economy is education and a strong middle class, Mr. Speaker. And I know when I look at this Throne Speech put before us, there is very little to advance the position of the middle class. And in fact what we see is, in many ways, a government that's actively working against building a stronger middle class, Mr. Speaker, working against the interests of working families and working against the economic interests of many in this province, including main street activity and local economies themselves, Mr. Speaker, across the province.

[19:30]

You know, I've also had the special opportunity, a special journey to be out all across the province listening and connecting and building relationships, Mr. Speaker. And so I not only look at this through the lens of just my constituency and through my perspectives and files as a critic, but also in the stories I've heard, the circumstances that I've witnessed all across this province. And it's in analyzing both my own constituency and the challenges facing many, the opportunities present in the lives of so many and also in looking across our province, Mr. Speaker, that I can say that I'm disappointed with the Throne Speech.

Now we have certain aspects in this Throne Speech that we can speak about, some of the changes that have been put forward, some of the commitments that have been made for which we can discuss. And there is some critique to be had on some of them. We can also talk a bit about what's not in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and I intend to do just that here tonight. But we also, I think, some of the uncertainty that we feel on this

side of the Assembly, but what we're hearing from more so the uncertainty of Saskatchewan people, is very much the surprises that Saskatchewan people have been offered up by this government in their second term.

Many are feeling in fact, Mr. Speaker, that it's a changed approach by this government, one that's sort of lost its connect to the realities of many families in this province, lost its connect to the realities of our economy, Mr. Speaker, on many fronts. And we see that, I think, in this Throne Speech once again. But it's not, as I say, not just what's in this Throne Speech and not just what's not in this Throne Speech, but also that sense of uncertainty and surprise that many are awaiting from a government that they've learned has been less than predictable and less than keeping its word on many fronts, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at the Throne Speech, we've recognized that there's a rehash of many ideas, not a lot of new and innovative approaches to address challenges and opportunities ahead of us. We see re-announcements, Mr. Speaker, in infrastructure, and infrastructure quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that we have to do a better job of providing and keeping up with.

These are some of the demands and pressures of growth. And we need to challenge what seems to be an appropriate governing philosophy for this current government, which is growth for the sake of growth alone, Mr. Speaker. And we need to push that and challenge this government to make sure that as we develop, as we progress, as we grow, that we're in fact making those improvements in the lives of Saskatchewan people and communities. And certainly this Throne Speech doesn't step up to the plate to address that in a meaningful way.

We, in fact in many ways, see limited action or little action, little plans, and not enough straight talk coming from a government that many expected better of, Mr. Speaker. We see far too often this circumstance where ideology is trumping common sense. And if there's one value or set of values that certainly extend across this province and in communities — whether it's a First Nations community or a rural community or northern community or urban communities, Mr. Speaker — is that appreciation in this province for a common sense approach, one that reflects our co-operative spirit, our willingness to work together, and takes forward that community-minded approach, that sense of compassion that are binding values across this province. And certainly this government, by way of their actions, by way of this Throne Speech, have displayed themselves to be inconsistent with those values that I speak of.

I've heard from many people that, you know, it's been about a year now that this new government's second term has been in place. And I've heard from many that they've, as stated to me, that this isn't exactly what they voted for: some of the changed approaches, whether it's killing the film industry and the investment that was flowing in this province as a result, driving away that investment and workers from this province; or the hikes for many seniors by way of the prescription drugs that we saw in the spring; or the very misplaced priorities that this government's had by way of sort of playing games with our electoral system and our constituency boundaries and forcing ahead, adding three more MLAs when it's only in their own political best interests, Mr. Speaker, and certainly not reflective of the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

So as I say, when I look at this Throne Speech that will also direct the budget as we move forward, I see words and commitments that don't address the real challenges and opportunities that I'm hearing all across this province.

When I, you know, when I spoke before, I think that we need to do all we can to be supporting thriving main streets in Saskatchewan, thriving local economies, thriving small business, Mr. Speaker. And we need to be working with small business to ensure that's happening. And we certainly don't see . . . We see scant mention of working with small business to ensure the conditions are in place to see that success, Mr. Speaker, and we need to do a better job on that.

And I guess hand in hand with that is what we see in many ways as the organized and coordinated and deliberate effort to in many ways attack the middle class here in this province and certainly not support the best interests of working families. And we know that this has a direct impact on that local economy and those small businesses that we speak of, Mr. Speaker. And I know that Saskatchewan people, whether they're on the main street of Indian Head or whether they're working within my constituency, expect better of their government. And that's our role, to put forward some of the critique.

I'd say that the Throne Speech itself fails to respond to the challenges and opportunities of today's families, the real challenges that they're facing. It misses the mark in understanding some of these realities. And in many ways, as I say, it works against building strong families, communities, and economies. And this is where I feel strongly that it's important to place a critique on many fronts.

It fails to make steps and ensure that we, you know, really that we can fully capture the generational opportunity that we've been presented by way of our resource economy and our place in the world. And we see too often, sort of, some of those opportunities slipping through our fingers, to ensure that what we take from today is the opportunity to build healthier, stronger, better communities for tomorrow.

And this is something that is desired across this province, whether in the Southeast in Estevan, whether on the west side up in North Battleford, whether in the North through La Ronge and beyond, or in any of the rural communities and urban centres throughout this province. And this is something we need to work towards: how do we fully capture the generational opportunity that we have been presented here in Saskatchewan and not let that opportunity slip through our fingers and fritter away some of those opportunities? What seems disappointing is that we see deliberate actions of this government that seems willing to intervene to make sure that Saskatchewan families don't capture that opportunity or aren't able to share in some of that prosperity. And I speak specifically to some of the overhaul and aggressive changes to labour legislation that's both occurred and that we're anticipating. And I'll speak a little bit more to that as I go into another aspect of my speech.

Many of the actions that we see have been both short-sighted and ideological. And this is where we stand up strongly on matters of the privatization that makes no sense at all — of ISC, for example — or the continued rabid pursuit of purchase power agreements and private power in SaskPower, or the

many other examples that are going to really put us in a difficult position down the road and will in fact limit our ability to control our own destiny, something that Saskatchewan people have been very proud of over the years, to work collectively to put some institutions, some mechanisms in place that will provide some certainty of that brighter future for which we all should aspire and work towards, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan people certainly deserve better than what we see in this document. Many were dismayed and disappointed, some in fact that have relayed to me a level of disgust that the Premier and the Sask Party found it fitting that, rather than coming forward in our democratic tradition to put forward a Throne Speech to the people of this Assembly and the people of this province, they chose to do it, Mr. Speaker, at a \$100-a-plate dinner with a business crowd in Saskatoon.

You know, it sort of speaks in many ways, Mr. Speaker, to what's going on in this province: sort of a select few that maybe have close proximity to current government, that are participating in some of that prosperity, but that the many, Mr. Speaker, have been actively denied the ability to share in some of that prosperity. And Saskatchewan people deserve better.

And I'm, you know, it's strange I'm being heckled by the member from Moose Jaw North, Mr. Speaker. I was in Moose Jaw just last night, and quite a gathering and some new members, Mr. Speaker, members that would come out and join into that discussion and that dialogue, Mr. Speaker. And I know they expected better than what's in the Throne Speech, and I'll get to some of the specifics that they found specific challenge with. But when they're looking at significant economic loss in their own city, Mr. Speaker, what I think they're hoping for is for a member to do more than to shout across the floor in debate. What they'd like that member to do is to in fact take their feet and engage in discussion and put forward the priorities of Moose Jaw in a meaningful way, Mr. Speaker. And quite frankly they should expect nothing less; that's the least a member could do. But we'll leave that for the member opposite to consider.

You know, Saskatchewan people quite simply deserve straight talk. They deserve common sense solutions and a common sense approach of government, one that reflects, as I said, those co-operative values of Saskatchewan people that desire to make those improvements in a community-oriented way, and to reflect the compassion that we all have, Mr. Speaker. And they deserve a government that's willing to work together with Saskatchewan people to build a better, fairer, more prosperous Saskatchewan for all. And on too many fronts, Mr. Speaker, we don't see that occurring with this government, a government that's very much disconnected itself from the communities that it had once earned the respect to represent and disconnected in many ways from the realities of communities and families across this province.

I'd like to highlight a couple of changes that we see in this Throne Speech that reflect some budgetary pressures. And you know, I look at this one aspect. I often watch, sort of, TV and I recall ads that are this no money down, no money down, no money down. And you know in that approach — those ads when you're watching those on TV — is it's appealing to individuals that are in tight financial circumstances. And

typically if you go back and look at the fine print, is that many of those individuals it's appealing to, it's putting them on the hook for a significantly larger cost through the long run, higher interest rates and long-term pain — sort of a short-sighted offering to many people.

Unfortunately I see that same sort of bargain basement sort of appeal coming now from our Premier and from the Sask Party with its approach to building infrastructure in this province. This privatization approach that they're putting forward, they call it P3s [public-private partnership], but it's simply masking, I believe, the fact that they're into budgetary pressures that they are unwilling to share with Saskatchewan people and unwilling to take the measures required to shore up our finances and make sure that we're in a position to make those investments back into people, back into families, and back into communities.

And when I see that approach of the P3s — the privatization, the no-money-down approach — it's, you know, sort of this concept that they think they can build \$100 million bridges with just \$10 million upfront or no money down. But we know of course that they're tying themselves and tying the hands of residents and the taxpayer, and for many years forward, to higher costs by choosing the approach that they're choosing, by choosing the approach that they're choosing. And what we need to do is we need to address the priorities of communities, and we need to make sure that we're addressing some of that infrastructure that's so key.

And I would highlight one piece of infrastructure that is such an artery both to a community but to a province, and that being the Prince Albert bridge and the second bridge that's there. What that community and what all of Saskatchewan will be well-served by is a government that's able to put forward a principled plan to make those improvements, to make sure that that safety and that connect for people and communities is in place, but also to make sure that economic artery is in place.

And what I criticize, Mr. Speaker, is this approach of government that's in fact tying our ability to do that effectively into the future — spending more than we need on private profits for those we're entering into contracts with, paying more for higher interest rates, borrowing costs of the private sector for whom we're entering into. And it very much reflects that bargain basement sort of pitch that we hear from, that no money down, that sort of trying to sell someone up front with no cost but the long-term pain is significantly higher.

So these are the short-sighted sort of approaches that have long-term costs and impacts, and what they do is they're going to tie the hands of the treasury from being able to do the meaningful work that it needs to down the road. So it's preventing us from being as effective as we can, a year and 10 years and 20 years down the road, tying ourselves into these long-term private agreements.

When I look as well, I guess it's . . . You know, I see this reflects to me some budgetary pressures. And, you know, going back to budget this year, we were pretty direct, Mr. Speaker. We had concerns with the revenue assumptions that were put forward by this government. It's unfortunately been a pattern of this government to be overly optimistic on its resource revenue assumptions, and we were clear and we were specific on what

we saw on potash and stated those concerns.

[19:45]

And sadly, Mr. Speaker, it seems to be bearing itself out and I know placing strain on our finances here in our province. At a time where we're supposed to be prospering and booming, we in fact have a government that can't get a handle on its finances, continues to put forward deficits to the people of Saskatchewan, and in fact, you know, in this plan here there's not even any meaningful debt repayment that we see in this plan.

And not only is it a concern because some of this was cautioned from day one, Mr. Speaker, at budget day, Mr. Speaker, and certainly in the subsequent days and weeks and months to come. So not only is it disappointing that the current government hadn't listened closer to what was going on within the economy but hadn't heeded some of that advice. But instead they pushed forward with an expensive spin and a boastful approach that stuck billboards all over the province, Mr. Speaker, stating a position, Mr. Speaker, that was likely precarious from day one and certainly not fact at this point in time, probably not fact at the time that those billboards were being placed up. And spending money on this boastful sort of spin, Mr. Speaker, is so inconsistent with the values of Saskatchewan people who would rather a government roll up its sleeves, do the hard work, be straight, be direct, and advance the priorities that are important to them.

And I guess it gets me to one of the other pieces that we've heard out of this Throne Speech that was delivered at the \$100-a-plate dinner up in Saskatoon, and this is this concept that we need to give away more dollars right now to the out-of-province corporations that are doing quite well in this province.

Now don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker. We need to have a principled relationship with those corporations that are investing in this province, that are creating employment. And we do. We need to make sure a competitive employment environment is in place, and we certainly have that. In fact we can hold up our economy on some of these fronts as having strength and certainly those large, many out-of-province corporations are doing quite well in Saskatchewan.

But I find it interesting that a Minister of Finance and a Premier, at a time where we know that they're already under financial pressures and now finding ways to creatively finance infrastructure that's going to cost us longer through the long-term, finds that is their number one priority to be reducing or to be giving more dollars back to those corporations, most of which will flow outside our jurisdiction.

Quite frankly, I guess this reflects a difference in priorities and it reflects a difference in who we are as opposed to the current government governing party. It's a, you know, a party that sort of serves the select few, Mr. Speaker, that seems to be disconnected with the realities of many families, many communities, and our economy, but also, Mr. Speaker, that sort of just pursues this agenda of growth for the sake of growth. And we believe in something different. We have a proud record and commitment to economic growth and development and

progress, but progress being the key word, Mr. Speaker, making sure we're making those meaningful investments and improvements in the lives of Saskatchewan people.

So that's something that we're going to be focusing in on. We believe right now that it's the wrong-headed approach to give hundreds, you know, hundreds of millions of dollars back to out-of-province corporations when we really need those dollars right now to be putting pavement on the ground, to be building our schools, to be investing in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker. And I'll stand with the families and communities of Saskatchewan any day of the week on this one, Mr. Speaker. That being said, we'll continue to have a respectful and principled relationship with the corporations of this province.

When we talk about prosperity in this province, we talk about a middle class. We talk about the importance of that middle class and we believe very much that this current economic activity or current resource prosperity should be extended back to communities, back to main street, back to families. And instead we see a government that's actively working against that happening. We see a government that's denying the ability and the levers for many families across this province to share in some of that prosperity with the dismantling and the unilateral overhaul of labour laws in this province, working against the best interests of workers' rights and of working families all through this province, and working against the best interests of our local economies, of our main street, of our small businesses, who depend on having a strong middle class, Mr. Speaker.

You know, this is a government that has rammed forward unconstitutional labour legislation in the past, Mr. Speaker, without any consultation, and we see a government continuing that shameful approach with the workers and economy of this province, Mr. Speaker. And certainly we expect better. And there's a huge surprise sort of looming for so many in this province as to what those labour law changes that are being intimidated by government opposite are going to be. What we know is that government opposite didn't sit down with Saskatchewan workers and have the conversation and have the dialogue that they're deserved on this front, the basic consultation that should have occurred.

Who I'd like to commend on this front is my good colleague, the member from Saskatoon Centre, our Labour critic, who led meetings for our caucus to lead that consultation all across this province, to hear from Saskatchewan people, to have that meaningful discussion that government failed to have. And quite simply, when you're making changes that impact the lives and people in this province, you owe them the respect to sit down and to be a part of that consultation.

You know, I went to all of those consultations but the one in La Ronge — I had a conflicting announcement at that point in time — but I went to all those other meetings up in North Battleford and in Humboldt, in Yorkton, all over the province, in Regina and Saskatoon. I found that if government would have come out and listened to what a family or a worker would've had to say in Yorkton or North Battleford, the common sense sort of ideas about how we strengthen our economy and protect the rights of workers, build a Saskatchewan for which prosperity is extended back to communities, families, and the middle class, Mr. Speaker, we would've been well-served by that sort of listening

and that sort of approach. But I commend our Labour critic for his work on this front, for the ideas that he's gathered for what's been put forward, certainly on the public record as well. But I certainly scold government for their divisive approach and an approach that's damaging for our economy and for families.

You know, I see this approach where . . . We see this in our Crown sector. The facts are just adding up. The evidence is clear where we see this persistent and deliberate dismantling of our Crowns, the constraining of our Crown corporations. And now in fact this old, old idea of privatization that's being pushed forward by the government opposite. And I don't know if members opposite . . . I think this maybe reflects sort of that lack of connector, that change that I see in government opposite or that I'm hearing from Saskatchewan people all across this province in the fact that they feel this government's changed in its second term and failing to understanding their priorities.

And I see that reflected in its approach with our Crown sector, whether it's the now very wrong-headed plan to sell ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] which in fact will impact families and homeowners and businesses and corporations all across this province who are purchasing land, purchasing homes, staking claims, making investments. To pass off a monopoly of the nature of ISC to the private sector doesn't make any sense at all, Mr. Speaker. In fact for a government that sometimes pretends that they're sort of interested in ensuring there's a competitive environment for business in this province, I question how this somehow serves ensuring that competitive environment. Right now we have the ability to make sure we've got a competitive environment for businesses and for families who are purchasing homes and businesses that are making land claims and purchases and registering corporations. And all of that's going to be put at risk with the approach of this government; also putting at risk that sensitive private information that, you know, is in our best interest to contain in a Crown entity.

I can go on with the attacks on the Crown sector, the raids of dividends that we've seen, the recent example we saw in SaskPower where they went directly and raided the dividends in the late hours of last year. And now we're calling for families and businesses across Saskatchewan to step up and to backfill that by way of increased rates at a time where so many in this province quite frankly are challenged by affordability, Mr. Speaker. It's simply the wrong approach.

We see through SaskTel the continued contracting out that's occurring, in many cases to out-of-province and out-of-country firms and in fact putting 8,000 rural customers all across this province in a very uncertain environment with looming rate hikes, Mr. Speaker, from a government that's failed to stand up for the best interests of the people of this province on this file.

And of course we've highlighted the fact that the Premier and this government was so willing to enter into a contract with the Chinese firm that's been a stated security risk through both our intelligence bureau, through CSIS [Canadian Security Intelligence Service], but also through countries from around the world, the United States and from Australia. And I believe the United Kingdom has also actively done some analysis on this front that has put forward significant threats to our security, the integrity of our systems. And it seems to me, why is . . .

how is it worth that risk that government's subjecting Saskatchewan people to, and our province? Because it's not just the privacy of the emails and data, of the private, sensitive information of Saskatchewan people all across this province that's been placed at risk, but also some of the competitive information and advantages that we have. The knowledge and understanding, the data that speaks to the competitive place that we have in the world, Mr. Speaker, by way of our resource activity, by way of our mineral wealth, by way of our oil and gas industries, Mr. Speaker, by way of our land, our agricultural land in this province. And what we should do is be proud of those assets and then act in a principled way, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we're able to capture the full benefit for Saskatchewan people. And certainly this was an unneeded risk that Saskatchewan people have been subjected to by a reckless move by this government.

I highlight the Sask First policy which has collared our Crowns from being able to divest risk outside of our jurisdiction and to bring back benefits to Saskatchewan people. And, you know, it's sort of the anything but a business-minded approach that we see on this front, and very much one that's limiting our future.

You know, I noticed with that \$100-a-plate speech and booklet that was put forward, Mr. Speaker, I noticed that there was mention of a heritage fund, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, I thought this is interesting, because this is a principle that I support and something I call for, Mr. Speaker, and something we support. A principle that we need to take non-renewable resource revenue of today and put it to work and put it to the benefit of future generations. Not spend all of it now, Mr. Speaker, make sure we're creating a legacy and ensuring that bright future that so many deserve.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, we did once have a Heritage Fund in this province that was in place back in the late 1970s, and of course that was sold in the early 1980s, Mr. Speaker, by another conservative government. I sometimes look back and think, boy, had we not had that government that went in and actively undid some of those institutions and structures that were there to make sure that we had the sort of economic strength for families and communities in the province that we should have, we'd be in such a better place.

But I notice that the Heritage Fund was going to be something that was maybe now supported by this Premier and government, but when I got through some of the fine print I notice that they said that, you know, this is something that may begin or wouldn't begin until debt's repaid. Well sadly, I know, I was looking through the books with some of the private sector accountants here recently and going through some of the analysis that they were assisting to engage in, and what they were noticing was that in fact we're not paying off debt at all, Mr. Speaker — but in fact it's escalating, Mr. Speaker. That we're, at a time of an apparent booming economy, we're actually adding debt to the province. So I question when this Heritage Fund may begin because certainly we're going in the wrong direction right now to ever get there.

But I also noticed that even if we buy the plan put forward by the Premier on this front in his booklet is that this fund would, based on what he's suggesting his debt repayment plan to be, is that we'd start funding this plan in 2060, Mr. Speaker, which I

think the Leader of the Opposition aptly mentioned that he would be 110 years old at that point, Mr. Speaker. I'd be a few years younger than that, Mr. Speaker, but regardless, 2060 is far too late to be putting dollars away for future generations, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker is engaging in discussion or debate and I didn't quite catch his message but . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, Mr. Speaker suggests that he'll still be here in year 2060 and he's, you know, he may have that sort of longevity, I'm sure. I certainly wish him good health and happiness, but hopefully by then he's watching from the bleachers, Mr. Speaker.

[20:00]

What we do see, you know, I thought it was, you know, when we look at some of these pressing and important issues, we see a government that's just offside with really truly advancing the best interests of Saskatchewan people. We see an old approach in the privatization. Whether it's ISC or the new approach to funding infrastructure, it's going to cost us far more through the long term. We see it in health care. We see it in our power corporation. We see it in highways. And unfortunately what we see in this approach is giving away some of the control we have of our future, some of that certainty that Saskatchewan people deserve and have worked too hard, Mr. Speaker, to simply give away — giving away some of the competitive advantages and some of the certainty that we're going to have a circumstance for the next generation that will be better than for the previous.

So I touched on some of the pieces that were in the Throne Speech for which Saskatchewan people have concern over, Mr. Speaker. But it's not just notable what's in the Throne Speech; it's also notable what isn't. And I know I'm mindful of the time here, Mr. Speaker, so I don't want to take too much time, but I'll go through some of these pieces.

We see no serious plan for housing, and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that's a common concern, a common cause across communities all across this province. Whether it's Melfort, whether it's Humboldt, whether it's the North, whether it's First Nations Saskatchewan, whether it's urban Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, housing is a major challenge. And what we see a government doing is paying lip service and putting forward sort of plans that do nothing more than tinker around with the edges of what we might call market housing, or plans that do little more than support those that basically can already access housing, and we need much better, Mr. Speaker. We need a broader approach. We need a comprehensive approach that needs to include affordable housing, Mr. Speaker, true affordable housing — not the stuff that members opposite speak of — true affordable housing and true social housing, Mr. Speaker, to balance off the demands in our province.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, without doing so we're placing challenge and pressure on the quality of life for many. We're placing stress on far too many, and we have too many families, Mr. Speaker, in communities all across this province in far too precarious of a circumstance with too much vulnerability in their own economic lives by way of housing, and we need to do better. And we should be proud of a growing population, of people moving into our province, but then we need to place that subsequent investment back into the places where pressure is

created. Housing is one of these key areas where we need to be balancing off that approach. And yes, quite frankly, as I've said, whether it's renters or young families, we have far too many in this province without security and with too much vulnerability for far too many across this province.

I would suggest as well that, you know, because I want to get into a little bit of discussion about education and health care, but without addressing housing in a meaningful way, we directly impact those outcomes in education and the classroom and in health care. And those are those factors that have a direct impact, whether it's external to the classroom or external to the health system, and we need to be active in making the meaningful difference. And quite simply this isn't just about building a better life for families, which should be enough motivation for us, but it's also about good social policy and good economic policy, and we all need to work together on this front. We're going to continue to stand strong as the New Democratic Party opposition.

We see no commitment, you know, without . . . what else isn't in this budget. We see no commitment to address or resolve the underfunding, unacceptable underfunding of Aboriginal First Nations on-reserve education, something that has harsh and direct consequences for all of us, Mr. Speaker. We see no compromise by way of the unilateral changes that were made without any consultation to the many newcomers and new Canadians who are building and bettering their lives here in Saskatchewan, and no addressing or putting forward fair immigration laws or no keeping of one's word, Mr. Speaker, a word that was broken by this government when they unilaterally made changes that directly impact the lives of so many.

Further to that, we see, at a time where we're growing as a population, we see inadequate support back into settlement services and support back into the classroom for those very students. And without providing those supports, it impacts all of community, all of the community, and impacts all students, Mr. Speaker.

We see no plan in this Throne Speech to properly fund our classrooms. We see many classrooms, many teachers being starved of the resources required to address the challenges of today. And certainly the approach of this government, at a time where we need to be investing in education, is short-sighted. In fact what we see is this government, where they're going to spend some new money, is to spend more money on testing, Mr. Speaker. We don't need to spend more money on testing right now; we need to invest more in those very classrooms and in those students to provide the better outcome that we all should be working towards, Mr. Speaker.

We have opportunities to make improvements to the funding formula. Growing school divisions that we have that we should be excited about, but a government that's dragging its heels to properly fund that population growth and make sure that school divisions and classrooms have the resources that they require. And the impacts are being felt. We see it by way of class size. We see it by way of pressures in the classroom. We hear the stories from parents and students that are bringing back the stories. We see the cuts in early learning and in full-day kindergarten, Mr. Speaker, that all the evidence would suggest

is the kind of policies that we need to be pursuing as a province to bring us that stronger economic future and that stronger social position for families all across this province. Instead we see cuts.

In fact I heard recently from a young student up in Saskatoon who conveyed that even their SRC [student representative council] budgets have been impacted of late, Mr. Speaker, and of course the kind of, you know, this is . . . some see as a smaller item, Mr. Speaker, but it's just making clear the kinds of cuts that are occurring at a time where we need to be making education a priority and investing in Saskatchewan. And I know the members opposite, what they say is, well those are decisions of school division. Right, Mr. Speaker, but it's basically what this government's approach has been to do is to set the allocation, to take control of financing, to put forward a funding formula that has shortfalls, Mr. Speaker, and then to leave it to divisions and school board members that have been elected all across this province to make the tough decisions that this government isn't willing to take responsibility for.

We see barely a mention of the critical work needed to improve Aboriginal employment in this province, First Nations and Métis employment, and engagement in this province, something that we know to be so critical to the future of this province and something that we need to be working towards together as a province.

No plan or commitment to reinstate the film industry, to recognize an error that's been made, something that's providing a cultural hit to this province and an economic hit to this province, and certainly a life-changing negative impact on many families, Mr. Speaker, that have been employed and worked in this creative industry.

And I'd argue, Mr. Speaker, that this goes beyond, this goes beyond just the simple argument put forward by the Sask Party in their cutting of the film economy. In many ways, when we see people choosing to build their lives here in Saskatchewan, whether they're moving from Ontario or from around the world, what they're looking for isn't a stripped down province or community. They're looking for enriched communities with cultural offerings and quality of life that should be second to none, and instead we see a government that's actively working to sort of eliminate and strip down some of those cultural offerings that offer us pride of place and creative outlets to engage as communities, Mr. Speaker.

We see a government that has put forward no plan in this Throne Speech to come into compliance with public sector accounting standards, to come in line with the rest of Canada in how we report our finances, and really digs their heels in deeper to continue to report our finances in a way that allows them to manipulate and manufacture outcomes that aren't reflective of the realities of the true state of our finances, Mr. Speaker. And I guess I touched on some of that before when I talked about the approach to . . . the lack of plan to paying down debt and the fact we're actually increasing debt year over year for a few consecutive years, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that we're having a government that simply can't get its head around how it's going to leave some sort of legacy for the future by way of a heritage fund. One that they're suggesting may start after 2060, Mr. Speaker, almost 50 years from now.

I touched on the labour laws. I'm not going to go back into much more right now, Mr. Speaker, other than to say that it's shameful to see a government actively working against the interests of workers and families in this province, actively working against the long-term prosperity of our economy, Mr. Speaker, and unilaterally overhauling legislation — 15 pieces, Mr. Speaker — reviewing with an aim to overhaul legislation that was built, Mr. Speaker, out of the spirit of co-operation and through over 100 years. And Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan employers, Saskatchewan organizations deserve better than that, Mr. Speaker. And we'll be ready to stand up for Saskatchewan families, Saskatchewan workers, and the economy of this province when the presentation of labour law changes are put forward.

We see in agriculture a lot of pressures and challenges in this province, Mr. Speaker. We see cuts that have come to AgriStability and AgriInvest, Mr. Speaker. We see the privatization of our tree nursery that started, at the turn of the century in fact, before we were a province and has supplied over 600 million trees all across Western Canada and has transformed our prairie landscape and played such a key role in agriculture and in habitat and conservation all across this province, eliminated or privatized by the federal government and a provincial government that's sitting on its hands instead of working as an active partner to find solutions to ensure the viability of that tree nursery for many years into the future.

We see a piecemeal approach from this government in stepping up to the challenge of the privatization of community pastures by the federal government, Mr. Speaker, leaving in limbo many producers, many patrons who simply aren't in a position to acquire those lands, Mr. Speaker, and placing risk to many that have been patrons of those lands for generations, Mr. Speaker, and those lands playing, of course, that very important role in balancing off our agricultural economy for so many.

And of course we see beef producers taking a real hit, Mr. Speaker, right now and a government that sits quietly as a result of a deregulation, reckless deregulation agenda of the federal government that has not only impacted and placed a hit on our beef producers, Mr. Speaker, but also our food safety.

So there's many challenges that need to be addressed. You know, I think as well, as we meet with so many of our producers and in rural Saskatchewan, a lot of pressures and challenges as it relates to transportation: the logistics but also the cost, the pressures of increasing inputs and lack of control or certainty on those fronts, and certainly eating many of the margins that hard-working producers in this province have worked hard to achieve.

So we see quite a few areas, Mr. Speaker, that aren't in the Throne Speech that are of concern, and that should be. A couple others that I might just want to address before I close and turn it over to someone opposite, Mr. Speaker. But we see nothing for northern Saskatchewan. And I talk about all of Saskatchewan. I've highlighted specifically rural Saskatchewan and urban Saskatchewan, First Nations Saskatchewan. But when I think of northern Saskatchewan and some of the requirements to improve safety and quality of highway infrastructure in through the North, the broken promises, Mr. Speaker — in fact raiding dollars that have been set aside and committed to the North, Mr.

Speaker — is a shameful approach of this government. And we have northerners who deserve and expect better.

We know we need to do such a better job by way of those educational and employment opportunities through the North. I see scant mention of any of that sort of initiative in this budget. I don't see the sort of reinvestment back into the North that would be reflective of the wealth of the region and the role it plays economically, and providing it a level of fairness to the rest of the province, Mr. Speaker. Then I recognize the social conditions that in many cases are simply unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. And you know in many ways, for a Premier to boast about prosperity and to be dismissive of those circumstances that exist for many up in northern Saskatchewan is something that is not acceptable and not responsible to the people who live throughout that beautiful region.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I see the issue that is so critical for many in this province, I see no commitment, no plan, no protections by way of our environment — our land, our air, our water — for future generations. And quite simply, Mr. Speaker, we owe the next generation so much more on this front and something that we need to address. Something so critical to ensure any of the other plans that we're able to achieve.

And when we travel this province, we hear about the pressures to access health services. We see many, many doctors that are not in place in communities. We see emergency services that are less than adequate. We know how important that access to those health services are to Saskatchewan people and I see, I see no plan in this Throne Speech at all to be meaningfully addressing those challenges. And you know, when I think of so many young families, Mr. Speaker, that I chat with that are so concerned about the future of public medicare in this province and every part of this province, Mr. Speaker, I see nothing in this Throne Speech to make sure that we're not only protecting but expanding public medicare and making sure that it'll be there to serve their children's children as we move forward, Mr. Speaker.

[20:15]

So what I see in this budget, as I've said, highlights some concerns. Certainly what isn't in the budget is also of concern. And what is also of concern, as I've said, is the uncertainty that exists and looms for so many in this province from a government that they've learned they can't quite trust what's put and put forward to them as the plan.

And when I say that, Mr. Speaker, what I've had shared with me as an example was this is the same government that ran on glossy brochures about a year ago about a booming Saskatchewan and then shortly thereafter put a Throne Speech that was inconsistent with that and then actively brought around surprises, Mr. Speaker, that weren't in the best interests of Saskatchewan people — killing a film industry, pushing forward an agenda to spend more money on politicians, Mr. Speaker, to hike the cost of prescription drugs for so many in this province. And it's that sort of . . . To make cuts in our classrooms all across Saskatchewan at a time where we need to be investing in education, Mr. Speaker. Quite frankly, Saskatchewan people deserve better.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd argue there is a better way forward. I would argue we could work together with all Saskatchewan people. I would say that what I recognize when I have meetings all across this province is that there's far more that unites this province than ever divides us. And we require a government that's going to actively work together with all of Saskatchewan to make sure we're building that better, fairer, more prosperous Saskatchewan for all Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, I have more to say at different times and questions to be asked, look forward to committee structures, but I won't be supporting the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would ask permission to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member from Batoche has asked for a leave to introduce a guest. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Up in your gallery I would like to introduce Mr. Beryl Bauer, president of the Saskatchewan Federated Co-ops and one of the cornerstones of the mighty Lake Lenore Credit Union. Mr. Beryl Bauer, welcome to your House, and I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming him.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Mr. Speaker, the west coast is having earthquakes. The east coast is having hurricanes. And we sit here in Saskatchewan, the best place in the world to be, as compared to what the member on the other side said, but it's still the best place ever.

Before I begin my speech, there's a few thanks I would like to make. First off, the people of Batoche for their support and their continued advice and wisdom. I would also like to thank my colleagues for their friendship and their advice and time. I'd also like to thank our Premier. His strong leadership and guidance is worthy of this great province.

High on my list also is Team Telfer, Don and Mary Anne, who run my constituency office. And I thank them for their friendship, their hard work, their wisdom. Also my family for

their years of support. November now, I'll be completing nine years here, and I thank them for their support. But mostly, I would like to thank my friend, my partner, my wife, my Valerie. Valerie and I have entered in a new era in our life. We are now grandparents. And I am looking forward, Mr. Speaker, to some day introducing our grandson Carter to this House, and then we'll enter his name in *Hansard*.

Mr. Speaker, I was at a function in Prince Albert where the Honourable Governor General David Johnston was speaking. And he said there was a country in Africa — and I don't remember the name — but he said in that country in the legislature, when you get up to speak, you stand on one leg. And when you play out and you end up putting that leg down and you stand on two legs, you're done. You sit down. It would be good advice for our former speaker from the other side.

Mr. Speaker, after hearing his comments, I will start off my speech by saying, I will be supporting the Throne Speech and rejecting the amendment totally.

Mr. Speaker, the greatest indicator of success in any business is growth. The greatest indicator of success in any country, any province, any community, any town, any village, any hamlet is growth. Growth is a true indicator. They say numbers can be juggled but in this case, growth is the factor.

There are only two alternatives towards small communities. They either have to grow or die. They cannot remain the same. And many of our small villages — of which Batoche is comprised of, villages and hamlets — if possible they find a way, an industry, whatever, to stimulate. And they must induce growth. This is the situation that Saskatchewan has been in for a number of generations: it has been dying. I was here in the House the day that Eldon Lautermilch got up and said, when answering to why people were leaving this constituency or leaving this province, he said, there was more for the rest of us. Yes — more taxes, more children leaving. It was a sad state of affairs.

That is why on November 7th of 2007 and again even stronger in 2011, the people chose to grow. They wanted to see Saskatchewan grow. They are proud of the new Saskatchewan. They are no longer the wee province. We are the new Saskatchewan and some rightly say that it is our resources that are carrying us in this new future. Others say we were lucky that the boom happened at the same time as we were elected. They also say it would have happened if the NDP was still in power. Well, Mr. Speaker, was oil and potash first discovered in '07?

Mr. Speaker, opportunity has been knocking for years, even for generations. Opportunity knocks and our government has answered that knock. We have opened the doors wide. Mr. Speaker, nothing speaks louder than actions. Nothing speaks clearer than actions.

K+S Potash of Germany are back. That's a huge, huge feature. That is the company that was driven out by the former government. They had to pack their bags, salvage what they could and leave because the government took away their potash mines. They've got enough confidence in the new Saskatchewan, they've got enough faith, enough courage that

they are back. So nothing speaks louder than these actions. With the return of them it will be providing jobs and a future for our children.

From this Throne Speech, the gem that I will take home, the gem that I will be repeating over and over, we are not seeking growth for growth's sake but to achieve a better quality of life for our people. Mr. Speaker, we are the 58 chosen ones that are elected to better this province. Our decisions here guide the province's direction. We struggle. We debate. We try to build this province for our children and for our future.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is an eastern cancer coming our way if this false doctrine of the federal NDP and their theory of the Dutch disease is not stopped. Mr. Speaker, Bank of Canada Governor Mark Carney had these comments, and I would like to read his comments into *Hansard*. His comments were, "... higher commodity prices are unambiguously good for Canada." He also said, "The strength of Canadian resource sector is a reflection of success, not a harbinger of failure." That was a big word for a country boy.

"Exports of oil and other commodities have brought greater wealth into this country, including generally higher income and economic activity." He also said Dutch disease is "... a tidy argument that's appealing ... But in the view of the Bank of Canada, it's an overly simplistic assessment and in the end it is dead wrong." Dead wrong. "Our economy is much more diverse and better integrated than the Dutch disease caricature." Those quotes were by Bank of Canada governor, Mark Carney.

In 1974 the Canadian dollar was worth more than the American dollar, and the East — and more correctly — central Canada was thriving. Mulcair would sacrifice the West. He would sacrifice us on the political altar in order to maybe win an election. He views that if he can win Eastern Canada that he can win an election.

The problem is, our people on that side of the House are supporting him. We, the people of Saskatchewan, need the provincial NDP to say no. No to Thomas Mulcair; no to their federal masters. The people of Saskatchewan will hold you accountable for deserting Saskatchewan. Stand up for Saskatchewan. Stand up for the people that elected you. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has said we need some good, old common sense. Mr. Speaker, good, old common sense is what carried us in the last five years and is what will carry us into the future.

Mr. Speaker, we look with pride at how far we have come in the past five years. We also look to the future with common sense, courage, and faith. May God bless our province. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize Regina Douglas Park.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Just like the member from Saskatoon Southeast to take note that I'll not be speaking out the clock tonight.

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise in the House today and enter debate on the 2012-13 provincial Throne Speech. Mr.

Speaker, this is the new Saskatchewan, a province full of opportunity and a province rich with people. Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne sets out a plan: a plan with goals and a plan with targets, Mr. Speaker, a plan that lays out for the people of Saskatchewan their place and their role in this exciting and growing province. This plan is a plan of growth, Mr. Speaker, not decline; a plan going forward, not stagnant or backward. A realistic plan, Mr. Speaker, not rhetoric, and a plan of fiscal responsibility, not reckless debt spending. Mr. Speaker, a plan that will continue to position Saskatchewan as a leader in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, as I reflect on my first year as the MLA for Regina Douglas Park, I am in awe of the tremendous trust the constituents of Douglas Park have placed in me. It might be cliché, but I am truly humbled to have been elected. And as my colleagues before me have already articulated, I still find it inspiring, very inspiring to be able to enter this grand building, this edifice, this Legislative Building, a building that celebrates this year its 100th birthday.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the constituents of Douglas Park, those who this is all about, and I want to again thank them for the opportunity to serve them in their government.

[20:30]

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my constituency assistant, Becky Mason. Becky's hung in there with me as I learn the intricacies of being the MLA and the responsibilities of cabinet. Mr. Speaker, she has done yeowomen service, and my thanks to her, as well, Mr. Speaker, to my wife and family who have been so supportive and understanding throughout the most amazing year. Mr. Speaker, I want to say thanks to my colleagues in caucus. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, the work that is accomplished here happens only because there is a group, a team of like-minded, loyal, and committed individuals who look after each other and support each other as we discuss, debate, agree, disagree, cajole, and bother. And so on behalf of Regina Douglas Park, thank you to my colleagues.

To our leader, to the Premier, and on behalf of Regina's Douglas Park, I want to thank him for his leadership, for establishing the atmosphere in this province that is so conducive to growth, that atmosphere that has allowed the people of Saskatchewan to be the best that they can be and to challenge themselves and to grow personally. We have always known it was good to be from Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We were simply heads bowed, insecure to proclaim it and now we are not. We are confident. We do have a vision and, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan: a plan for growth complete with stated goals, targets to aim at; a plan and a leader that will sustain Saskatchewan and establish our province as the global leader it needs to be.

Mr. Speaker, this is serious work, and all those mentioned deserve serious recognition for a job well done. Mr. Speaker, this plan is all about growth, economic growth on the one hand and social growth on the other. One happens because of the other. This plan is not about growth for growth's sake. It is because of economic growth that we will become the best place in Canada to live, raise a family, and build a future.

Mr. Speaker, I have seven grandchildren. I can think of nothing better than to have all of them here in Saskatchewan fulfilling their dreams and for me to be a part of their successes. I have never been more confident of that possibility than I am today. The purpose of growth is to secure a better future, a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people. And in order to secure that goal, our plan articulates six core activities that the government of Saskatchewan will undertake to foster economic growth and address the challenges of that growth.

When the Assembly broke for the summer, MLAs were charged to seek input from constituents about their ideas on what can be done in Saskatchewan to sustain growth and maintain the Saskatchewan advantage.

We sent out questionnaires. We talked to constituents, and we door knocked. And, Mr. Speaker, we listened. We were told that we needed to pay down the debt and balance the budget; that we needed to adjust infrastructure issues; that we needed to educate, train, and develop a skilled workforce; that we needed to engage in work with First Nations people so that they could take their place in this great Saskatchewan. And so, Mr. Speaker, the job begins.

Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I participated in several events during Education Week. "Learning Success Today . . . Leading Success Tomorrow," what an absolutely perfect theme for our growth agenda.

Since 2007 our government has tackled many aspects of life in Saskatchewan that were in a state of sorry decline, a legacy of affairs resulting from a lack of planning and the absence of growth. We can look to every sector and find examples of how our plan for growth has affected the lives of all the people. But, Mr. Speaker, I can't think of a better example of how growth in Saskatchewan is not just about growth for growth's sake, but how economic growth benefits all of the people than to look at our most precious resource, that of our children.

Mr. Speaker, I was on hand with officials during Education Week to turn the sod on the new elementary school in White City, a rapidly expanding community just outside Regina. Mr. Speaker, in that group were two grade 8 students who spoke very eloquently about what this new facility means to them.

Mr. Speaker, for me it's always reassuring, as I know it is for every member of this Assembly, just how accomplished our young people are. Saskatchewan has some of the best and brightest minds in our country and, Mr. Speaker, we're going to let the country know that.

I saw first-hand the impact the new school had. Mr. Speaker, I attended the grand opening of St. Michael elementary school in Weyburn. The community of Weyburn combined two schools to make one as a result of some very creative planning, but most importantly the students now have a performing arts stage. Think about that. Talk about the benefits of growth.

We have turned the sod in Saskatoon in the Willowgrove community, a new joint-use school. A school built in partnership with the city of Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Public and Greater Saskatoon Roman Catholic Schools Divisions.

Mr. Speaker, there is more. I was on hand in Swift Current with our Premier who turned sod on the largest shared-use facility in the province, a unique complex of facilities including a hospital, communiplex, aquatic centre, and schools that will share a band room and a band instructor, practical and applied arts room, and a practical and applied arts instructor. A concept, Mr. Speaker, that exemplifies what can happen when people collaborate, co-operate, and challenge themselves to think outside the box for the benefits of their community.

Mr. Speaker, I was in the sector when I had to close schools because of declining enrolments. That experience will stay with me forever. It's not something that was a lot of fun.

Mr. Speaker, we know that investing in school infrastructure improves the learning environment for our students. We know that it improves the working environment for our teachers and support workers. And above all, Mr. Speaker, we know that investing in school infrastructure provides a safe and nurturing environment for our students.

Mr. Speaker, since 2007 our government has invested a record \$500 million in pre-K to 12 education facilities — a record high investment in school infrastructure, a record high investment in our children, and part of the plan for sustaining growth. Mr. Speaker, there is more to do and, Mr. Speaker, more is on the way. And as part of our growth plan, we will be asking our sector partners to be creative and collaborative in their planning so that we can sustain the growth we are experiencing and ensure our children's future.

Mr. Speaker, if I could I'd like to turn my attention to child care. Mr. Speaker, our government understands, and I understand all too well, just how important child care is in a growing economy. Child care helps to remove barriers that prevent parents from fully participating in this growing economy. Parents need to know and they need to feel confident that when they're off to work or are furthering their education that their children are safe and being looked after in a nurturing environment.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be blunt. Our government inherited an absolute child care disaster — a black hole, an embarrassing inventory of child care spaces. Mr. Speaker, when we took office in 2007, Saskatchewan had 8,850 child care spaces. Our neighbour to the East had 26,375 — three times as many as Saskatchewan. And our neighbour to the West had 71,000, almost 72,000 — almost nine times as many child care spaces. Mr. Speaker, tough to dig oneself out of that hole. But, Mr. Speaker, we have set a target, and to date we have increased child care spaces by 42 per cent.

We had a promise, Mr. Speaker of 1,500 more spaces by the end of this term. We now have 13,240 licensed child care spaces operating in or in development in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, we are not done. We have allocated funding to expand the total number of infant spaces by 53 per cent and toddler spaces by another 39 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we have also provided nearly \$10 million for initiatives to improve the quality of licensed child care centres and homes.

Mr. Speaker, we also know the importance of early intervention and the link between early learning and success later on in life.

And that's why we have aggressively increased pre-kindergarten across the province. You know, Mr. Speaker, that student achievement is a priority of this government and access to high quality early learning opportunities supports just that. To that end, we now have over 4,500 of our province's most vulnerable three and four-year-olds enrolled in this valuable program.

I've had a chance, Mr. Speaker, to visit these pre-kindergarten classrooms, Mr. Speaker, and I've seen the impact it has. The bright, smiling faces of those children tells me that we are headed in the right direction. The dedicated teachers and educational assistants in our classrooms are role models and have learning at the top of their minds. Engaged students is a great thing to see, Mr. Speaker.

And as to the middle class, Mr. Speaker, in 2007 a family of four with \$50,000 total income paid \$3,382 in provincial taxes. Today that same family pays \$744 in provincial taxes, down \$2,638 or 78 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That's what we did for the middle class.

Today in Saskatchewan more people are working. They're earning a lot more and they're keeping more of the money they earn, thanks to lower taxes. That's what growth has done for the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, there is more to do. We recognize that. We accept that and, Mr. Speaker, we'll keep our promise.

For me, Mr. Speaker, it's all about credibility. We make a promise; we keep a promise — 100 made, 100 kept. Goals established, targets set. Plans made, plans articulated. And, Mr. Speaker, I ask, who would you want behind you as you charge up the hill? As I've stated previously, I am very confident with the direction our government is going and I'm very proud to be a part of a team of individuals who exude nothing but commitment and, above all, integrity. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne and I will not support the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to join the debate tonight and to welcome you to the Chair. I think this is your first experience presiding over this great House, and we wish you well in your new endeavours.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I look back over my time in this building, I think it's probably pretty close to 13 and a half, maybe 14 years ago when I delivered my first response to the Speech from the Throne. Of course at that time I was a member of the opposition, and having looked at the words that I brought to that opportunity, I realize that we were fighting a government that really had lost track of rural Saskatchewan. And in the extreme southwest, the most common phrase I would hear among my citizens and my electors was, we're the forgotten southwest. And in the interim years, I hope, Mr. Speaker, that not only have I made a difference in terms of whether or not they feel forgotten, but our government has actually made a real impact in the southwest and they realize that we haven't forgotten them as part of our initiatives to provide better roads, to provide better schools, to provide new health care facilities

and a variety of other initiatives.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's with real pleasure that I speak tonight on the Speech from the Throne 2012 because this particular document outlines very clearly a whole series of goals and objectives. It sets hard targets for where we want to be over the next number of years leading up to 2020. And, you know, having listened to some of the speeches from members of the opposition, I'm glad that I'm a person that can say my glass is half full, as opposed to what I've heard, a glass being half empty.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this province is enjoying economic and financial circumstances like it's never enjoyed in its history. And we are on the cusp of something great in this province, and I think the people of Saskatchewan recognize that reality. This building is an indication of how great our founding fathers thought the potential was for the new province of Saskatchewan. And at that time, they thought that this building would house the entire complement of government employees, that no other building would be necessary than what they had developed in this particular edifice. And as it turned out, our population didn't grow like had been envisioned; our fortunes weren't realized as had been predicted. We had some very difficult circumstances in the '30s where the economy fell flat and people left Saskatchewan in huge numbers.

But nevertheless, in the intervening years from 1940 to the early 2000s, it was the longest, slowest, crawling effort to get out of the hole and back to some state of stability and growth. But more recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've seen that opportunity explode in the province of Saskatchewan. We've seen people coming back in great numbers. We've seen the growth of our economy, and opportunities in industries that have lain dormant almost for lack of attention. And I'm going to address some of those as I get into my speech.

But before I get into the details of the speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the constituency of Cypress Hills. This is a part of the formalities, I suppose, at this particular time in speech making. But none of us get to this point where we're able to represent our constituents without the help of some very important people. And I recognize my wife, who is watching tonight I think. She's taking a break from the storm coverage I hope. But nevertheless she's back in Eastend, and I'm grateful for her support over all these years. I really am.

But more to the point, not only am I grateful for her support, I also want to recognize the sacrifice that our spouses and partners make when we enter public life. And the distance that we often experience apart is a challenge, and it can have an impact on families. And I want to acknowledge that reality for everybody that serves in this place.

[20:45]

I also want to acknowledge the dedication of the three people who work in my office. I have three constituency assistants who work tirelessly to make me look good. In fact when I hired them that's what I told them their job description was. All you have to do is make me look good . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And it takes a lot of work. It's very hard, and thank you to my

colleague. But I'd like to acknowledge Carol Miller, Beth Humphrey, and Glenna Gordon once again for all of their undertakings on my behalf.

This was a wonderful summer in Cypress Hills. You can assume that just based on the reality of Cypress Hills, a great geographical gem in the southwest corner of the province. I'm told that there's flora and fauna in Cypress Hills that you won't find anywhere else in the world outside of Siberia. And everybody knows it's the highest point between Banff and the Laurentians and so it's got a magnetic attraction. Something very special about it. But the weather this summer was absolutely fabulous. And I remember when weather people used to say, it's not going to rain, so the weather's good. My farming constituents would say, so what's so good about that? Well this year we had the advantage of bountiful rain early in the spring. The crops were seeded. They came up in a beautiful, even state and we had that warm summer weather that allowed crops to flourish. And so for that, we're very grateful.

But over and above that, I used the great weather this summer to travel around my constituency a lot. This was the summer of 100th anniversaries in a number of communities and there were parades and special events and weekend long celebrations, homecomings, and all of the great things that go with those kind of events in several communities. I think we had parades in Eastend, although they weren't celebrating their 100th anniversary this year. But we had parades in Leader and Cabri and Lancer and Piapot. I missed the parade in Maple Creek because I had another event elsewhere. But it was a summer of celebration in Cypress Hills, and it was great. The optimism and the enthusiasm for where we are as a province, where the agricultural sector was, how the economy is growing in the southwest, has all contributed to a real sense of optimism.

And so when I came here 13 years ago and said, we aren't going to take it anymore; we want to be heard — there's a completely different mentality and attitude in the Cypress Hills constituency right now because people are enthused and excited about where they're at today and what our prospects are for the future.

We've seen tremendous growth in some communities. We've seen a little bit of loss in the few other communities, but overall I would say that our school numbers are stable and growing in some communities.

We have new people moving in to service the oil industry in the Shaunavon area, which is just exploding right now. And we've seen growth in a number of other communities throughout the southwest. That in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that experience, that reality in southwest Saskatchewan is indicative of the reality for 80 per cent of the small towns around the province of Saskatchewan. We've had a new city arrive on the scene, the city of Warman, and we'd like to congratulate them.

But you know, those 80 per cent of communities, those small communities that have been stabilized and have seen growth over the last number of years are equally excited about what's happening in their communities, and we need to salute them and recognize that new reality for rural Saskatchewan. You know, train stations aren't being closed. Tracks aren't being ripped up. Elevators aren't being pulled out. Schools aren't

closing in big numbers. There's been quite a reversal in rural communities over the last few years and we're very grateful for that reality.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having talked about the population numbers, you know, we've got an all-time high in terms of employment in the province. We hit a record number of people employed in Saskatchewan — 550,000 people, and that's more than 20,000 just in the last year. That's never been achieved in this province before that I know of. I stand to be corrected by some detailed historian, but that is a very significant increase in people living and working in the province of Saskatchewan, and that's something to celebrate.

I think the opportunities with that kind of employment and population growth speak not just well to the reality of our current economic situation but the faith of these people in the future of this province. And not only are we getting people who are coming back from Alberta or maybe coming across from other provinces where employment opportunities are less, but we are experiencing international migration in big numbers. All you have to do is walk down the streets of any one of our communities, large or small, and you'll see the reality of international immigration that is impacting and benefiting the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wanted to spend my 10 minutes telling you about what we anticipate will happen in the field of agriculture. This little booklet, as has been described by our friends in the opposition, contains hard goals and objectives. I can recall, I think our colleague from Dewdney referenced the NDP's unwillingness to set goals and objectives — especially when it came to nursing — and said, well there's no sense in setting a goal because you couldn't reach it anyway. And of course population growth, it was statistically impossible to achieve 1 per cent growth. Well we far exceeded that.

But nevertheless, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the goals and objectives I'm most pleased by in this particular document, the Speech from the Throne, is an indication that Saskatchewan hit \$10 billion in agricultural exports last year, \$10 billion. That's a number that we only imagined a few years ago, and now we've set a target for increasing that by 50 per cent over the next number of years, just a short number of years. That offers an opportunity and a challenge to our rural producers like they've never seen before. And this government is committed to reaching those objectives, and we're going to do whatever we can to help accomplish those particular goals.

We have a huge potential for infrastructure development that I'm very pleased has been identified in this speech, that we have been in a desperate way for infrastructure support. And with the creation of SaskBuilds and a commitment of \$150 million to that enterprise, we're going to see some interesting and creative things happen in the field of infrastructure.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could probably spend the next half hour delineating some of the things that I find really important for the people of Saskatchewan in this particular document. The glass isn't half empty. The glass is more than half full. It's full and running over. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to be pleased to support the Throne Speech and I will be voting against the amendment. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize the House Leader.

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — Does the House agree?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — This House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 20:54.]

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Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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Hon. Kevin Doherty

Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
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Hon. June Draude

Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Health

Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Crown Investments
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Hon. Nancy Heppner

Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for the Lean Initiative

Hon. Ken Krawetz

Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Russ Marchuk

Minister of Education

Hon. Tim McMillan

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Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds

Hon. Don Morgan

Minister of Advanced Education
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board

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Minister Responsible for First Nations,
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Hon. Lyle Stewart

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
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Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing

Hon. Randy Weekes

Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Gordon Wyant

Minister of Justice and Attorney General