



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

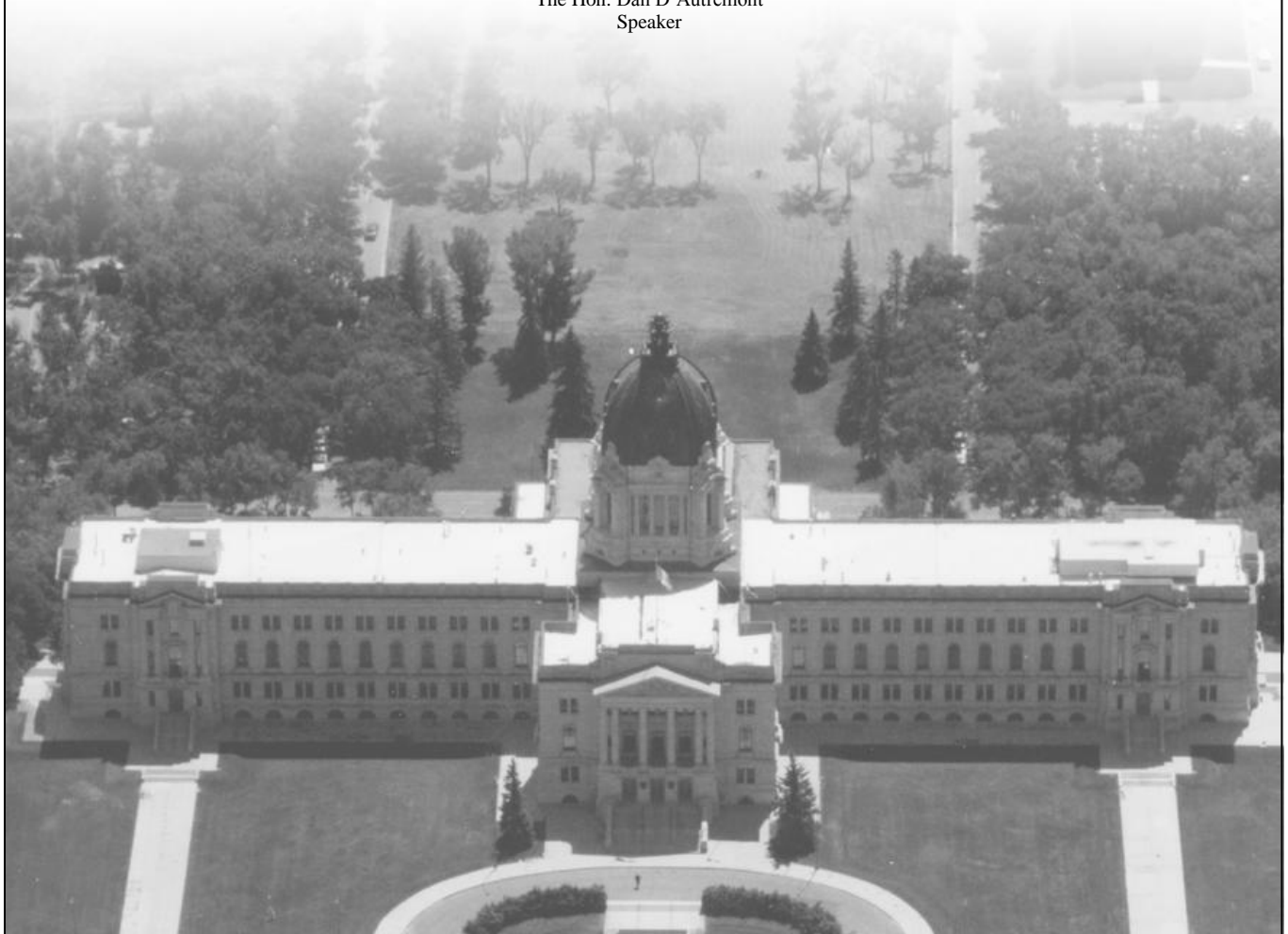
of the

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 — Cam Broten

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Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
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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 o'clock, debate will resume on the special order. I recognize the Government Whip.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must admit I got a bit of ribbing over the lunch hour. I'm 20 minutes into my speech. I haven't said a whole lot about the Throne Speech yet, so I'm going to try and wrap this up in the next hour, hour and a half if I can.

I was referring a lot in my initial comments to my dad, Alfred Ottenbreit. And admittedly, you know, that was my intent. Again I was talking about how my dad taught me to help those who can't help themselves and to give back to community.

One quick story I'd like to tell is an example that my dad set for me as a very young person. We had an employee who, you know, he had some challenges. He ended up buying a car that he couldn't afford. He was in a bit of a tough predicament. But again, dad, he could have looked the other way and let the fellow kind of put up with the mess he had created. But he took it upon himself to go down to the dealership to talk to the dealer and make sure that they would take that car back and give him his very, very capable old car, his used car back to get him out of that predicament. And that's just the type of example my dad would set for all of us kids.

Again, I talked about he gave employment opportunities to those that otherwise maybe wouldn't have employment opportunities. He gave them good jobs, fairly good-paying jobs, and gave them a sense of dignity as well, having a way and means to support themselves — again an example, as I talked previously about examples that my dad set, and I think examples that our government sets in large.

When it comes to planning, our government is very big on planning, as we've talked quite a bit about our *Vision 2020 and Beyond*, our plan document, Mr. Speaker. Very much along the same idea as my dad would have — respond to current needs and pressures, but plan for the future. Equipment upgrades, service improvements, find efficiencies — all mantras of my dad in business as well as our government. Adapt where needed. Don't stay stuck in one track. Don't refuse to change just because that's the way you've always done it. That's something I learned from my dad many years ago, and that's something I think our government is really following as well, Mr. Speaker. You know, think outside the box, and don't do something the same way because it's always been done that

way. Find better and new ways to get things accomplished.

When it comes to P3s [public-private partnership], for example, our government is very interested in P3s being able to address the infrastructure needs for our province over the coming years and decades to make sure that we have the infrastructure to address the challenges of growth that we are feeling right now because of the record growth that we're having in this province. And our government I think is really looking at improving those areas, Mr. Speaker, and thinking outside the box when it comes to addressing those challenges.

Again when my dad was growing his business, he was faced with many challenges in the business. But eventually he would find positive ways to overcome and address challenges, again very much like I believe our government does and as outlined in our *Vision 2020*, our growth plan, and this Throne Speech and throne speeches that have come before.

And again, you know, growing a business, what do we grow a business for? Well I think some do grow business just for the purposes of maybe self, you know, self-benefit and other things. But my dad was never that way, always growing the business not only for the better quality of life that he could contribute and provide for his family, but also the better quality of life he could provide for those employed and their families and people in the community that he could help. The better he did, the more he gave back, and the better the community would do around him. Growth not just for the sake of growth but growth for the betterment of all in society, which again, I think a philosophy of my father and a philosophy of this government. He learned how to be competitive in a very competitive business, a very competitive environment. And I think we're along that track as well in Saskatchewan and this government.

My dad kept competition out of our hometown of Yorkton, for the most part, for about five decades. And how would he do that, Mr. Speaker? I think a lot along the same lines as our government looks at philosophy and business, philosophy of running this province, as well as people of the province, the philosophies they have — honest practices, quality service, investing back and being part of our community, and a strong work ethic. And again, I think that's a philosophy of many in this province and a philosophy of this government as well.

Now for some overarching comments of the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, "Meeting the Challenges of Growth." The government has helped to do that in the past and will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, investing in highways, health, education infrastructure, and helping municipalities like Yorkton, like my hometown of Yorkton. Record revenue sharing has really given Yorkton the benefit of investing back in the community and helping with some of the infrastructure projects and the growth challenges that we have there.

We have a brand new water plant in Yorkton that has more capacity than we need, but it's there for future growth, to attract business, to attract other entrepreneurial organizations to our community as well, and through that provide opportunities for those that live in our city and our area. Surrounding highways have been upgraded, in large addressing some of the challenges

with the traffic flow. Our airport has, I think, benefited the best out of the CAP [community airport partnership program] program in our province. And the benefits there to our community and to the airport are very visible.

Post-secondary education, we talk about it quite a bit in the Throne Speech with training seats, new apprenticeship programs, and adult basic education, all programs delivered by our college in Yorkton, the Parkland College, the Trades and Technology Centre — the project approved by this government and funding in place now with the recent announcement last week by our Premier and our Minister of Advanced Education as well, the current one and the one that did a lot of work previously, or previous Advanced Education minister, the one currently looking after Education. I want to thank both of those members, the Premier and the Deputy Premier, for all the work that they've put into bringing that Trades and Technology Centre to fruition. And we're looking forward to that opening in 2015, what it'll do for our community, and the benefits and opportunities for all the people of our area including our young people.

A lot of health initiatives. Yorkton is a very . . . We do have a very aged demographic, Mr. Speaker. And I'm very happy to say that although we do face challenges in our health care system — I'm not happy about that — what I'm happy about is that we have been addressing a lot of those challenges. We have a state-of-the-art heart and stroke initiative in Yorkton addressing the needs of a lot of our senior citizens. We have a chemotherapy outreach and advanced cancer treatment in our community as well that is advancing and growing every day, Mr. Speaker, as well as a dialysis department has grown, addressing some of the needs for not only the seniors but also benefiting many of those in our area.

So again, you know, we're setting the table. We're supporting a growth environment for those in our community and for business opportunities in our province. In fact in my local area the Yorkton Grain Millers, now they're looking at going ahead with an expansion there which will make them the largest oat processor in North America, Mr. Speaker. We are currently the canola crushing capital of Canada — I know for a fact — probably all of North America as well. We have manufacturers there that are doing well. Their only challenge is, admittedly, getting employees.

And with, you know, some of the immigration initiatives we have going forward, we've increased our SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program] program by 4,450, I think, or 450 — sorry, Mr. Speaker — to 4,450 SINP nominations every year. So we're looking at immigrating enough people to start filling those positions but also training them at home with the good work done by the Parkland College there.

Parkland Welding has advanced greatly. They're actually producing all of the hydraulic cylinders for Seed Hawk manufacturing right now, as well as a lot of the hydraulics for the oil field. Leon Ram — I think I touched on them — they've been expanding just by leaps and bounds as well and really contributing to our local economy and the employment opportunities at home. We have three new hotels, many new restaurants in town, and enormous other private investments that are again creating opportunities for people there and just

contributing to our local economy.

There's so many opportunities we have in this province, Mr. Speaker — the resources, the resource base which is our wealth. We have a very diverse economy, including our agriculture. But one thing I always try to remind myself and those around us that, you know, it wouldn't be possible, the investments that this government has made back in this province, that people are able to make in this province would not be possible if we weren't so totally blessed by God in this province, blessed with such divine providence that, you know, without that we really wouldn't have the tools to do what we're able to do. And the people of the province wouldn't have the opportunity to do that either.

Many, I believe, Mr. Speaker, positive qualities I've seen and tried to adopt from my father and my mother, I see in our government — our philosophy, our plans, our members, our policies. They're also reflected in our budgets, our throne speeches, including this one. So, Mr. Speaker, for those reasons and for the reasons that my dad taught me, I will be supporting the main motion, our 2013 Throne Speech, and I will not be supporting the amendment put forward by the opposition.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw North.

Mr. Michelson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to stand in this House and talk about some of the positive things of Saskatchewan, and to address the Speech from the Throne that was delivered last week.

First of all I'd like to thank my family, my wife, Debbie, and our children that support the position and the extra work and the extra miles and the extra efforts that come into being an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and serving the people of Saskatchewan and especially the people of Moose Jaw.

I'd also like to thank my assistant, Judy Hatfield, for looking after the office. She's very diligent in what she does. She's very strong in her commitment to looking after the concerns that come into the office. Two other people that help us in the office are Deb Mutlow and Rosalie Boots who are also very supportive and help look after the office and the people of Moose Jaw.

I'd like to thank the people of Moose Jaw that have trusted in me as their MLA and look at this government very positively moving forward, doing the things we said we would do, of supporting growth in this province. And that was very evident last week when we, Moose Jaw North along with Moose Jaw Wakamow, had the Premier's Dinner. The support that we got from the community was outstanding. Premier Wall was there to give an address — very inspiring. The people that were there very much were inspired. It was an enthusiastic presentation, promoting Saskatchewan and how it's being promoted throughout the world, the strength that this province has to go forward, Mr. Speaker. The Speech from the Throne really has two themes, that of continuing the growth of this province and meeting the challenge of growth. They really go hand in hand because if you're meeting the challenge of growth, the growth will continue and this is where we're at.

You know, I was listening earlier today. The member from

Athabasca as he laid his presentation out, really I questioned whether he even looked at the Speech from the Throne, because there's so much good things in the Speech from the Throne that he couldn't possibly have made the statements he was making as he addressed this House. It reminded me a little bit of the old story from years past, the story about the United States. They had Ronald Reagan. They had Johnny Cash. They had Charley Pride and they had Bob Hope. Saskatchewan had the NDP with no cash, no pride, and no hope.

There's something that I've told my grandsons, especially Taylor when he was playing football. He had difficulty getting to the football games, and I tried to impress upon him, if you think you can, if you think you can, you're right. But if you think you can't, you're also right. And I would suggest the member from Athabasca thinks they can't, and in their minds that's what is the reality of this province.

So when we took over, there was some promises we made for growth, some real goals we set, and one of those goals was to increase the population. Mr. Speaker, the population surpassed the 1.1 million people just a few weeks ago. And I'm proud to say that last week, last Tuesday the population of Saskatchewan increased by one more as we were blessed with our fifth grandchild, a little boy whose name is William. So I want to publicly congratulate my daughter, Kimberly, and her husband, Colin, for helping to add to the population of Saskatchewan.

Colin is what I would call a young entrepreneur. He had some difficulties a few years ago, in fact just before their wedding. He was operating a seed plant near Mortlach and just days before the wedding, the seed plant burned down. Now here's a young entrepreneur that took the situation and was determined to be involved, and is now involved with Agropcorp, which is a new processing plant in Moose Jaw. Colin actually manages it and managed the establishment of it. It was opened this summer. It is now handling some grain and processing some specialty crops that will be marketed around the world. It's a huge industry and it's going to be such an addition to this province as we move forward. And he's just one of the young entrepreneurs that we have in this province.

[19:15]

Debbie and I were fortunate enough to attend the Business Excellence Awards in Saskatoon for Saskatchewan business excellence, put on by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Speaker, the room in Saskatoon was enthusiastic. The business people of this province were very proud in what they were doing. They had some enthusiasm. They had some . . . a life that we didn't see a few years ago. But of all this what was most surprising to me, was most noticeable I should say, was the amount of young entrepreneurs like my son-in-law Colin Young, young entrepreneurs that were in there establishing businesses, taking business leadership roles, and really with all of the enthusiasm that this province has. They can see the future here. It's not like a few years ago when our young people were migrating out of the province. Now the young people are staying. They're thinking. They're being educated and they're starting to get into business, growing this province. And they will certainly be the future for many years to come.

There's a strong attitude for growth and it certainly was noticeable at the Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards. I was very proud to be there as one of the past presidents. And it was one of the reasons that I got involved with the political aspect of government in this province, was really initiated when I was president of the Saskatchewan chamber. The NDP [New Democratic Party] were in power at that time, and I thought as the president of the voice of business in this province, I had a right that I should be able to talk to the premier of the province about business concerns. Mr. Speaker, on three occasions I had contacted the premier of the day and never got a response back. I was all but shunned by the government of the day and the premier of the day. I could never understand why they wouldn't want to talk about business in this province. I suppose maybe it's understandable now when you know a little more about SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] and some of the dealings they had. They really didn't know too much about business. But since then, but since then there's a new attitude in this province, and it certainly is in the attitude of growth and prosperity.

And students are staying. There's two programs that we introduced, the student retention program, the student advantage scholarship, that are keeping our young people here. And the Speech from the Throne is really strong on education, which I'm proud to say.

The Speech from the Throne talks about the student first. We've taken that concept of patients first, Mr. Speaker, and we've put that same concept into what we would like to see as students first, putting the students first, putting education there. It's not just buildings and systems; it's students learning. The student first will build on the successes that we've already seen in some cases. For example, in the Chinook School Division, they used the student reading assessment to help teachers respond to each individual student needs. Clearly this approach is working. In 2008, 63 per cent of the students were reading at their grade level, but by just last year, 2012, this number had increased to 84 per cent. So you can see that there's a marked improvement. An important first step to the student first will be consultation with the teachers, with administrators, with parents, and students. And as we go on, this will be a great value to the learning ability of the students and the growth of the province.

Early years evaluation for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students and Tell Them From Me surveys will continue. Last year nearly 75,000 students and over 4,000 teachers took part in the Tell Them From Me survey. That provided the students and the teachers from grade 4 to 12 an opportunity to provide feedback on their school experiences.

Mr. Speaker, in this session our government will be responding to the anti-bullying recommendations put forward by the Legislative Secretary responsible for that, based on extensive consultation that she held throughout the province with students, parents, and teachers. Mr. Speaker, bullying is becoming more and more evident. I think it's always been around, but it's something that has to be addressed. And when I hear from my town, from Moose Jaw, that a parent felt forced to move their child from a school in May because there was nothing happening with the bullying that was going on, it makes me believe that things aren't as they should be, and there

has to be steps taken. So I'm really proud that our government is looking at the bullying situation and taking steps to go forward on that.

A growing Saskatchewan requires new schools and classrooms to support the increasing population of students. Since 2007 our government has invested more than \$600 million in building 20 schools and undertaking 23 major renovations in addition to completing approximately 900 smaller capital projects. Education is important and our government knows that. Our government has announced nine new joint-use schools that will be built using the innovative P3 bundling approach through SaskBuilds.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of talk about the P3 system. I attended a workshop that was conducted by the Saskatchewan Construction Association. I can tell you some of the speakers there were fairly high-profile panellists that were there. Patrick Waunch, the president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Rambow Mechanical Ltd. was one. Robert Lashin is the president of Houle Electric, British Columbia's largest electrical contractor. Brian Savage, the vice-president and chief operations officer of Western Industrial. Mr. Speaker, they were higher profiled panellists that sat down and talked about P3s and how they're being used in other parts of Canada. The bottom line . . . They all agreed on one thing, that P3s are the way of the future. About 23 to 25 per cent of major projects will probably fall under the P3s. They're not for everybody, but they agreed that it is the system that the future will use in building major projects.

Now I might comment that during that particular workshop, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member from Regina Rosemont, also was there. He came about three-quarters of the way through the program and left shortly after that. So I'm not sure the purpose of him being there was a photo op or just what it was, but obviously he didn't really get the sense of what a P3 could do or would do just by coming and going that quickly. So when he stands in this House and talks about the disadvantages of P3s and what they'll do, I don't think he really knows what he's talking about.

Further in education, the development of 15 new pre-kindergarten programs and the development of 500 new child care spaces is also part of the Throne Speech, bringing the total number of licensed care spaces in Saskatchewan to more than 13,700. It's a 48 per cent increase since 2007.

In education, SaskTel will invest \$5 million over the next four years through the CommunityNet program to increase bandwidth and improve Internet access and speed to schools throughout the province. Learning is important, education is important, and so is keeping our children in Saskatchewan, keeping them here after they're educated to build a future.

Another very strong part of the Throne Speech was the post-secondary education. More than 40,000 students have received part of their tuition costs back through the Saskatchewan graduation retention program. At one time, if you'll remember, our students were leaving the province in droves. They weren't staying here. A lot of us have grandchildren and children that are in other parts of the province. The Saskatchewan graduate retention program helped

relieve that. They've kept them here. They started being interested in Saskatchewan, got jobs, started businesses, and further to that there's another 4,500 students that have seen their tuition costs reduced through the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship. A growing economy is ultimately powered by education and this government believes very strongly in education.

Further in education, Briercrest College and SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] were granted degree-granting status last year. SIAST is going to be taking one more step into the polytechnical . . . as a polytechnical institute. Polytechnical is kind of an elite of education. It's kind of a step higher. There are 11 members of the Polytechnics Canada, making one of the elite post-secondary technical education and skills training institutes in Canada.

There are advantages of being a polytechnic institute. And I talked to the president of SIAST and he was quite excited. Polytechnics Canada members offer a four-year bachelor degree program with a focus on applied science and studies. They have joint bachelor degrees with universities. They have apprenticeship programs, post-secondary certified courses, specialized corporate and government training, online training, and distance education. International students need to know, need to be informed about their options when pursuing post-secondary education in Canada, and the polytechnic system will address that. They will provide improved credit transfers from universities and other technical schools to enhance student mobility. Credits earned at one institution are valid at all the other members' institutions.

So polytechnic memberships, which SIAST is a part of, are really a growing part and especially for SIAST Palliser Campus who has an international component to their studies.

I could go on, and there's lots I could say. You know, the housing in Saskatchewan has been a challenge to growth. We all know that, but our government is doing things to try and assist with that.

Moose Jaw is no exception. There's strong demands on housing, especially with the K+S Legacy mine under construction. Our government has committed 344 million to expand the housing supply by 12,600 units and repair or upgrade about 24,000 units by 2016. In this program, Mr. Speaker, Moose Jaw is receiving 114 public housing units that will be replacing public housing units already in existence in Moose Jaw. It's a unique program, and it gives the people in Moose Jaw that are in the public housing an opportunity either to buy the existing house or to graduate up into the new housing once it's completed. I talked to the manager of Moose Jaw Housing just last week, and he informed me that about 80 per cent of the houses have started construction or started planning for, which he was very delighted with. It's a lot faster than we had originally anticipated it might be, but it's a good news story, and I'm proud that it's going forward in that respect.

Further to that, the government has broadened the Headstart on a Home program to encourage the construction of rental properties. Since its creation in 2011, Headstart on a Home has provided more than \$193 million to finance the construction of

1,159 entry-level homes. Another successful story for the province of Saskatchewan and the government in meeting the challenges of housing. We know housing is a challenge, and we're working to address that as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to cover the features of the Throne Speech in a 20-minute presentation. The Throne Speech is prepared to meet the challenges of growth and, in summation, it is for the people of Saskatchewan. It's for a better living for all the people of Saskatchewan, a higher standard of living.

In the last six years, we have lowered income taxes. We have lowered property taxes. We have lowered corporate taxes to be competitive and attract investment, and we have attracted businesses. We've attracted investment. We're growing the population. We're broadening the tax base.

We're expanding resource development with uranium, potash, and with BHP Billiton and K+S. Mr. Speaker, just two weeks ago, I do believe, I had the opportunity to do a tour of the K+S mining site. They're progressing very nicely with construction keep on going, but they have boreholes already made. They've got a lab set up there. Then they're testing the product as they plan for the future.

[19:30]

Mr. Speaker, we've increased the health care, and there's more in the Throne Speech on that. We've reduced waiting times. There's more doctors. There's more nurses. There's more education spaces for doctors and nurses. We've got better health care into rural Saskatchewan with the collaborative emergency centres. We're building hospitals, Mr. Speaker, in North Battleford, the children's hospital in Saskatoon, and yes, the Moose Jaw Hospital. It'll be closed in this fall. They'll be able to work on the inside of it, and it's slightly ahead of schedule, on budget. It's really looking good, and I certainly appreciate that the plans are moving forward in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on longer and longer but I see that certainly the time is passing. We have improved highways, construction and upgrades. We've twinned the highway between Saskatoon and P.A. [Prince Albert]. That's been finished. There are major heavy traffic areas in the province that will be twinned in the future. There's been more money for municipalities, reduced regulation bottlenecks. Even the Crown investments through SaskPower and SaskTel are being made to better serve the people.

There are a lot of good things in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. I've touched on a few of them, I think, especially the ones that have been close to the city of Moose Jaw. I appreciate the work that has been gone into this. I appreciate the foresight that this government has — looking forward, meeting the challenges of growth, growing the province, and doing the kinds of things to benefit all of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I will not support the amendment but I will be in support of the motion of the Speech from the Throne.

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

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to I guess part of my speech is going to be discussing the new anti-bullying initiative. Without letting the cat out of the bag, I just wanted to talk about all the hard work that's gone into it from the staff in the Ministry of Education as well as the Minister of Education's office.

But first I would like to, you know, acknowledge my constituents from Fairview and thank them once again for allowing me to represent them and for me to be able to sit in this seat. I still get a little bit overwhelmed when I pull up to the legislature and realize I get to work here. This is part of my job, you know, as well as working in the constituency, and definitely it's still very surreal even though it's been more than a few years. So even tonight I was still quite affected by it. And I think that that really, you know, contributes to the way I try and do my work as well as relate to my constituents and be a representative.

Because nobody really gives you a handbook in how to be an MLA. It would have been nice in the beginning. And you try and figure things out and you hope you don't screw up too bad. But definitely, you know, you put the time and the energy and the effort into it, and definitely realize that it is a privilege to sit in this Chamber and to sit, you know, and sit next to my colleagues. And definitely there's been some definite synergies between people on this side of the Chamber as well as on the other as I get to know the MLAs.

And I'm being very earnest when I do, I guess, talk about we need everybody's perspective in terms of what this bullying strategy is going to be. And I'm very hopeful that the members opposite really do put in a submission. The submission deadline is October 31st for the online submissions and they can send an email to anti-bullying@gov.sk.ca.

The deadline of October 31st hasn't changed since the spring. That deadline for online email submissions has always been there. We haven't pushed back the date. And definitely it's been widely reported in the media. And it's also on the website so it's pretty, you know, it's not very hard to find in terms of . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. You know, we didn't push back the date.

The date has been constant. And it's very difficult to sit and just listen and not be able to defend myself or defend my team at the Ministry of Education. And realizing all the hard work and all the long hours that they have put in, and definitely even before I was appointed as Legislative Secretary, the good work has been done definitely from some people in the department who were in, you know, tasked with looking at anti-bullying measures. So I really, I really want to thank the staff at the Ministry of Education as well as in the minister's office with all the hard work and the long hours they put in. And definitely it's not an easy job. It's a very touchy subject and definitely everybody has an opinion about it and they've been touched by bullying in some way.

We have many parents and grandparents and even aunts and uncles sitting in this Chamber and in this building who know somebody close to them that's been affected by bullying, and definitely not to take it lightly. And we need to do definitely do our research and our consultation and go through the process,

make sure it's thorough, and make sure it's done right. I've always stressed that I would like to make sure that we are as thorough as possible and also I'd like to kind of only do it once. I don't want to come back to it in six months and amend it even though it's going to be basically a living document because technology changes every day and, you know, the experiences of our children in our schools change every day.

You know, they constantly evolve and definitely we can't, you know, predict the future and what, you know, a child's school experience is going to be in the next 5 or even 10 years. But we definitely have to make sure that we have a strong foundation in place before, you know, we just kind of roll out a strategy because definitely we don't want to jump the gun. We want to make sure that the process is followed. And the dates are pretty clear.

So the deadline is on Thursday. I stress that again and hopefully somebody from, you know, the members opposite take that down and hopefully we get a submission from them because I'd really like to hear what their opinions and their views are. We have many parents across, members across, as well as grandparents, and we have a couple of teachers over there and lawyers and definitely we'd like everybody's opinion so I am . . . I say again, I'm being very earnest in wanting their opinion.

So we did 16 in-person consultations and that is not the only consultation that we have done. We went to eight different communities and eight were with stakeholders and eight were in the evening with the public. So that did not end there. It didn't end there. It can't end there. For it to end there would be very lazy on our part and I'm one person who, and others on my team who go above and beyond in our jobs and take this very seriously. And we also had online discussion groups and that's where we got other submissions. And we had gotten up to over 1,000. And now we're just waiting for the email submissions. We didn't just have the consultations, finish up in June, and then go sit down and wait around. Work has been done. We're still meeting with stakeholder groups. We just met with the Human Rights Commission last week again. It was one of several meetings.

And you know, sometimes one meeting isn't enough. Sometimes the stakeholder groups would like to have a couple of meetings, and we're definitely accommodating them because we want to make sure that, you know, we have all our t's crossed and our i's dotted because when we come up, when we release the strategy, this is affecting children's lives, which is very, very serious. Definitely we do not take it lightly and, you know, and the process was . . . The timelines were specifically set with that in mind.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, we've had two deaths in the last couple of weeks, of children. And that's exactly what they are. They're children. We had one last week, Savhanah Turcotte from Regina, and also Todd Loik of North Battleford earlier this fall. And the fact that these children don't think that there's any alternative for them and that death is a way out is very, very upsetting and disconcerting. And this is one of the reasons why we have to make sure that the bullying strategy is done in a way where it can be effective. Definitely don't want to hear about any more deaths due to bullying and for children to be so young. And it is very difficult.

As my daughter leaves her teenage years and goes into young adulthood, and just having discussions with her about bullying and then realizing she was very lucky, that she had a pretty good high school experience and she had a pretty good circle of friends where she didn't deal with that . . . But you know, not everybody can say that. There are parents out there who are dealing with this, have been dealing with this for years and this is the kind of feedback and discussion that we heard at these consultations.

And definitely we need to be holistic in how we approach it because we can't just focus on the person who's being bullied. We definitely have to look at why the person who's, you know, bullying the kids, why they're behaving the way they are and what's the root cause of that.

So as a result it is going to take a little bit longer than some people would like. Definitely if I had all the answers, you know, and my team had all the answers, we would have rolled something out. But you know, not everybody has all the answers ever, anywhere. So it's very, you know, a very difficult prospect in terms of trying to come up with a strategy that's all encompassing and that's as well-rounded as, you know, we can make it. And definitely, you know, in terms of addressing the bully, you know, we definitely don't want to bully the bully as government. We don't want to, you know, not treat them like they're children because that's essentially what they are in the K to 12 system. They're children.

So when you approach that with the same perspective and realize that we need to not nip the behaviour in the bud, but basically give these kids support . . . And as government, you know, we can't solve everybody's problems. And I would hope as a citizen, and I'm not speaking as an MLA right now, that I wouldn't want government to have all the answers because I would want the community to get involved. And that's definitely one of the approaches that we took, you know, when we had the consultations in my opening remarks. You know, I think the communities are, you know, you guys are going to be writing this strategy.

Because one of the first questions that I got was, what's your opinion? And I always reiterated, it doesn't really . . . I'm here to listen to you. I'm not here to dictate about what this plan is going to be. You guys have to tell me what's going on. What's your experiences? What's your children's experiences? What's your neighbours' experiences? What are you hearing out there? What are these kids going through? Why are these children taking their lives? Thirteen years old. This little girl was 13 years old. And I don't know what her mom's going through right now.

Mr. Speaker, we need to take that into context when we're coming up with a strategy. And it was very hard for me in the last couple of weeks when everybody wants to know what's the strategy. And it's really hard to keep my mouth shut when it comes to that because I don't want to jump the gun and let the cat out of the bag until we actually, you know, we do as much due diligence as we need to. So I'm very glad that our government is coming up with these new measures, which was mentioned in the Throne Speech.

[19:45]

Mr. Speaker, I know there was many other aspects of the Throne Speech, but this stood out in my mind because I'm very close to it, and definitely don't want to let the work of, you know, the people involved go unnoticed. We were very fortunate to have a member from the Health ministry come over and help us out and give us a different perspective of what we need to do in terms of what we need to look at as well, and not just education policy. There's many other different ministries that are involved, such as Policing, Justice, Health, Social Services. It's very, very diverse. It's a very diverse issue. And there's also diverse components of bullying, and I wish I could address all of them. But in this anti-bullying strategy, we're definitely going to be looking at the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system because that's what I was tasked with, and definitely looking at, you know, ways to address it and where we can have happy and healthy and productive children, and give them the best possible quality of life here in Saskatchewan.

I came back home about 10 years ago after living in southern US [United States] as well as out east. And I wanted to raise my daughter in a place where she felt safe and had really good values and where she would be hard-working, and know what it's like to, you know, walk down the street and feel okay and feel safe. When we left the US we were living in Houston, and I love Houston but it's not a good place to raise a young daughter. And especially if I'm working all the time I can't always be there.

So here I could do that. I could do what I wanted to do in terms of going to school and working and knowing my daughter can walk home and arrive home safely and get the support that she needs. And definitely very lucky that she's in her first year of university, and I still have a little bit of a hold on her. She's still living at home, which is nice. I get her for a few more years, in my mind. She keeps threatening to move to South Africa. That might happen eventually. But realizing that, you know, we're pretty blessed to live in Saskatchewan. You know, we're so lucky, you know, we're not experiencing what a lot of other countries and even our neighbours to the south are experiencing in term of economic turbulence and just even the level of disparity.

You know, we live in western society, you know, and I realized when I had gone over to India in 2008 how westernized I was. I had gone over there, and I was of the mindset I was indigenous. I was not a Canadian. This is how I felt in 2008. I went over to India, and it changed me. And I thought, I am a Canadian. I like the western comforts. I like running water, even though as a child, you know, there were times where I lived in a household when we didn't have running water. And definitely, you know, realizing that I don't have to go very far to be comfortable. And definitely realizing that hard work will . . . With hard work, you can achieve success. And then realizing that success doesn't have any colour attached to it, you know. Opportunity has no colour attached to it. So you know, and the key is to know who is in front of you and to not ever give up that opportunity.

So I have a quote. Everybody knows I love quotes. I had to find a good one. But I found Steve Jobs, and this resonated with me because I took a path that's a road less travelled. And some people still scratch their heads when they see where I am, and where they've known me for years and they still can't believe I am where I am. So Steve Jobs said:

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma — [which I hear a lot of dogma in here and] which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. [And] everything else is secondary.

And this is the message that I send out to the kids out there who are different, who aren't following the path that their parents or their cousins or their friends are taking, and they decide to be different. And that there is always a tomorrow and it's not going to be as bad as it is today. And definitely I want to send out the message out there to kids, is there is hope. There are people out there. There are support systems. Definitely if any of you are listening and you're being bullied and you don't think that there are any support systems out there, you just have to reach out to them. Because in the last few months, I've learned we have so many supports out there, that the community of Saskatchewan is just amazing and there is already some good programming that's being done out there with . . . in terms of bullying.

And I don't know how many minutes I've been talking, and I could go on with a whole list of things. But, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment and I will be supporting the Throne Speech.

The Speaker: — Why is the Government Whip on his feet?

Mr. Ottenbreit: — For introduction of guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has asked for leave for introduction of guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, to all the members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce two very good friends of mine up in your gallery, Patrick and Andrea Thomson — no P — from Yorkton. They come to Yorkton via Abbotsford and other parts around the world actually, Mr. Speaker.

Pat is a very accomplished airframe maintenance engineer, a long history in aircraft maintenance all around the world, and has very interesting stories in how he came to Yorkton. But we're very blessed to have him and Andrea there right now.

Andrea is actually a property manager in Yorkton, worked with Pat at the Prairie Harvest Christian Life Centre for a time there as well. Pat, his main duty there is youth pastor and the lead and developer of Reload Ministries, a paintball ministry program in Yorkton that's doing just great work with youth there. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask you and all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon

Nutana.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and it's certainly an honour to be able to rise in this Assembly tonight to speak to the Speech from the Throne that was presented by the Lieutenant Governor last Wednesday.

First of all, I guess I want to start off by just acknowledging how quickly time flies. It's hard to believe that I've been a member now for almost two years. And I certainly echo the comments of the member from Fairview in terms of still being a bit in awe of this Chamber and this Assembly and being able to drive up in my vehicle and say, there's the office. It's an amazing place to be and certainly in a large part because of the people that work here.

But before I get into more of that, I just want to start off by acknowledging some important people in my life, and particularly want to thank my family for all the supports they have given me. My older son is now in second year in university so he's kind of off on his own and I hear from him on Facebook every now and then, but I still have my youngest son, Sam, at home. And Sam is someone that keeps me grounded and always sort of in touch with what his generation is looking at and the issues they're dealing with. And certainly I know he's dealing with the modern lifestyle, including the social media networks that are so prevalent in people's lives these days, and how young people are struggling with sort of the interpersonal relationships and the evolution of social media for relationships with young people. We have some really good discussions about that.

And how he relates to his friends now is much different than how I related to my friends when I was growing up. In fact, you know, not to date myself but I remember when we had the button telephone and my uncle would always sort of click it up and down — I was talking to my friends on the phone — because he'd get impatient with me and my sister when we used to chat with our girlfriends on the phone. So there was no privacy then, that's for sure, in terms of conversations. But we managed to occupy a lot of telephone time.

Now you look at it and there's texting and there's Facebook and there's all kinds of websites and social media — in fact even socializing through game playing on the Internet. So it's quite a different world for children and I really appreciate the perspective of my son Sam and his friends and the way they operate in this new world of social media.

I'd also like to thank my brothers and my sisters for their constant support. My sister is a recently retired teacher and I have two brothers who are farming on our family farm down in

Lafleche. And again they certainly keep me grounded as well in terms of what's going on in their rural communities.

And I would also really like to acknowledge my mom and my dad. And my dad and my mom both come from what I would call entrepreneurial backgrounds. My dad was a farmer and his dad was the homesteading farmer before him. And they are essentially entrepreneurs in the farming community, struggled to make the farm business work, and did a good job at that and were able to pass it on to my two brothers. And my mom's family, my grandpa was the pharmacist in town and ran a pharmacy business. So certainly there's a lot of entrepreneurial spirit within our family and within our community.

And also able to say that I'm proud to say that they were also community-minded people who support socialistic principles like credit unions and co-operatives. And we hear today that even credit unions could be successful business people. So I'm proud to be part of that background and that heritage, that entrepreneurial spirit that has been such a basis for the amazing things that people in Saskatchewan have accomplished over the last many, many decades.

In terms of my experience here in the last two years, even though I'm past 50, I have learned so much. And the learning curve has been steep, but what an opportunity for someone like me to be able to come in to this Assembly, be part of a great team of opposition members, and to actually really learn a lot about the government and enjoy meeting and working with a lot of the government members as well. It's been, Mr. Speaker . . . And the staff of the Legislative Assembly. Again a wonderful, wonderful opportunity for someone like me and certainly an honour and privilege to represent the people of Saskatoon Nutana in this capacity.

Before I go on too further, I do also want to acknowledge the support of my sons' father, Mike Fisher, who is again one of the reasons why I'm able to do this job because he's always there when we can't be at home for our family responsibilities. So a shout-out to Mike. He's the best ex that a woman could want, and he certainly is very, very, very supportive of my career and my political choices, and I appreciate that very, very much.

Also I just want to wish my mom and dad a happy anniversary. It's their 60th wedding anniversary this coming up month, and we're going to be celebrating that in Lafleche at the end of November. So very exciting. We will be in Lafleche for the 60th anniversary.

I would also like to really thank our caucus staff and the legislative staff. Again the support of the people that are here keeping this place going is really, really important. And our caucus staff have been really the most reliable people I've been ever able to work with, and I really want to appreciate them, particularly Kyall Glennie who's been very helpful for me in the last part of this session. And I'm always able to know that there's somebody there for me, and Kyall in particular I wanted to thank for that.

[20:00]

Also want to thank my constituency staff. This April, my

former constituency assistant Troy MacGillivray had gone back to his musical career, and so I now have the wonderful Deborah Aitken who is there in the office every day. And Deb is just a ray of sunshine for me. She's a very optimistic, forward-looking individual. She's very talented and very creative and really brings a lot to the position. She loves people and she loves people's stories and really, really digs into that kind of work. So I'm very fortunate and thankful that Deb has agreed to work for me and is there in the office looking after things when we can't be there.

Again I want to mention how happy I am to be representing the people of Saskatoon Nutana. Been living there for more than 20 years now, and really I have to say it's probably the best constituency in Saskatchewan. I don't want to just, you know, say anything about anybody else's, but Saskatoon Nutana is really a good group of people to be with. I have to say there's even a couple of members opposite who live in my riding, and I'm happy to represent them as well.

There are a lot of people doing their part in Saskatoon Nutana. And they are people who are very concerned about the future of the province and really care about this province and love this province, and they love our city and the city of Saskatoon. I often refer to them as a triple A riding because we have lots and lots of academics in our riding. I also have a lot of artists, and we also have a lot of activists. We have people who are very politically engaged in Saskatoon Nutana and are truly protective of our democratic procedures. And quite often, you will find someone who's all three. So we have a great mix of people in Saskatoon Nutana and I'm very pleased to be able to represent them.

Over the summer, got to visit and travel throughout the province on a number of different trips. And even in Saskatoon itself, I'm always happy to head down to the farmers' market on Saturday morning. Often see our mayor there, the mayor of the city of Saskatoon who makes his visits to the farmers' market. Lots of people there that you can touch base with and find out what's going on in the heart of Saskatoon. So that's a great opportunity to mix it up with people.

I was able to attend the 100th anniversary of my hometown this summer, and the member for Wood River was there bringing greetings. But it was great to be part of that and to see my dad, as a former reeve of the RM [rural municipality] of Wood River. And then my uncle, who's the former mayor of the town of Lafleche, got to cut the cake, the official cake, for the 100th anniversary of my hometown. So it was great to get there and see how people are prospering and how they're working hard to do their part to make sure that Saskatchewan continues to thrive and prosper as we go forward.

I was able to attend a number of cultural festivals and events throughout the summer, up to Ness Creek of course for the Ness Creek Music Festival, and also a new festival up there, Country at the Creek, in June. And it's good to see the people of Big River getting more and more involved in the culture and events out at Ness Creek.

I was able to attend and participate in Back to Batoche this year. I actually got to perform on stage with John Arcand, the master of the Métis fiddle. And it was a great night to get out

there and see the pride in Batoche, the Métis pride and the great cultural event there. And also I got to attend out in Tuffnell, a fiddle camp down in Kenosee Lake, the Kenosee Lake Kitchen Party, which is in Mr. Speaker's home riding. A great area and a lot of fiddle activity going on then, lots of young kids out there doing the dancing and the playing and making music and sharing the love of music together. So it really inspires me to be able to participate in those kinds of things.

And in particular, Mr. Speaker, I want to just give a kudos to all those volunteers out there who make these events happen. And it's not just signing up for a shift for a couple hours to work the gate at a festival or an event, but it's the immense quantity of hours that goes into organizing events, that really people roll up their sleeves and do the work. And it's always a pleasure to know that people are working together to put together these wonderful events. And I will be hopefully talking about more of those as we go through in this session.

One example I wanted to mention, Mr. Speaker, was, if you recall, at the Speech from the Throne on Wednesday, there was a school from Regina that performed some singing. And there was a fiddle player, or a violin player, I guess, and a cello player. The two boys that did that are Raymond and Benjamin Knorr. And this summer we were hosting a national fiddling championship in Saskatoon, and Raymond and Benjamin, in order to do fundraising for that, performed two separate occasions in Kipling, Saskatchewan. And they donated all the money they raised — \$1,700. And these are two teenaged boys, Mr. Speaker, who donated that money to the cause of supporting fiddle music in Saskatchewan and Canada. And it's those kinds of boys and that kind of initiative that gives me hope for the future. So I really wanted to congratulate them. It was a real pleasure to see them here in the Assembly last week and performing with their school. I think it was the Winston Knoll Collegiate, if I'm correct, and they were . . .

An Hon. Member: — It was Campbell.

Ms. Sproule: — Was it Campbell? Oh, okay. Okay, well then I want to stand corrected then. It was Campbell Collegiate.

So now we get into the purpose of the Throne Speech. I wanted to make sure I understood what the purpose of the Throne Speech was. So I turned to my good friend Wikipedia and Google and had a little look at what was going in there. And I also turned to the resources that are available here in the Legislative Library, and again something I'm very thankful for because the people that work in the Legislative Library are always able to help me out when I want to do some research on some of the issues that we're dealing with.

So what I found is that there's a couple of purposes for a Throne Speech. And the first that I was able to ascertain was that the Throne Speech is typically a report on the condition of, in this case, the province. And I think we certainly found a lot in this Throne Speech that talked about what this government has done. So I guess in that sense there's lots of looking back and seeing what this government has attempted to do over the last few years.

But the other piece I think that's always mentioned and when you do the research on a Throne Speech is where the monarch,

in this case our Lieutenant Governor, is asked to outline the legislative agenda for the upcoming session. And I mean historically what the Speech from the Throne was was a summons for all the members of the Legislative Assembly or the parliament to come forward to do the work of the Chamber. So in this case we have a Throne Speech that's to summon us here to the Legislative Assembly as legislators and to do the work that this government wants to set out.

I had to look harder in the Throne Speech to find out exactly what the reasons for summoning us to this debate were because there wasn't really a whole lot that I could find in terms of upcoming legislation and what the goals and intentions or the legislative agenda for this particular session is going to be. Why were we summonsed and what will we be debating here in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker?

I went through it carefully and I found there were about six things that looks like is on the agenda for the government this fall. On page 3 of the Throne Speech, we found there is intentions to introduce amendments to *The Personal Care Homes Act*. We don't know for sure, but there's an indication on page 5 that there will be a response to the anti-bullying report that the member from Saskatoon Fairview was just talking about. On page 7 we know . . . we expect there will be something on the traffic safety recommendations. Page 16, some sort of legislation for protection for adults in our community who must rely on others to ensure their well-being. So that's a vague reference to some sort of legislation that perhaps the Minister for Health will be introducing, but it wasn't clear to us and there certainly wasn't any indication in the Throne Speech what the content of that would be.

Then they're also rehashing the essential services law. They've — on page 16 — indicated that they attend to amend the Sask. employment Act, despite the fact that I understand the Supreme Court of Canada has now agreed to hear the case against the introduction of that particularly contentious piece of legislation. And the only other thing I found in the Throne Speech in terms of why we are being summonsed here to speak is new regulations for agricultural drainage.

So that doesn't sound like a very heavy legislative agenda, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not sure if that's going to be the whole content of our debates in the next few weeks. So perhaps there's some surprises that we don't know about. And actually in the short two years that I've been here, I have noticed that it is the tendency of this government to not talk about the legislation they intend to introduce at the Throne Speech, which is a bit of a departure from the normal customary procedures where the Throne Speech is an indication and a demonstration of what the agenda will be.

For example, Mr. Speaker, I was participating earlier this year in some hearings about *The Provincial Lands Act*. And the indication we received at that time from the ministry staff was that there would be legislation this fall in relation to *The Provincial Lands Act*. I know that at the Throne Speech itself members of the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association were here and were disappointed that there wasn't any announcement about *The Provincial Lands Act*. And certainly we don't have any idea what the agenda is or what the content of that Act may be if it's introduced.

So I'm a bit disappointed that we weren't able to find out more about that particular piece of proposed legislation. And it just makes me wonder what else this government didn't talk about in the Throne Speech. So we, again I remember last year when we found out there would be changes to the Information Services Corporation, it certainly wasn't announced as part of the Throne Speech. It was an element of surprise, and the same when legislation was introduced in terms of adding more MLAs, which were not asked for or even discussed during the election period.

So we're not sure why this government chooses to introduce legislation, that why they won't use the conventional way of introducing their legislative agenda as part of the Throne Speech. And our job as legislators and our job as members of the opposition is to provide that thoughtful reflection of what the public's concerns are with that legislative agenda. It's difficult to do that in this response when we don't seem to have any indication exactly what the government's up to.

I was thinking, you know, if they're hoping to have the element of surprise, my only concern is this is not a birthday party, Mr. Speaker. This is the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, although it is one of my colleague's birthday today. The member from Regina Elphinstone is celebrating something in the 40s, I believe, a birthday party. But he looks, as the member opposite suggested, no older than, not a day over 20 I'm sure. But his youthful appearance belies his wisdom and his leadership as our House Leader.

One of the things I wanted to raise in terms of this Throne Speech that was brought up by the editorials we were all . . . I was happy to be able to have an opportunity to look at what the pundits in the fifth estate had to say. And the quote from *The StarPhoenix* was that this Throne Speech is not very, it's not very . . . Here I'll just read it, and then we'll get it over with:

The most common complaint lodged against throne speeches is that they typically are heavy on rhetoric and vision, but frustratingly light on detail.

And they went on to say:

On Wednesday . . . the government delivered a speech that is the opposite. Although it is chockablock with details on actions the government has taken . . . what's frustratingly weak is its vision for Saskatchewan.

And as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with the editorial. This speech tends to look backwards more than it looks forwards, and it tends to spend a lot of time discussing what the government has done or has announced in the past. But certainly it doesn't give us any idea of what the future of Saskatchewan should look like. So it's a bit, it is disappointing — not a bit disappointing, it is certainly disappointing.

As the editorial points out later on — and this is something I think that this government is maybe missing the mark on — is that the true sign of progress, Mr. Speaker, is health. And a healthy society is something I think that should be first and foremost in any sort of legislative agenda or the spending of revenue dollars or tax dollars on the part of a government. And I just want to find my notes here. The editorial points out:

But more must be done to help the broad spectrum of people whose incomes haven't grown with the cost of living, who struggle with addiction, mental illnesses, HIV and other infections, and homelessness, or whose income supplements have fallen way below what is necessary to survive, much less help change lives.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we know that in order to have a healthy society — and this isn't just health care dealing with illness, but this is about having a healthy society overall — the things we need to be looking at are income. And when we live in a place in Saskatchewan where the income gap is getting wider instead of narrower, this is of concern for everyone, Mr. Speaker, and there are numerous studies that prove that.

[20:15]

Income, education, employment, housing, the wider environment, and social supports — those are the things that determine the health of a society. And unless you have those first and foremost in the legislative agenda and in the executive government's actions, those indicators of health are going to suffer. And we will have, like the people I have in my riding, I have a lot of seniors that live in Saskatoon Nutana and they are being squeezed very much because they're on fixed incomes and they're terrified about where they're going to end up living because of the cost of living that are impacting them so much.

I have students who are really struggling to be able to attend university because of the cost of living. So these are the people, these are the indicators that tell us whether we're doing a good job as a society. And those types of things are not to be found in any great detail in this Speech from the Throne.

There are of course some programs and some ideas I think that are very laudable and I want to comment on them as well, Mr. Speaker. There are definitely good things to be found in this speech and the first one, recently announced, is the Urgent Issues Action Fund in relation to health care in the long-term care facilities. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, our leader and the opposition have been repeatedly calling for improvements to long-term care, and certainly the staffing levels.

And I guess my biggest question about this \$10 million Urgent Issues Action Fund is, why is the urgency there? And it shouldn't be there, Mr. Speaker, because there was every indication for many years now that this issue was going to become more and more pressing and urgent. So it's a bit disappointing that the money has to be put in as an urgent action fund when we know, and this government has had every indication, that these problems are mounting, they're growing, and they're becoming more and more serious. And unfortunately they haven't responded in a timely fashion.

There are good things in the health section in the budget or in the Throne Speech. The amendment to *The Personal Care Homes Act* for public disclosure of inspection reports, the idea of collaborative emergency centres, the pilot project in Maidstone, and new centres that are coming up, I think that's very important.

On page 4, the government talks about hot-spotting pilot programs to help with high-risk, high-use patients who

repeatedly show up in emergency rooms. Mr. Speaker, this is critical. I mean it's costing the taxpayers a lot of money and it's obviously not working in terms of the needs for these particular patients.

What I find a bit frustrating is that on the same page we see the government talking about Patient First and student first, which is a new initiative that they're implementing in education, but we don't see anything on Housing First, which is an initiative that the major cities in Saskatchewan have been talking about for a long time and are looking for this government for leadership and support in starting a Housing First program here to deal with the issues of homelessness. And I was again looking at Housing First on Wikipedia, and there's a good article there that the government may want to look at that describes the importance of this kind of approach where you put people in homes first and then these types of hot-spotting pilot programs would be less likely to be required.

So the science is there. The evidence is there. I hate to say the evidence is evident, but I said it, so . . . But we know that Housing First is something that is desirable, it's being used in other provinces, and we have other provincial governments who are supporting it. So you know, let's keep up with the firsts. We have Patient First. We're starting student first. Why not Housing First? And I think that's something this government should take very seriously and take a very close look at because of the success in other areas.

We have quite a bit on education in the Speech from the Throne and no wonder, given the trouble this government seems to have with handling this particular file. And maybe mishandling is generous, Mr. Speaker. But a couple of things that I want to point out in terms of the education and the response, and one is in my new capacity as official opposition critic for francophone affairs. And I just wanted to share this story with the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and maybe point out that there's certainly more that could be done in this context.

On October 15th, les Conseil des écoles fransaskoises wrote a letter to all the parents of students in their schools. And you may not know this, Mr. Speaker, but the francophone education community have had to take this government to court pretty much every year for the last few years because the funding they're receiving is not meeting their constitutional requirements under our constitution here in Canada. It's very frustrating for the educators because they're spending more time in court and more money in court than they would like to be doing, and it's because the lack of response from this government for their needs. Since 2007 they've had to go to court multiple times. There are growing numbers. The schools are bursting at the seam. Their portables are filled before they're even delivered, and they keep winning in court but for some reason this government refuses to recognize this constitutional obligations.

At any rate, in this letter I'd like to share a paragraph for you. It's in French and I will read it in French but I have a copy of it and will share that with the Assembly. So I'll read it in French first and then I'll give a bit of a translation. But here's a letter dated October 15, just went out. And it says:

Le budget . . . [équilibre] présenté à la province n'est pas

un budget de choix. Il ne répond pas aux besoins uniques du Conseil des écoles francophones. Comme tout conseil scolaire de la minorité au Canada, le CSF doit respecter ces obligations constitutionnelles en vertu de l'article 23 de la Charte canadienne des droits et des libertés. L'article 23 assure aux parents ayants droit un accès équitable à l'éducation dans la langue de la minorité. Toutefois, ces obligations nécessitent un financement supplémentaire. La Cour a d'ailleurs déjà reconnu «que le CSF doit composer avec un budget serré et a épuisé les réserves destinées aux urgences.»

[Translation: The . . . [balanced] budget presented to the province is not a budget choice. It does not meet the unique needs of the Conseil des écoles francophones. Like any school board in the minority in Canada, the CSF must comply with constitutional obligations under article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Article 23 provides for eligible parents equal access to education in the minority language. However, these requirements require additional funding. The court has already recognized that “the CSF has to deal with a tight budget and has exhausted the reserves for emergencies.”]

So basically what the French . . . council of French schools is telling parents is that the budget they presented is not a budget that they've chosen. It's a balanced budget, but it doesn't respond to the unique needs of their council. And like every school council in Canada that's for a minority school, they have to respect the constitutional obligations because of article 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And article 23 assures parents that they have the right to equal access to education in the language of their choice. And so these obligations always require supplemental finances that are not being provided by this government. And so what the courts are recognizing every time they go to court is that this council of French schools have to make a budget that is broken and always exhausts the reserves that are supposed to be for emergencies. So this is a real difficulty for the French schools, and we don't see anything in the Throne Speech that recognizes the frustrations and the failure to meet the constitutional obligations that we have under section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Those same constitutional rights are of concern to the Catholic schools. We met last week with, or a couple of weeks ago, with the Catholic school board and again, in terms of minority rights, we have religious rights that require . . . Equality doesn't mean treating everybody equally, Mr. Speaker. And that's something I've said before in this legislature, and I'll say it again. And that's that those same things, those same concerns that we hear from the French schools council, we're also hearing from the Catholic school board. And I'm just wanting to highlight that and just say that we don't see a whole lot in this budget — in fact we don't see anything — that deals with the recognition of those frustrations and difficulties that those organizations are having in meeting their constitutional requirements and our constitutional requirements.

We see in the education piece that the student-first program they're talking about is going to start with wide-ranging consultation. And you know, Mr. Speaker, that's really encouraging because this government's record on consultation with educators hasn't exactly been stellar . . . [inaudible

interjection] . . . Or in any area. That's right. Hasn't been something that's very commendable. So we're glad to see that they are intending to do the consultation. It's too bad it's taken this long to realize that. But we're certainly supportive of that form of consultation and we hope that that new program will provide this government with the information that they're looking for.

One of the things we just heard the previous speaker from Saskatoon Fairview talk about was the work that's being done on anti-bullying, and the Throne Speech refers to a forum that's going to happen in November for national Anti-Bullying Week. And, Mr. Speaker, there's only a couple of things I want to say about that and it's something that's been bothering me a lot since I started attending here in the Chamber. And that is, in order for us to expect students to not bully, it's important for adults to lead the way. And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that the behaviour in the Chamber here sometimes is bullying and there's a lot of that that goes on here.

And when we have school kids come and attend and watch — and I hear this comment over and over again, and I hear it not only from the schoolchildren but I hear it from people that I care about — and they say they really are disgusted by the behaviour in this Assembly at times. And I think that in order for us to show leadership . . . We are the leaders of this province. We've been elected to be leaders in this province. It is very important for us to treat each other in this Chamber without bullying. And I have to say, by and large, most members are not engaging in that type of behaviour. But when it does occur, it's very disturbing.

And I think also, Mr. Speaker, I've been asked since I got elected, as a woman, to talk to women's groups about women in politics. And one of the things that I discovered as I'm doing some of my research when I do these speeches is the impact of this perception of what goes on in these chambers as . . . I have to find my paper on that. The perception of many women and why they choose not to engage in political activity is because of that type of behaviour that goes on. And so if we really, truly want this to be a place where people feel welcome and people feel that they can bring their ideas and their enthusiasm, their passion for legislation and their passion for bettering their society, that we can't have a place where bullying occurs. So I just wanted to raise that, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing that was raised in the . . . and we've heard lots about this in the last few days is, raised in the education piece, is the idea of these new joint-use schools. And the government has described the method that they're using as an innovative P3 bundling approach through SaskBuilds. And so we've heard a lot recently about P3s and it appears that there's a lot of rhetoric that goes around what exactly P3s are. So I turned to my friend again, Wikipedia, to just try and understand. Because some of the questions that are being asked of me is, who's going to own these schools? Who's going to end up owning them at the end of the day? And this is something that's not clear, and we certainly don't know, by what the government has announced, who's going to actually own them. So we're looking forward to finding out the answer to that.

But one of the things it says in Wikipedia, and I'm going to quote, it says there are usually two fundamental drivers for P3s.

Firstly, P3s — and this is what we hear from the government:

... P3s enable the public sector to harness the expertise and efficiencies that the private sector can bring to the delivery of certain facilities and services traditionally procured and delivered by the public sector.

So we've heard a lot about that from this government. What we're not hearing about from this government is the second piece of the P3 definition that's found in Wikipedia. And it says, secondly, a P3, I'm quoting again:

... a P3 is structured so that the public sector body seeking to make a capital investment does not incur any borrowing. Rather, the P3 borrowing is incurred by the private sector vehicle implementing the project and therefore, from the public sector's perspective, a P3 is an "off-balance sheet" method of financing the delivery of new or refurbished public sector assets.

So I think that's very important and it's interesting that this government isn't talking about the fact that they can successfully invest our future without it showing up on the balance sheet. And, Mr. Speaker, I think this is something our Provincial Auditor has pointed out on other occasions in terms of how this government approaches its bookkeeping, because what we see is the debt isn't showing up. And that's something that's very handy for a government, Mr. Speaker, to be able to not show the debt that they're incurring on the balance sheet.

And I think that this government needs to take a more serious look and be more honest with the people about the fact that they are able to hide debt by using this P3 model. So it's not just for the first half of the definition that they're doing it but, Mr. Speaker, I think they need to be more open and transparent about the second half of the P3 equation, which is allowing them to basically defer debt. In fact I thought I'd be clever, Mr. Speaker, and I thought rather than calling them P3s maybe we should be calling them D3s — because to me they're deferring and delaying debt. And that is really part of the picture that we're not hearing about from this government.

So we will be watching very carefully to see, are these going to be owned by the people of Saskatchewan, these schools? Or are we going to be leasing them in perpetuity? There's nothing in the Crown's speech that tells us that. There's nothing from the Speech from the Throne that tells us what the details are on this kind of thing. And so we'll be watching very carefully to find out where the debt will lie and what the impact on the taxpayers is going to be.

[20:30]

So we're glad to see new schools, Mr. Speaker, and certainly we've been calling for them for a long time. Again no surprise to this government that, with the increase in population, we're going to need more schools. But all of a sudden they decided that they need to get caught up. And so they're using the cookie cutter, bulk bundling approach to actually just get caught up with the deficit that the schools are incurring right now.

One of the things again that I was happy to see in the Throne Speech was the Premier's recognition that Internet access in

schools is suffering and that there's a barrier there. You know, he actually talked to teachers and found out it was a problem and is responding to it. And I think that's an important response because Internet learning is very much part of the modern education approach, and so it has to be there.

On post-secondary education, really there's nothing new there, and I think that's disappointing for a lot of people that are struggling in their post-secondary pursuits. There are some individual advantages that are described, but there's really no oversight or vision for the future for post-secondary education.

I mentioned earlier on the highways we're going to see perhaps ... We're told the government will act on the recommendations of the Special Committee on Traffic Safety. And as my colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale indicated, there's a couple of pieces missing on that report, and we are certainly really hopeful that the government will take account of that and do the right thing by ensuring that the impoundment of vehicles is part of the new law that's being introduced, hopefully, we hope.

I'm going to skip ahead a little bit here. Just a couple of comments on competitiveness. We see there's two full pages on competitiveness, under the heading of competitiveness, and yet there's not a single heading for First Nations and Métis people here in Saskatchewan. And it's concerning to me, Mr. Speaker, that we don't see more of a highlight on our partners in Confederation, the First Nations of Canada and the Métis people.

And there's a couple of mentions throughout the speech of smaller points on First Nations. But I guess I could move into that discussion right now. I was going to talk about it a little bit later. But on page 17, we have a heading, accountable government. And you would think maybe under that heading you might see something about being accountable to the First Nations partners and our Métis Nation partners in our relationship here, our government relationship. But it's not there. The only thing under accountable government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that we are finally getting a new lobbyist Act. And that seems to be the extent of accountability that this government is prepared to deal with in this particular Throne Speech.

There's no heading for First Nations people, and we know that our First Nations are the partners in Confederation. They have enshrined rights in the constitution. And I just wanted to point out a comment that I found on the January 16th *Globe and Mail* when the regional chief, Perry Bellegarde from the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations], was talking about the need for government to ensure that the duty to consult is being properly carried through.

And we have a comment from our Premier in that article that he said:

Our position will remain unchanged as long as I am premier, as long as this government is in office, that there will be no special deals for any group regardless of that group in terms of natural resource revenue sharing.

Mr. Speaker, to refer to our First Nations constitutional partners as a group is really relegating them to a status that is

inappropriate, in my view. We know that the First Nations were the founders of this country, and we know that in our constitutional relationship with them and within our treaty relationship with them that they are still a self-determining group of people. And just because we've imposed a domestic system of law overlaying that onto their enshrined self-determination rights is something that I don't think we can overlook.

And I find those kinds of comments coming from our Premier really are not reflective of the actual relationship with that particular sector of our society and of our Canadian history. And it really disturbs me when I hear those kinds of comments coming from our leadership, because it really doesn't show respect for the role of the First Nations people and the Métis people in Saskatchewan.

And I think by seeing that we don't find any kind of plan, any kind of vision for how our relationship with First Nations people is going to unfold in this great times that we have here in Saskatchewan, when we see First Nations people suffering and struggling with poverty issues beyond belief, Mr. Speaker, when we see the Idle No More movement and the frustrations that First Nations people have continuously with our government and with the governments of the country, it just saddens me, quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm very concerned about the kind of comments that we see coming from this Premier and this leader for the future of our relations with the First Nations. I could say a lot more about that but, given the hour, I'm going to move on in my comments. But I just wanted to mark that on the record, Mr. Speaker.

Another point I want to talk about on page 5, this government indicated in their speech that . . . They talked about the development of 500 new child care spaces. Again that's something that was already announced, so they're reannouncing something that they've already done. But what's of concern there, Mr. Speaker, is that they're announcing that there's 13,700 spaces in Saskatchewan when in fact that's not quite right, Mr. Speaker. And we know that many of those spaces don't exist. In fact about 3,000 of those spaces are not developed at this point in time. So although the announcement has been made, really the right number is more like around 10,700 spaces. There's still a desperate need for these spaces and you have to ask yourself: they've announced them; why don't they exist?

And I was talking to my colleague from Riversdale, Saskatoon Riversdale who indicates that a lot of the reasons for that is that the organizations that are approved to provide these spaces simply don't have the capacity to put them into place. So why is that, Mr. Speaker? I think that's something this government needs to take a look at and I'm hoping that they will do so in the very near future.

Okay now, I'm just going to move on to page 15 of the Throne Speech and there's one line in there that I found really disturbing and I wanted to highlight and talk about this a little bit. On page 15 under safe communities, there's a reference near the bottom of the page that says that "helping the victims of crime is a priority for my government." Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that there are some victims of crime in this province that are not being helped by this government, and it's

a sad story and it's a long story and I've been working with the Lange family for a long time, since I became involved in politics.

And I want to talk a little bit about Kutler Lange who is a young man who was viciously assaulted and suffered permanent brain damage. He's almost 30 now, but this was quite a few years ago when he was a teenager and he was brutally beaten in a house. He was hit over the head with a whiskey bottle and then his head was repeatedly kicked in and he spent at least two months in a coma, I think, Mr. Speaker. And he is now permanently brain injured and is not able to work or have a family or have a lot of those things that a lot of us take for granted with our children and ourselves.

I have to talk a little bit about Kutler's mother, Sharlene, who is one of the most amazing women I think I've ever met. And she is her son's biggest advocate and she has not stopped trying to get justice for Kutler since this terrible, terrible incident occurred. And Sharlene's done a lot of work and has educated me on *The Victims of Crime Act* and the various compensation levels that are available to people who are victims of these types of crime.

Back in 1967, Saskatchewan — I don't know if you know this, Mr. Deputy Speaker — but Saskatchewan was the first province in Canada to recognize victims of crime and provide compensation for those victims of crime. And we've had various versions of that legislation in place. But something very important happened in the early '90s when the no-fault legislation came through.

And what happened there was, we have a no-fault scheme, so if people are injured through an automobile accident, they are able to access that insurance fund in order to provide for loss of income and all the kinds of care that are required for people that are injured. And certainly those that are brain injured are included in that care. In fact I believe they can get up to \$6 million in compensation through the insurance scheme under the Auto Fund.

Now what happened though is that at the time when that fund was created and the no-fault insurance scheme came in — and I hope I understand this correctly — I'm advised by Sharlene that all of a sudden there was a problem with the intentional assault by use of a vehicle. So if I decided I wanted to run somebody over with my car, that's a criminal assault. But there was no ability to compensate for those kinds of injuries through the ordinary victims of crime compensation because that was gone. And so the assault by use of a vehicle was now incorporated into the insurance scheme for the purpose of being covered.

So we have some crimes that are covered by an insurance scheme, but we have the crime that was perpetuated against Kutler that is not covered by an insurance scheme. And it's that injustice that Sharlene has been very, very determined to deal with. And in fact she has dealt with a number, at least two Justice ministers in this government, trying to find a way to bring justice for her son. And I really just want to commend Sharlene for the work she does. I want to commend Kutler for being determined to find justice for these types of victims of crime.

And we do have a victims of crime scheme here in Saskatchewan, and we certainly do. But that goes up to about \$25,000. And that deals with — and this is the inadequacy in our system — it deals with lesser crimes or lesser impacts of crimes. So if your property is damaged by wilful acts of violence or vandalism, you are eligible to get compensation to get your garage door repainted or your fence fixed or there's all kinds of things under *The Victims of Crime Act* where people are properly given coverage. But the sad part for us is that there's nothing that deals with the grave and catastrophic consequences of crime that Kutler has suffered.

I asked Sharlene the other day about, were you not able to get support through the civil system? Because the criminal system deals with the crime itself. The fellow who perpetuated the assault was found guilty, and he actually did time in jail. I think the sentence was about three years. He's now married. He's taken over his father's business. He has a beautiful wife and a family, and he is moving on with his life. He did his time, and he has, you know, paid the price that society requires for that type of crime. But he is able to get on with his life, Mr. Speaker. Kutler isn't.

And I asked Sharlene, you know, why weren't you able to use the civil courts because, you know, you can sue? And here's what . . . This again is an example of how the legal system has failed this family. She said there were no legal proceedings.

I tried several lawyers . . . They all wanted money and I had none, Kooter had none. [Kooter is her name for Kutler.] Not one would offer pro bono or contingency because there was likely nothing to be had anyways. Which is exactly why we have the motor vehicle insurance compensation system. Tony Merchant's office told me to go to the Victims' Fund and get the \$25,000 for legal fees. I told every lawyer that I was not entitled to use that money for any legal fees, and if I use it for income replacement . . . [then Kutler couldn't] get welfare.

So she was caught up in this system of getting bounced around, and she was not able to get any help. She said, my hands were completely tied.

Kutler was hurt so bad that that is all this kid has for rehab for the rest of his life [this 25,000 was all he had for the rest of his life] so I needed to use it sparingly and only for emergency physiotherapy relating to his spinal injury when this kid is down with it for months at a time . . . [She said] I even went to CLASSIC and met with a lawyer. He said that I had to be turned down by at least ten lawyers in order for them to give me advice . . .

And all they could do was give her advice. They couldn't even act for her.

The assault happened on October 24, 2003 and the trial was in May of 2005. I had to wait for the trial and outcome before we even knew if we could sue . . . I was out of work for one year and seven months by the time the trial was did and done. Kutler was in very bad shape so neither of us could possibly have the means to drop thousands for a civil suit, and even if I did have some funds, how under those circumstances could I risk

investing thousands with the likelihood of getting nothing.

Remember, the trial was in May 2005 and there was a two-year statute of limitations to sue so if you couldn't find anyone to help in that period of time you were pretty much out of luck.

And then she goes on to talk a little bit more about the situation they're in.

[20:45]

In 2011 there was an article in *The StarPhoenix* about this, and the headline is that the "Justice system forgets crime victims." And here's a bit of the story there. This is by Bronwyn Eyre on August 13, 2011.

Victims of crime. It's a term much bandied about, but often without any real sense for the stories and faces behind the phrase.

Take Kutler Lange — the young Saskatoon man who was severely beaten in 2003 after he helped his friend fend off a home invasion in Lawson Heights.

Kutler's mother, Sharlene, dropped him off on a Friday evening to hang out with friends. When an acquaintance of Kutler's went out for a cigarette, he engaged in verbal back and forth with some other youths driving by. Matters deteriorated and the group announced they'd return with "back up."

They did. There were some altercations outside and some windows were smashed. After Kutler helped his friend try to lock up the house, the two hid in a closet, as one Tyrell Morash roamed through the house with a metal bar.

When Morash entered the bedroom, Kutler's friend accidentally turned on a light. Morash opened the closet, pulled him out and started to beat him. Kutler then emerged from his hiding place to intervene — taking the beating instead, which has ruined his life.

After Kutler was knocked out with a Wiser's bottle, his head was repeatedly stomped on and he suffered permanent brain damage.

Morash was sentenced in adult court to nine years, but was released in April of 2009. Kutler's friend — the one he protected — has never been in touch with him.

Following a one-off \$25,000 payment, Kutler now receives only \$1,000 a month from the provincial government. He can work only sporadically. His mother, who refuses to institutionalize him, has spent everything she has to take care of him.

As she says, people injured in auto accidents — even car thieves and drunk drivers — get more compensation from SGI than . . . [victims of crime] such as Kutler. [And she says] "Why are people like that protected, yet the true victims live in poverty?"

So, Mr. Speaker, there's every opportunity for this government to rectify what is clearly an injustice and a completely unfair situation. Sadly I received a letter dated today from the Minister of Justice. I was asking about restitution in Kutler's case. And basically the minister has said that the only restitution that's available are for damages or expenses that are quote, "readily ascertainable" and of course at Kutler's . . . the time of his injury, there was no way to determine the full extent of the damages that he suffered as a result of this crime, Mr. Speaker. So basically what the minister is saying is that there's nothing this government can do for Kutler.

And I really want to and will continue to raise this story and encourage this government to find a way. There are catastrophic victims of crime legislation in other jurisdictions and, given the inequities with our criminal injury system and our automobile insurance system and the fact that this is just clearly unfair, I urge and implore this government to make some way to make this right. And so I appreciate the opportunity to be able to bring it to the legislature's attention, and I really do hope that we can find fairness and justice for this family and the other families in Saskatchewan who are dealing with these types of catastrophic impacts for criminal activity.

I'm going to move on now, Mr. Speaker, to later on in the Speech from the Throne. In particular on page 18, we see the section on parks and culture, and we see the government patting itself on the back for the launch of Creative Saskatchewan. And I just can't let that comment go by, Mr. Speaker, without pointing it out that we've basically lost an entire industry here in the province.

Now the film industry is basically shut down because of the refusal of this government to recognize the importance of a tax credit like the film employment tax credit and its role in keeping a healthy film industry and a viable film industry in any province. And our loss is to the gain of every other province in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And again it's disappointing that this government refuses to admit when it's wrong and is too stubborn to fix those kinds of oversights and mistakes, Mr. Speaker. And I just wanted to reiterate our disappointment on this side of the House for this government's inability to do what's right when it comes to the film industry.

Near the end we have the final section on the environment. And I thought, Mr. Speaker, as Environment critic, I would actually go back and see what other things this government has been saying about the environment since it came into power. And I looked at the Speech from the Throne from 2007, and I found something very interesting there. The quote from that particular speech was this:

My government is committed to finding solutions to the environmental problems facing our province, our country and our planet. The recent record has not been good. This province has the highest rate of growth in greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. For the sake of our children, this must change.

That is why my government is committed to meeting Saskatchewan's existing greenhouse gas emission target of reducing levels by 32 per cent by 2020.

Okay. So in 2007 we were going to reduce levels by 32 per cent by 2020.

Now, Mr. Speaker, earlier last week, or I think it was late last week on Thursday, there was a report released by *Canada's Emission Trends*. And what we see in this report is that in Saskatchewan in 2005, the greenhouse gas emissions were at 71 megatonnes, and in 2011 they are at — this is dated information because it gets released after the fact, but this is the most recent information we have — 2011 the number of megatonnes is 74. So we have gone up from 71 megatonnes of emissions in 2005 — and remember those emissions are still in the atmosphere — and every year since then we've been adding at least that much more. And in 2011 we added an additional 74 megatonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Now that is not what the Throne Speech said in 2007 unless . . . And we haven't seen this in this Throne Speech, but the government may still have a plan for reducing levels by 32 per cent by 2020. But, Mr. Speaker, that's only seven years from now. And there's nothing, there's nothing in this Throne Speech that identifies how that's going to happen. So we have to assume that this government has basically reversed its position, and it is not at all interested in meeting the greenhouse gas emission target, reducing levels by 32 per cent by 2020.

And I think that's an absolute shame, Mr. Speaker. I think it's something that's not serving the people of Saskatchewan well. And it really concerns me, particularly because our emissions per capita, our emissions per capita in Saskatchewan are the highest in Canada. And not by a small bit, Mr. Speaker. Incredibly large. If you put together Alberta and Saskatchewan's emissions and compare them to pretty much the rest of Canada, that's where they're all coming from. As much is coming from Alberta and Saskatchewan as the rest of Canada. I think that's something that we need to be very, very concerned about.

The numbers are stark. I think they're quite frightening. And I guess my biggest disappointment is when I look long and hard in the section on environment in this year's Speech from the Throne, there's no mention of it. There's not a single word that's being said about the continuing pumping out of megatonnes and megatonnes and megatonnes of carbon into our atmosphere. And I think that's something that this government has really let the people down on. And we'll continue to comment on that as we go through the legislative agenda for this session.

Now the other piece in the environment that was commented on in the Speech from the Throne was the issue of agricultural drainage. And as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've been up on my feet in this Legislative Assembly in the past, commenting on the fact that the existing law for environmental drainage is not being enforced and monitored in an appropriate way. So rather than just do that, which I think would be sufficient, this government has said, well we're going to develop new regulations. So this is another area where we're being promised some sort of legislative activity in the form of regulations.

I'm hoping that . . . That's something the government is telling us they're going to be getting consultations on. And I'm hoping

that these consultations will actually go and they will speak with Andre and Lorraine Boutin. And I don't know if you remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the Boutins were here in the spring and were very, very concerned about the impact of agricultural drainage on their property near Bellevue, Saskatchewan. I recently received a letter from them indicating that they have not been able to progress at all on their problem. And even as late as September 16th, they were still writing to the Water Security Agency and asking for help and assistance.

And what we really get, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a lot of buck-passing. Because what's happening here is the response that came from SaskWater or the Water Security Agency is, what they're saying here is that there's really nothing they can do. And what they've said in a quote . . . This is a response from a gentleman named Dwayne Rowlett to Mr. and Mrs. Boutin, and on September 20th he said: "We would look to your family with the support of the local conservation development authority in promoting the project as one that would provide benefit to all those that would drain toward it." Now you've got to remember, the Boutins are at the bottom of this drainage system, and Chicot lake I think is the name of the lake.

So they're telling the Boutins, the toughest . . . There's three pillars to the development of a project that will save their farm — basically most of it's been under water for a number of years now — technically feasibility, financing, and the last but not least is community acceptance of the project. So well that sounds kind of reasonable, you know. Is there a technical feasibility? Possibly. Financing? Maybe there's financing out there and community acceptance.

But what he went on to tell these individuals is the toughest one of the three pillars is community acceptance of the project. And then he went on to say, "I encourage you to talk with your neighbours about the benefits of such a project that will allow some level of flood control." Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's the neighbours who have been draining on to the Boutin's property. So for the government to suggest that they go out and talk to the benefits of flood control and to pay for it, it's just not going to work. And this is the basic problem with the existing system.

So I'm happy to see the agricultural drainage is being identified as one of the most serious environmental issues in the province today. I'm not happy that greenhouse gas emissions aren't that serious issue. But we will be watching this government very carefully and looking very closely at any proposals because the current system . . . I think the words on paper are fine. There's all kinds of enforcement ability for this government to ensure that drainage is taken seriously and that people up the hill are not taking advantage of gravity in order to solve their problems but leaving it all on their neighbours down the hill. So we will be watching very carefully to ensure that the new regulations, whatever they look like, are going to be fair and adequately deal with the problem.

So I guess in closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's been an honour again, as I said, to be able to bring these comments forward at this point in time and to comment on this most recent Speech from the Throne. As I indicated, it's a little bit what we call maybe legislation light because there isn't a whole lot in there in terms of a legislative agenda that I think that this Assembly

can look forward to in the following weeks. But who knows what surprises are up the government's sleeve, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we've seen it before. We don't see it in the Throne Speech, but we certainly do get all kinds of little surprises on the legislative agenda as we go along. So we look forward to that.

The one other piece that I did want to talk about was the upcoming report from Peter MacKinnon on our permanent sources of wealth from ongoing resource sales. And we see a government that isn't able to put aside any of this money. Right now they're using this one-time resource income. This is non-renewable resources, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's using it for 25 per cent of its operating costs, and this is something that very few other provinces are doing. So I'm not sure how we're going to be able to move forward with a proper savings for the future when we're using up these resources that are non-renewable. But again, we're going to really look forward to Mr. MacKinnon's report and the action that this government proposes as a result of that report.

The StarPhoenix editorial had a comment on that as well, and what they've said is that "A responsible government has to find ways to set tax rates and services that achieve a closer balance between revenues and demands." So maybe, regardless of what Mr. MacKinnon has to say, there's still some work to be done over there in terms of proper management of those resource revenues.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, in closing then, I would like to say that I would like to support the motion that was brought forward. I do agree that this Assembly should condemn this government for its lack of vision, that we should condemn this government for its actions and often its failure to act, which are hurting education and seniors' care. We should condemn this government for its failure to deliver a smart growth strategy which includes diversifying our economy so that our prosperity is sustainable for the long term. And so, Mr. Speaker, I will support the amendment and I will vote against the motion. Thank you very much.

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

Hon. Mr. Weekes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a real pleasure to be able to take part in the address to the Throne Speech that was brought down by our government.

First I want to thank a few people. I want to thank my wife Cindy. We just celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary last summer, and she actually is celebrating her birthday on Thursday, so wish her a happy birthday on Thursday. Just thinking about my children . . . I have three children. They all live and work in Saskatchewan, and I was thinking that's quite a feat. We look back 10, 15, 20 years and how many young people stayed in the province and can say that they had no intentions of leaving the province and there were jobs and opportunity here in Saskatchewan. So I'm very pleased that my children are living and working in Saskatchewan.

[21:00]

I'd like to also mention and thank my constituency assistant, Janet. She is very friendly and professional in her duties as my constituency assistant and does a great job, given the last year and a half. Since I've been the Minister of Rural and Remote Health it's been, as it always is, very important to have an assistant that looks after all the constituency issues, and she does a great job.

I would also like to thank my office staff: my chief of staff, Megan, Selena, and Dale. And we work very closely — quite frankly, seamlessly — with the Minister of Health's staff, the chief of staff, Kim, and Paula, Crystal, Michael, Brittany, and Sarah. So we work very well together, and I'd like to thank all those people for making our jobs much easier and enjoyable.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is growing, and we want it to continue to grow. We've grown by more than 100,000 people in the last six years. Growth brings great opportunities but also challenges. Our Speech from the Throne focused on what our government will be doing to meet the challenges of growth. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments about my constituency, the community of Biggar and the constituency of Biggar, and how growth has had a great impact on the constituency.

In the town of Biggar there's two major manufacturing businesses that make tanks for the oil industry and another that builds shortline equipment and adaptations for shortline equipment. And Prairie Malt of course. And a great demand for people to weld and put equipment together and all those jobs.

And there's a lot of people that have come through the immigrant nominee program. Very successful, fundamental actually to the businesses in Biggar and around the constituency and quite frankly across the province. In Biggar, and as many communities, most of the immigrants are from the Philippines. Most of them are Catholic, so they have, you know, not only bought houses and work in the manufacturing jobs in Biggar but also fill the schools and fill the Catholic church, quite frankly, which I am a member of, so I've got to know many of those people and they're very wonderful people who do a great job for the community, raising their families. But we have people from all of the world as well from India, Pakistan, from the Eastern Europe, and all those people very productive and doing a great job, building our province and our communities.

Biggar's constituency always has been a farming community and I, like the rest of the province, have taken off a record crop and so the farming community is very vibrant and done well. I believe all the crop is in and it's just fantastic yields. So Biggar constituency has a lot of things going for it. Real estate prices, of course, increased with the demand of more people coming into the communities in Biggar constituency.

Biggar, and a number of communities, always been a railway town and that's still a factor in the town of Biggar, but it's not as big a factor as it once was. Many people, of course, also are retired farmers and have retired into the town of Biggar and the other communities. So it's a very vibrant community and constituency.

Mr. Speaker, what our Throne Speech does, a number of things, but it has invested in Saskatchewan's health care. It's an honour

to be an MLA and a minister in the government that recognizes the need for a health care system that can complement the growth of our province.

I'm also pleased that our government recognizes that we need to build a health care system that would be sustainable into the future. Our government investment in health care overall has increased 41 per cent over the past six years. Almost \$1 billion has been invested in health infrastructure over the past six years.

Increased funding in order to decrease surgical wait times. We have more than 1,000 new nurses more now than when we formed government in 2007. Our goal was for 800 new nurses and we've met and surpassed that goal.

Physician recruitment and retention is a big piece of my work as a Minister of Rural and Remote Health. Since 2007 there are more than 300 more doctors practising in Saskatchewan, but we know we still need more family doctors, especially in rural areas.

Now we haven't been sitting idly by. There's many initiatives we've introduced to address this challenge. We have increased the physician training seats and doubled the residency positions in the province. Over 90 internationally trained physicians have passed our made-in-Saskatchewan physician assessment program and are working across the province, and most of them are in rural Saskatchewan. We provide up to \$120,000 for new physicians who will practise in a rural or remote community for five years.

A new locum program is providing relief to rural physicians who need time off. So there's two locum pools. One through the Saskatchewan Medical Association, which they administer, and those doctors are more for short-term locum duties — weekends or holidays that doctors may take. We've asked the 10 southern health regions to each of them have two locums, so a total of 20, plus one for the North to fill in on a longer term. So it would be locums that would work in the region that they were hired in. And we're making progress on that; we still have a few more to hire. And they certainly relieve some of the pressures on hospital disruptions. We're training more Saskatchewan graduates in smaller communities through the distributed medical education.

Now, Mr. Speaker, since I was appointed to cabinet just a year and a half ago, I have been touring health care facilities in communities around the province. And to date I have visited 80 communities in rural and northern Saskatchewan. I meet with doctors, nurses, and health care professionals in rural Saskatchewan. And I also meet with community leaders and hear first-hand about the challenges of the communities. It's been very, very rewarding, first of all to see all the communities in rural and remote Saskatchewan, wonderful people in every community. Communities are well-kept and people are very proud of their communities.

We'd go into a facility, whether it's a hospital and/or a long-term care home and tour the facility, meet and greet staff, either while they're working or just meet with them while they're having coffee in the morning and afternoon when we're there. Then we have a meeting with the community leaders —

that's the mayors and reeves and councillors and foundation heads — and sit down and talk to them about their concerns about health care in their community. And also we have a third set of meetings with physicians and nurse practitioners to get their take on the issues in health care in the community. Over the past year I've visited many communities including Stony Rapids in northern Saskatchewan, Shaunavon, Watrous, and Loon Lake, and of course many, many more.

When I was first appointed to cabinet, the Premier directed me to go to Nova Scotia to tour Nova Scotia's collaborative emergency centres or CECs. And I went there with Dr. Padayachee, the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] director, and we toured two CECs or collaborative emergency centres in Nova Scotia. And we certainly understand the stresses and strains of rural health care.

And there is a number of reasons why physicians have historically not stayed in rural Saskatchewan, but the two, probably the most common ones, is that the physicians get burnt out. So there will be a physician that either by themselves or with another physician working 24-7, being on call, and after a while just can't stand the pace and leave to somewhere else out of the province or even in the province.

The other reason physicians do leave is to follow their family members. Sometimes physicians will follow their children to Saskatoon and Regina when they go to university or the other issue is their spouse would like to work at a job in their field of expertise and sometimes that's an issue. Like I've always said, if the spouse is a registered nurse or worked in the health field, well we can work around that, but many times they don't. And so those are all issues that put stresses and strains and reasons why physicians leave the community or the province in some cases.

Now what the CEC or the collaborative emergency centre does is really, number one as far as I'm concerned, is it's really a recruitment tool and a retention tool to keep physicians in rural Saskatchewan, and I'll tell you why. The CEC is very flexible but generally speaking the nighttime model, the emergency care is looked after by a registered nurse and an advanced paramedic, generally from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. So those two health care providers work in consultation with a STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] emergency physician and when patients come in the door there's three things that could happen. They are triaged and people that are just looking for an appointment with a physician because of shift work or because they can't get an appointment will be asked to come back the same day or next day for a same-day or next-day appointment. Some people are just treated and released and the real emergencies are sent on by road or air ambulance or STARS to an emergency ward to be looked after by emergency physicians.

The other key component of a CEC is the daytime model, which is looked after by primary health care providers, headed up by physicians, nurse practitioners, you know, a full array of health care providers, dieticians, you know, counselling for mental health and addictions, and in other types of health care that is needed.

And so those physicians are working generally 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.,

12 hours, seven days a week. It's flexible. On weekends they may not be working the 12 hours. They'd just have one physician, but it's flexible, so people know they can get in to see a doctor on the same day or a next-day basis, which is very important.

In Nova Scotia's experience they found that about 85 per cent of the people that are going to their emergencies were non-emergent. They were just people that couldn't get an appointment in a timely fashion. So that's the other part, a very important piece.

We learned many things. The SMA and the nurses and health regions and the ministry people were in Nova Scotia, both with me and on their separate trips. We had an information exchange. The officials from Nova Scotia came to Saskatchewan last fall and spoke about their experience, the things that they learned about setting up a CEC in their province. And so that was very rewarding for all of our health care providers and board members and people to understand what a CEC is, how it works.

You know, obviously all the health care providers have to work together. The community is a very important part of making a CEC work. And so the good news is that we have our first collaborative emergency set up in Maidstone, Saskatchewan. And it's working very well and serving the people of that area and, quite frankly, Highway 16 very well.

Now we hope to have — we will have, quite frankly — more collaborative emergencies set up. Shaunavon is likely to be set up very soon, and working on Canora, Spiritwood, and Wakaw. And quite frankly this will spread out across the province and address some of the many needs of rural Saskatchewan where there's a shortage of physicians in their community. It's a great step forward, and we look forward to more of the collaborative emergency centres being set up.

In our Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, long-term care was a highlight, and our government is committed to improving seniors' care in the province. This past summer our government conducted the most comprehensive review of long-term care facilities ever undertaken in this province. As my colleague the Minister of Health has noted, we must do a better job when it comes to seniors' care.

[21:15]

The review of care facilities indicated that while we are doing some things well, many concerns were identified in the long-term care facilities. That is why our government has created a \$10 million Urgent Issues Action Fund to address issues identified based on each health region's and facility's needs. More baths, improved nutrition, better training to deal with patients with dementia are all part of that. We're also expanding the Home First/Quick Response home care pilot programs to Saskatoon and Prince Albert, originally in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region.

Another innovation is doctors' house calls, another measure to improve seniors' care. And this is really set up to keep seniors in their own homes, out of long-term care, out of hospitals. We will be announcing more details of that program that will

enable seniors to receive house calls from physicians, improve access to primary care for seniors. Seniors may not normally be able to access office-based physicians. I think that it needs to be pointed out, that team for doctor house calls, obviously physician-led, but it will include nurse practitioners and the full array of health care providers, primary health care providers, including pharmacists, dietitians, physiotherapists. Whatever health care provider is needed will be available through this program.

Another innovation, Mr. Speaker, is our government has launched hot-spotting pilot programs in the coming year. This program will better assist high-risk patients who repeatedly show up in emergency rooms. Many of these patients are not well served by the current system, and hot-spotting will connect these patients with the appropriate services that they may need at an appropriate time.

These patients may be in need of care for mental health or addiction issues. Patients who need this kind of help are not best suited by visiting emergency rooms at tertiary centres in Regina or Saskatoon. Some patients identified through hot-spotting may be better served through the mental health or addiction services, and our government has now rolled out the initial phases of the mental health and addictions action plan that was originally announced in May by the Health minister. We are now into the consultation phase of the action plan with an online tool released last week in order to gather feedback. Patients, family members, friends, front-line health care workers were all encouraged to provide feedback.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just speak a bit more about some of the other highlights in the Throne Speech. And I think that education obviously is very important. You know, the student-first approach that was announced will build on successes that are already being achieved in school divisions throughout the province. And the government has appointed Russ Mirasty and Patricia Prowse to lead the consultation.

Interestingly I attended the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] convention just the other day, and I was told by one of the STF directors that the Premier of Saskatchewan was the first Premier of any political stripe to ever speak at the convention. So I think that speaks highly of the Premier's commitment and our government's commitment to education in this province.

An important step in the development of student-first will be a wide-ranging consultation with teachers, administrators, parents, and students, as I mentioned, where those two people will be leading that consultation process.

Now the member opposite was talking about P3s. And you know, our government just recently announced nine new joint-use schools. Now two things. They will be built by bundling the schools and P3s. The schools will be built in Saskatoon, Regina, Martensville, and Warman, and there will be savings and efficiencies by bundling, by having the contractors bid on more than one school at a time, so there's efficiencies in that.

And the member kept asking the question, well who will own these schools? Well it's very clear, Mr. Speaker, that the people

of Saskatchewan will always own these schools. There is never any doubt on that. I assume the school divisions will own the schools like schools are owned right today, but it's very clear that the people of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers of this province, will own these schools.

Other things that our government has done since 2007: invested more than 600 million to build 20 new schools and undertake 23 major renovations and additions to completing approximately 900 smaller capital projects. Our government has supported the development of 15 new pre-kindergarten programs and the development of 500 new child care spaces, bringing the total number of licensed child care spaces in Saskatchewan to more than 13,700, a 48 per cent increase since 2007.

I'd just like to tell a bit of a story. In Biggar we have three physicians right now, but the last physician came about a year and a half ago from Manchester, UK [United Kingdom]. And her and her husband have a small child. They wanted to leave Manchester because it's a large city. They didn't want to raise their family in such a large centre. They went to Australia and checked out health care there and they didn't like it. They sought out Saskatchewan. They came to Saskatchewan. It came down to two cities or two communities they wanted to come to. One was Estevan and one was Biggar, my hometown.

And I have a lot of fun with one of the lead physicians in Estevan because Dr. McKee decided to come to Biggar with her family rather than going to Estevan. And it's interesting. Even though Estevan is not a very large community in terms of millions of people, it's a boom town, and they didn't like that atmosphere for their children. But the fundamental reason they came to Biggar, or they wouldn't have come to Biggar, is that Biggar had a daycare and that was so important to them. And so that's why we got our third doctor in Dr. McKee. And her husband and child are doing very well in Biggar, and we are glad to have them in the town of Biggar.

Some of the other issues . . . or not issues but things that our government will be doing as far as education, SaskTel will invest \$5 million over four years through the CommunityNet program to increase bandwidth and improve Internet access and speed at schools throughout the province.

Just want to touch on some other items. You know, our government will spend more than \$500 million in highways, bringing the total investment over the past six years to \$3.7 billion, 76 per cent more than in the previous six years. The investment is being used to rebuild or build 8,000 kilometres of highways, you know, and we can look at the new Circle Drive South bridge open in Saskatoon and the new overpass open in the west side of Regina. And again our government is exploring an opportunity to use public private partnerships or P3s to construct the south Regina bypass.

Twinning No. 1, as was just recently announced, has been completed. And our government has started pre-construction work on three new twinning projects — Saskatoon to Clavet, Saskatoon to Delisle, and Estevan to Bienfait. So our government is moving ahead on a wide array of infrastructure needs and committing resources to that.

Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government and ministries and Crown corporations have invested \$13.2 billion, a 110 per cent increase over the previous six years, in infrastructure. Our growth plan is committed to investing 2.5 billion in infrastructure over the next three years.

SaskBuilds, a new organization established to pursue innovation in infrastructure development, is exploring ways to complete large, high-cost infrastructure projects in a timely manner through the use of P3s. P3s will allow the government to advance certain capital projects more quickly while reducing costs, a very innovative form of financing and something that's been successful in other provinces.

Of course we have some major engagement internationally. Saskatchewan companies have exported a record \$32.6 billion worth of products, which is a 10.3 per cent increase from a year before and triple the amount of exports a decade ago. Uranium is now moving into the Chinese civilian market. And you know, our resource sector continues to expand. BHP has decided to invest another \$2.6 billion over the next three years in the Jansen project. They're very confident in Saskatchewan.

I can't end my address without talking about and speaking to agriculture. Agriculture continues to be a driver in this province. Exports have climbed to \$11.2 billion. It's on pace to set a new record this year. And our government's committed a record \$27.7 million to agriculture research.

We continue to support the federal government in trade negotiations such as the Canadian-European Trade Agreement and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and we continue to address trade irritants such as country of origin labelling in the United States.

Our government has significant improvements to crop insurance to help farmers. And also our government continues to work with the federal government, Alberta, British Columbia, and Manitoba to develop a Western Canadian livestock price insurance program for cattle and hog producers. I think that's very . . . a timely announcement, and that has been well received by all the producers.

Now our government has been very fiscally responsible. Since 2007 government debt has been reduced by \$3 billion or 44 per cent. This has reduced total interest costs by \$600 million.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken to some of the initiatives we have already undertaken in many areas and particularly in health care and rural and remote health care, and providing timely and consistent access to patients in rural areas is a priority for our government. And we are making progress in doing that, but there's always more to do, and we recognize this.

This year's Throne Speech confirms that Saskatchewan is growing and there are challenges to growth. Our government is committed to meeting the challenges of growth in health care as well as others. We have committed to build, as I said, nine new joint-use schools in areas of the province that have seen the most growth. We are continuing to improve and maintain highways and roads, and better roads in the province, in order to keep our residents safe. And our economy is continuing to diversify. But we need also to work to diversify our skilled

workforce by educating and training workers so that those important jobs in our province can be filled.

This Throne Speech and recent announcements by our government will attempt to address these needs. This Throne Speech sets a bold target and a wide range of initiatives, outlines some of the tools that are needed to reach those targets. In some cases they are lofty targets, but lofty targets are better than having no targets at all, and we are committed to achieving those goals. We are not seeking growth merely for the sake of growth. Rather we know that growth should be a means to provide a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, with that I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in my place and offer my remarks on the Throne Speech. My colleagues so far have been eloquent in providing their feedback, and I'm honoured to participate in this discussion alongside my fellow members.

To begin with, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge my wife Christine, thank her for her love and support. Without her support, I wouldn't be able to be here to do the work that I do. So I thank her very much for that, and to my children, Allison, Stephen, Jeremy, and Kayla, for their support as well. They stayed in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, because of the opportunities that are here for them as a result of what's happened in this province over the last number of years.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also grateful for the help of my constituency assistant, Kelly Merriman, who keeps things on track in my MLA office in Saskatoon. In addition I extend my thanks to my staff in the legislature — Dawn, Jennifer, Marina, Mary, and Reagan — for all the work they do to help support what I do.

Lastly I extend my gratitude to my friends and neighbours in my home constituency, Saskatoon Northwest. This October marks three years since the people of Saskatoon Northwest elected me to the legislature, Mr. Speaker, and I am truly humbled by their support. I had the opportunity to reconnect with a number of them this summer as I was out going door to door, and I continue to be encouraged by their ongoing support. And I appreciate all the feedback that I received. And because of their support, Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of working with a remarkable group of people on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, meeting the challenges of growth — this is the theme not only of our government but for our province on an upswing the likes of which would seem unimaginable a few short years ago. We are living in a new era of optimism, one which attracts families to build homes, leads businesses to invest, allows young people to work in their hometowns, and inspires pride among people across the province of Saskatchewan with their cherished past and future.

[21:30]

As a province, Mr. Speaker, we have confidence that our future

is one of opportunity. Yet even when circumstances favour us, we must make choices about the direction that we must take. The Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, was a signal from our government to the people of Saskatchewan that we're choosing a path of balance. It was a signal that we are moving forward with pragmatism and a spirit of community to ensure we meet the challenges of a growing province, a signal that we do not pursue growth for growth's sake but so that we can achieve a better life for our families and for those in our communities.

There can only be one reply to this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and that is gratitude, not for the policies of a government, but for the opportunities to live in a place where we are discussing the challenges of growth. As we consider the initiatives of our government, let us do so with an appreciation for the opportunity Saskatchewan has to offer.

Across the world, Mr. Speaker, governments are under pressure to address the causes and consequences of debt. Here in Saskatchewan, we are fortunate to have the lowest debt to GDP [gross domestic product] ratio in Canada. Since 2007, our debt has been reduced by \$3 billion or 44 per cent. In addition, with more people in our province than ever before, 1.1 million, the debt per capita level continues to fall.

Moreover, our thriving economy, based on innovation and productivity, makes us the envy of the world. We are on a pace for the best year of employment growth ever recorded. The latest labour force statistics show Saskatchewan unemployment rate is tied for the lowest in Canada for the ninth consecutive month. Youth unemployment is well below the national average, and off-reserve Aboriginal employment grew for the eighth consecutive month. For 22 consecutive months, employment has grown year over year. Compared to this time last year, Saskatoon's employment was up by 11,900 people.

Mr. Speaker, we exported a record \$32.6 billion in 2012, triple the amount exported a decade ago. This includes a record 11.2 billion in agricultural exports, the highest among the provinces. In our Saskatchewan plan for growth, we envisioned a province that is debt free. We are now in position to discuss how we will use our resource revenue after the debt is fully retired, an incomprehensible thought for a province once on the brink of bankruptcy. We will hear from Peter MacKinnon on the Saskatchewan heritage initiative recommendations on how to ensure our resource revenue becomes an enduring source of wealth for our province.

Our government's commitment to balanced budgets is an important component of our province's economic well-being. It is not the only way we are striving to deliver good governance for Saskatchewan people. We are also improving public policy by enhancing disclosure in the machinery of government. Mr. Speaker, this fall our government will be introducing a new lobbyist Act and will establish an independent officer of the Assembly to oversee a public registry. This follows the excellent work of the bipartisan Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to whom I extend my thanks for their work. In preparing their report, the committee accepted nine written submissions. We followed this with a further consultation period where we invited stakeholder comments on the report.

The new Act will make public the lobbying activities of corporations and paid lobbyists. While other chambers make headlines in their lack of transparency, we are introducing legislation to enhance disclosure.

This Throne Speech also represents an anniversary for our government. The Throne Speech 15 years ago represented the first full session where the Saskatchewan Party filled the official role of opposition. Under the leadership of my hon. colleague for Canora-Pelly, eight members created something on the new political landscape of this province, a party which would grow to form government in 2007 and now has elected 49 members.

When my colleague from Canora-Pelly responded to the Throne Speech of 15 years ago, he laid out a clear plan for a stronger future. I quote his words which stand true today: "Government, lest we forget, is here to provide the essentials: health care, education, highways, and safe communities." These priorities encapsulate the Throne Speech we heard last week.

Our government has undertaken significant work to improve our health care system. In the past six years, the number of doctors practising in this province has increased by 300. This means more care for seniors, more care for children, more care available with shorter wait times. We are continuing to make health care a priority, Mr. Speaker.

We will be announcing details of a program that will enable seniors with complex issues to receive house calls from physicians and nurse practitioners. We announced a new approach to delivering primary and emergency care in rural areas with collaborative emergency centres open 24 hours a day. Last month we opened the first collaborative emergency centre in Maidstone. We're also launching an initiative to assist high-use, high-risk patients who are recurrent users of emergency health services. This will connect these individuals with appropriate services outside of emergency rooms.

Mr. Speaker, a growing province means larger communities and higher demands for services. We will focus our efforts to meet the challenges of this growth. Education is another area the member from Canora-Pelly identified as essential 15 years ago. We are fulfilling that vision by putting students first. Since 2007 we've invested over \$600 million to build 20 new schools. Now using a P3 bundling approach, we are building nine more joint-use schools. This model will enable the province to build more schools in less time than our typical procurement approach would allow. Internet capacity will also be improved in our schools, ensuring an innovative and modern education system.

Mr. Speaker, a growing Saskatchewan requires new schools and classrooms to support a growing population and teach our children and youth. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, our government will be taking action to make schools safer. Our province has already participated in a national approach to combat cyberbullying, working with federal, provincial, and territorial partners to recommend changes to the Criminal Code. In this session, Mr. Speaker, our government will respond to anti-bullying recommendations put forward by the MLA for Saskatoon Fairview based on consultations she has had with students, parents, and teachers.

But our commitment doesn't end in grade 12. Mr. Speaker, we are also investing in the province's post-secondary sector. We've given record support to post-secondary institutions — \$4.6 billion since 2008. Like many of my fellow representatives, as well as my colleagues in the law community, I'm a lucky alumnus of the University of Saskatchewan. Unlike the time we graduated, Mr. Speaker, students today are receiving part or all of their tuition costs back through the Saskatchewan graduate retention program. More than 40,000 students have taken advantage of this program, making it attractive for young people to stay here in Saskatchewan.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, challenges accompany this growth. Encouraging young people to stay and begin their lives here in Saskatchewan means, in Saskatoon Northwest, we have to buy slightly more candy at Halloween. But this is a challenge we're happy to meet.

Mr. Speaker, we're investing in the province's universities. We're also investing in SIAST, evolving it into a polytechnic institute which combines the practical training of a college education with the in-depth study typically found at a university. Mr. Speaker, we are supporting our young people in reaching their career goals. In turn they are helping our community grow and prosper.

Mr. Speaker, the third emphasis was on highways. A growing province means growing pressure on our roads, and our government is responding. Over the past six years, we have spent over \$3.7 billion on our province's highways. This year alone we will invest over \$500 million. In Saskatoon this has meant the construction of the south Circle Drive bridge, which has made a significant difference in our city. We are also twinning a number of highways in and around Saskatoon. The twinning of Highway 11 to Prince Albert is now complete and a vital link between Saskatchewan cities and the province's North. Pre-construction work has also begun on Highway 7 to Delisle and Highway 16 to Clavet. And to make these roads safer, Mr. Speaker, we will be acting on the recommendations of the Assembly's Special Committee on Traffic Safety. In particular we will focus on tougher penalties for those who drink and drive.

Safer communities. That was a priority of our party 15 years ago, and it's an important part of our Throne Speech this year. It's also of particular interest to me. Crime not only hurts individuals and victims; it harms entire communities. In Saskatchewan we are taking an innovative approach to crime aimed at bringing down incidence rates and helping victims to recover and rebuild.

A community mobilization model, originally pioneered in Scotland, was first introduced in Prince Albert. This model fosters co-operation between the police, government ministries, human services agencies, and community-based organizations to respond to offenders. Since 2011, Mr. Speaker, overall crime in the city of Prince Albert has fallen by 18 per cent. We are encouraged by these early results. That's why other communities such as Yorkton, Moose Jaw, La Ronge, North Battleford, Estevan, Weyburn region are also implementing the Hub model.

But that's not all we're doing. Our government is committed to

helping those in our community in their most vulnerable moments, including victims of crime. A major expansion to police-based victim services program has been launched to bring crisis and service supports to 34 new regions. These services provide information, support, and referrals to victims of crime. Working with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] "F" Division, programming has recently been expanded to nine police detachments in Assiniboia, Canora, Coronach, Esterhazy, Kyle, Melville, Moosomin, Wadena, and Wynyard, with plans to expand to 25 more police jurisdictions. By the end of the fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, these services will be available throughout the province. Through partnerships with police and volunteers, these services lessen the immediate and long-term impacts of victimization, helping victims to heal and for communities to move forward.

And we are protecting vulnerable people in other ways. Following an inter-ministerial review of legislation affecting vulnerable adults in vulnerable situations, we are moving forward with amendments to improve protection for adults in our community who must rely on others to make decisions on their behalf. We are making sure decisions are made according to their own wishes and by those they trust, and ensuring appropriate safeguards apply to those who act on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat the words of my colleague one more time: government is here to provide the essentials — health care, education, highways, and safe communities. And, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, our Throne Speech does just that. A new program to enable some seniors to receive house calls from physicians, nine new joint-use schools, \$3.7 billion for highways in six years, and new initiatives like the Prince Albert Hub and COR [centre of responsibility] to provide the downward trends in crime rates.

On top of these essentials, Mr. Speaker, we continue to move forward with a spirit of community. A growing province allows us to pay for services like SAID, the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program. More than 11,000 Saskatchewan citizens with long-term and enduring disabilities now have enrolled in SAID. This year we boosted SAID benefits for a third time in four years. As a province, this is an important step.

Our province is growing, Mr. Speaker, and our government is meeting the challenges of this growth. We can have the future we want, Mr. Speaker. I believe our government is going the right direction, ensuring the benefits of growth are used to make our province a better place.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the direction outlined in the Throne Speech and I give it my full support for the benefit of our province, its people, and communities. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for the opportunity to speak about the Throne Speech. First I'd like to say some thanks to some people: Meewasin constituency for electing me and giving me the honour to be able to be here and spend all this time with these great colleagues of mine. Next I

would like to thank the Meewasin executive for all their work and all their support and their help door knocking and taking care of the Meewasin constituency.

I'd also like to thank my CA [constituency assistant] Matt, who takes care of the office and is there to answer any questions when I'm not around, and also to keep me informed to what has happened.

I'd really like to thank my daughter Shanaya. She has doorknocked with me since she's 12 years old — three elections — and not once has she ever complained and she's always there for me. Finally I'd like to lastly to say thank you for my wife Sheila who has also always supported me in these campaigns. She supports me when I'm here in Regina doing the work that we do and, I don't know, you can't be here without your spouse's help. It's as simple as that.

[21:45]

Mr. Speaker, I have lived in Saskatoon for over 50 years and I have spent roughly 30 years in the north end of Saskatoon specifically, mostly in Meewasin constituency. And I've had the privilege of having the river valley accessible to Meewasin which has always been its east boundary since I've been elected. We go for walks quite often with our dogs along the Meewasin trail or the river trails in Meewasin, and it is rated as one of the top places in Canada to visit. Often while we go walking, we'll stop down by the weir and we'll look at the birds and the different beauties of Saskatoon from the weir area.

The Riverworks Weir initially was built in 1939 and was one of many make-work projects during the Depression, and when the Gardiner dam was built in 1967, the weir was no longer necessary. Meewasin Valley Authority was created in 1979 by *The Meewasin Valley Authority Act*. I'm fortunate enough to sit on the Meewasin Valley Authority board and find out all kinds of different things that they're looking at doing in the planning for the future. By the way, meewasin is a Cree word for beautiful. Meewasin is a conservation agency dedicated to conserving the cultural and natural resources of the South Saskatchewan River Valley. All the beautiful existing trails and all the rest that are on the drawing boards are developed and maintained by the MVA [Meewasin Valley Authority]. The future, they would like to build trails all the way to Whitecap Reserve and as far north as Batoche.

The growth of Saskatchewan is why I got involved with the Sask Party back in the late '90s as I was tired of watching people move to other places to work. When I graduated from mechanical engineering technology, most of my graduate friends moved to Alberta and other provinces to work. When I graduated from business administration at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], most of my graduating partners and friends moved away as well. When my kids graduated, some of them have moved away. This would have continued for generations as we all know what the NDP think of growth. We also know what happens with no growth and an aging population. You end up without a tax base to cover the costs of taking care of the elders.

Since the Sask Party became the governing party of Saskatchewan in 2007, our population has grown by over

100,000 people, which the NDP said was impossible.

Here's some quotes from NDP. MLA Doreen Hamilton said it in the *Whitewood Herald*: "The Saskatchewan Party plan to increase our population by 100,000 people in 10 years is more wishful thinking than statistically attainable."

MLA Harry Van Mulligen, NDP, said in the House here, so, Mr. Speaker, I quote:

I say their plan flies in the face of reality, Mr. Speaker. Now it may well be an admirable goal, but it's not very realistic, Mr. Speaker. It's also, I might say, if this is the basis for their whole approach to government, that this is a shaky basis for an economic plan, Mr. Speaker. Because these plans, Mr. Speaker, if you're not right, you will in effect take hundreds of millions, billions of . . . dollars to put it into a plan that is doomed to fail because the reality says that plan will fail, Mr. Speaker.

That was from MLA Harry Van Mulligen.

Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege to sit on the Traffic Safety Committee. We travelled throughout the province, talked to various community groups all over the province. We also had received written documents from community groups from all over the province. And everybody was alarmed with drinking and driving and other statistics, like distracted driving. Last year in the province, 180 people were killed on our roads and highways, with distracted driving and impaired driving among the top contributing factors in those fatal crashes. This traffic safety action plan addresses these and other concerns with the goal of reducing death and injuries of the Saskatchewan roads. We are hopeful these initiatives will have an immediate impact on driving behaviour so we can all benefit from improved traffic safety in the province.

In 2008, Mr. Speaker, 157 fatalities, of which 31 per cent were distracted and 51 alcohol related, by 2012 there were 180. Thirty-three per cent were alcohol related. Thirty-nine were distracted drivers. So there has been a large increase in that area.

Mr. Speaker, growth over 100,000 new people. The NDP made statements. We have made statements, and we believe we are in the right direction. In Saskatoon the population in 2006 was 202,340 people. Since the Sask Party became the governing party, the population in 2013 was 284,000 people in Saskatoon, of which over the last two years, 60,000 people of the 284,000 have moved into Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon this year we opened a new South Bridge which took six years to get built. Of course, the Sask Party government took less than three years to get funding for the new bridge to start. Mr. Speaker, with a growing population, the need for more schools has been very real. With that, the Premier made an announcement at Dundonald School in Saskatoon that nine new joint-use schools would be built using P3 bundling through SaskBuilds.

Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP asked 51 times in the House for a school in Hampton Village.

An Hon. Member: — How many times?

Mr. Parent: — Fifty-one times.

An Hon. Member: — That's a lot of times.

Mr. Parent: — Yes it is. And now he doesn't even want them. He's saying that P3s will not work. Mr. Speaker, with all this growth, government spent more than 500 million on highways, and Highway 11 twinning opened last week. With this new spending this government will have spent, over the past six years, \$3.7 billion on highways. That's 76 per cent more than the previous six years when they were in power, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, housing is also top of the agenda for our government. This government has committed 344 million for expanding housing supply by 12,600 units and repair and update about 24,000 units by 2016. Last year Saskatchewan led the nation in housing starts on a per capita basis. Since its creation in 2011, Headstart on a Home has provided more than 193 million to finance the construction of 1,159 entry-level homes.

Mr. Speaker, a shortage of skilled workers, that's what we're hearing out in the community. We need skilled, trained workers. This government has invested where we can create 1,000 new training seats this year, which includes 300 new apprenticeship seats, to a total number of seats of 6,700 — an increase of 76 per cent since 2007.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been very competitive over the years, and our government goal is to eliminate the ABE [adult basic education] wait-list by the end of the term of office. Saskatchewan Government Insurance, SGI, estimates that just 30 per cent of on-reserve high schools in Saskatchewan provide driver training education. This has severely constrained the ability of First Nations students to obtain drivers' licences, creating barriers to mobility and employment for those students.

SGI has committed to fund delivery of education programs for on-reserve high school students in the province. It is anticipated that 2,600 First Nations students will take advantage of this program in the first year.

Immigration is an important source of labour for our province. Our government was successful in obtaining more than 25 per cent of the new provincial immigration nominees the federal government allocated across the country this year. This raised the annual cap under the Saskatchewan immigration nominee program to 4,450 nominations. Our government will continue to press the federal government to boost the number of nominations to 6,000 per year.

Our growing manufacturing industry is an important part of the Saskatchewan economy, providing stable employment to over 27,000 people and over 14 billion in annual sales. In order to continue this growth, Mr. Speaker, in a competitive world, the industry will need to adapt new innovative measures.

This government will seek to partner with manufacturing industry to create new manufacturing centres of excellence. This centre will focus on enhancing competitiveness, labour market development and initiative so that our manufacturers will continue to be successful both within Canada and abroad.

One specific focus on the centre will be providing Saskatchewan's First Nations and Métis people with the skills training needed for manufacturing jobs while encouraging assisting employers in hiring Aboriginal workers. This new centre of excellence will assist Saskatchewan manufacturers as they continue to diversify our province's resource-based economy.

Our government has established a Global Transportation Hub as an independent and self-sustaining inland port authority. The Global Transportation Hub added several new clients during the last year including Emterra Group, the city of Regina's recycling contractor, and Morguard, one of Canada's largest real estate investments trust. Canadian Pacific has completed the transfer of its intermodal operation from downtown Regina is now fully operational at the Global Transportation Hub.

International engagement, Saskatchewan expanding the economy is fuelled by exports as a growing world buys more of what our province has to offer. In 2012 Saskatchewan companies exported 32.6 billion worth of products, a 10.3 per cent increase from the year before, and triple the amount expected a decade ago. Saskatchewan is now Canada's largest per capita exporter.

Our government understands that in a competitive world we can't take this business for granted. Accordingly we are working hard to engage our customers, particularly in Asia, the fastest growing region in the world. Our government has worked hard to ensure that new international markets are available for our industry.

For the first time ever Saskatchewan uranium is moving into Chinese civilian market. Our government will continue its support for the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership which does an outstanding job in helping Saskatchewan companies promote their products and increase exports throughout the province.

Our government will also create the Saskatchewan International Future Scholarship to provide up to 20 students annual with the opportunity to study business at an international institution provided they return to the province after they graduate.

The Premier visited Washington, DC [District of Columbia] where he continued our province's efforts to push the US approval of the Keystone XL pipeline and promoted Saskatchewan innovation.

These are the reasons why I ran for the Saskatchewan Party and why I am thrilled with what's been taking place over the years. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech and I will not be supporting the amendments made by them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Government Deputy House Leader has moved that the House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the

Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 11:30 p.m. tomorrow . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . 1:30 p.m. I missed a one.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:00.]

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Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for The Global
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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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