



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

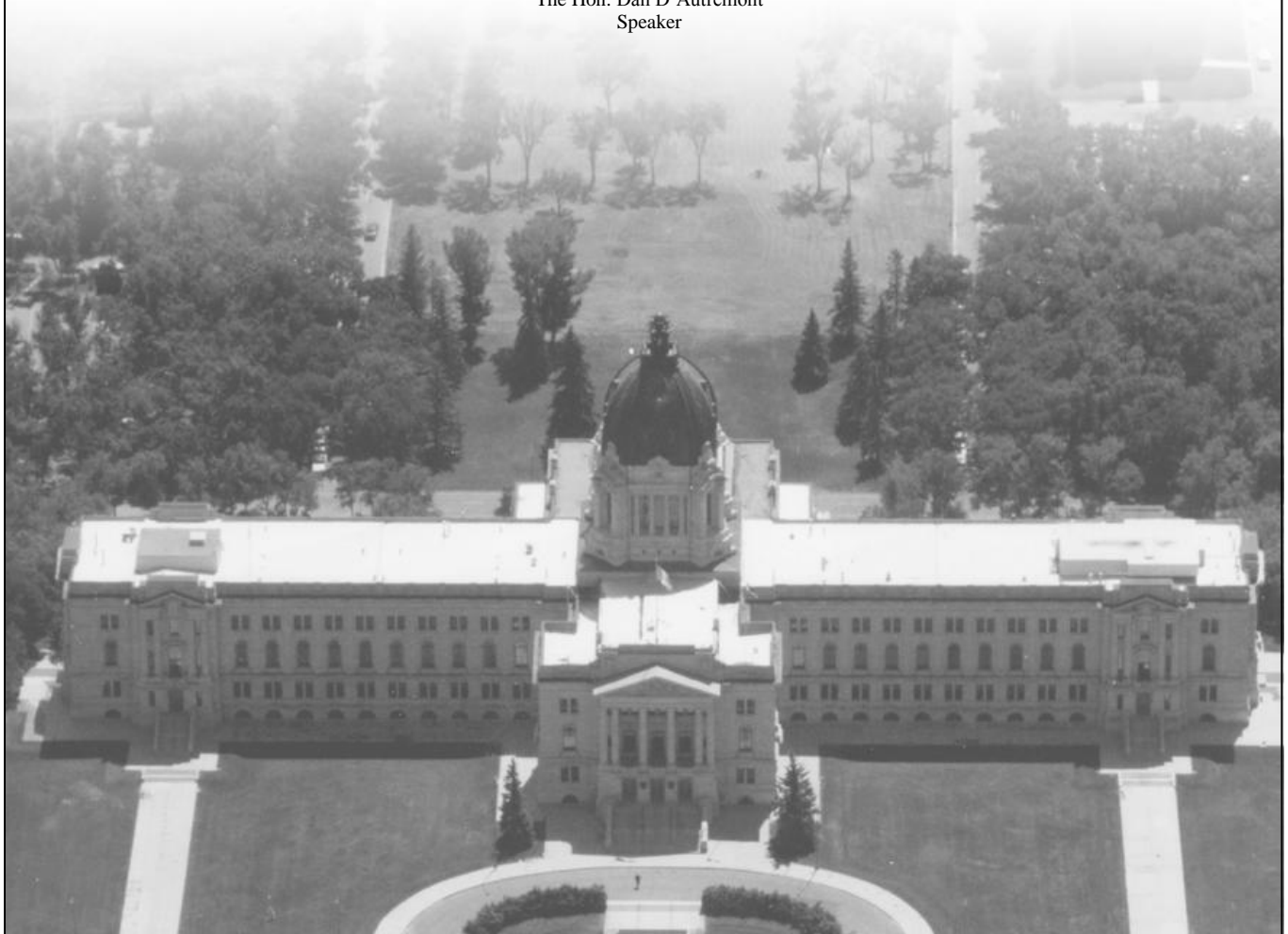
of the

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
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Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — It now being 7 o'clock, the debate will continue on the special order. I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

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. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's always a pleasure to rise in the House, especially on the third session of the twenty-seventh legislature.

First of all I would like to thank my family for their support. As we all know, we're away quite a bit from our family, so they take on the brunt of looking after the children and the grandchildren and everyone else that comes in the yard. So I would like to thank my husband, Douglas, and my four children and my six grandchildren, who are usually at home too.

And my CAs [constituency assistant] for their excellent skills on the casework and looking after the constituents of Saskatchewan Rivers. Marcus is in my main office and Jason is in my sub-office over at Big River. I have quite a long constituency. It's about 200 miles wide, so I have several CAs and I commend them for looking after the constituents of Saskatchewan Rivers.

And I'm very privileged to represent the beautiful Saskatchewan Rivers. It's home of one of two national parks. Prince Albert National Park resides right of the middle of the constituency. We have also have many provincial and regional parks in Sask Rivers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also must mention it's a privilege to work with the very fine men and women in this House, all of my colleagues. I enjoy working with them and they too realize what it's like to be away from home and working for this beautiful province of Saskatchewan. So it is a privilege to be here. They are all dedicated to Saskatchewan, I believe, on both sides of the House. We are very passionate about the people we work for and the province of Saskatchewan. I've gotten to know my seatmate and I'm also very honoured to be beside her. We discuss provincial issues and she has some great insight into what she believes is important to her life and her constituents. So thank you for being there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my grandparents came from the old country, as they called it, from Eastern Europe, and they came over for the opportunity that Saskatchewan had to offer. So I'm sure they would be thrilled to see the Speech from the Throne 2013, "Meeting the Challenges of Growth." They would

envision what has gone on — the growth, the optimism in the province. I'm sure if they were here today, they would be very proud of the direction and vision that our province has gone. My grandparents came with absolutely nothing after the war and they would be very happy to see the next generations, the future generations, how the family has thrived and contributed and is enjoying the benefits of Saskatchewan. We live in a very beautiful country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech demonstrates the business of getting to work on growing and managing the province, and this is what we are here to do. This is our attitude of managing growth, and that's what we're addressing in this Throne Speech.

In my travels, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I came across a very interesting person. He once told me there are three types of people. The first group is the caretakers. These are the people who take care of other people's business other than their own. He then said the second group is the undertakers. These are the people who take things under, even if it must be in the open. And the last group is the risk takers. These are the open-minded visionaries, the people who believe in possibility in the midst of impossibility. These are the people who realize that they can turn their test of the past into testimonies of the future. And these are the people who daily work in the government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our province population has surpassed over 1 million people, contrary to the naysayers who said it wasn't possible. The Speech from the Throne describes our plan for continued growth and how the government is meeting the challenges of growth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I . . . I was just thinking growth. We had another baby in our family. One more grandchild, number six. So we are growing the province. And this grandchild was born on Canada Day. The last one was born on Remembrance Day; this one was born on Canada Day. So I have to remember that date. This baby is called Jane Christie De Villiers, and the proud parents are Brigitt, my daughter, and Dr. Chris De Villiers, who is a newcomer, a doctor, and we are very happy to have him as a son-in-law. He's a great addition to our family. He came from South Africa. So they have two little girls now. So as I said, that grandbaby rounds it out to number six.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Big River saw mill in Saskatchewan Rivers constituency is now operating. It was closed in 2006 and it's now open on our watch, creating economy and jobs. Big River is not only a mill town, though. It's a very nice place to go for tourism and fishing. It's a very beautiful spot. It's a town surrounded by lakes, so it's a pleasure to visit, work, and raise the family. So I had to mention Big River. It's way over on the left side of my constituency and it's just a very beautiful spot. Not enough people in Saskatchewan have probably gone there.

In the middle of the constituency, we have a new park, the creation of the Great Blue Heron Provincial Park.

An Hon. Member: — First one in 20 years.

Ms. Wilson: — Well it's the 35th provincial park and the first new park in almost 20 years. You're right — 20 years. So we

have that in the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers and we're very honoured to have this beautiful area close to our homes. We are very proud to welcome more tourists to enjoy the uniqueness of this region.

Almost 44 million has been invested in our provincial park system since 2008 and I do believe that this showcases the beauty of Saskatchewan for both Saskatchewan residents and international tourists. Our government will also display an event-hosting strategy through Tourism Saskatchewan, and this will show Saskatchewan's targeted locations and facilities for national and global events. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our growth in Saskatchewan has brought many exciting opportunities for people and business alike.

As some of my colleagues have mentioned, a few of us were honoured to work on the Legislative Assembly's Special Committee on Traffic Safety. So as my colleagues and I travelled this vast province it became apparent, not only was this province huge and diverse, but a reoccurring theme in traffic safety occurred. It didn't matter if we were in the south, north, east, western parts of the province, but a pattern emerged. The focus on tougher penalties for drinking and driving was recommended, as many accidents involved alcohol. We talked to bus drivers; we talked to RM [rural municipality] councillors; we talked to police officers, parents, MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving] parents. And so a lot of people came together and discussed what they thought we could do to improve. So I was very honoured to be on this traffic safety board and give some recommendations to help improve the lives of all Saskatchewan people.

Our government will spend more than 500 million on highways, and a portion of that was spent right in Saskatchewan Rivers. I must commend Water Security, Highways, and the RM of Buckland for engineering a drainage plan for Highway No. 2 flooding issues that we experienced this summer. The repair work is almost completed, to the delight of tourists and constituents who depend on travelling this road back and forth in that particular area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government consulted on agriculture drainage in the province and I was very happy to hear of new regulation development. And it's very welcome in our region where we had so much flooding along the central part of Saskatchewan Rivers. So we do look forward to the continued work with all levels of government on that.

I was also very pleased to hear in the Throne Speech, "Meeting the Challenges of Growth," that a 25-year Saskatchewan water security plan was implemented by our government to ensure that our water resources are used in a very effective manner. And as we all know, drought can be a terrible thing. I've lived through drought as well. But water, having an excess water amount, can be very challenging to all levels of government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was also privileged, along with some members from Rosthern-Shellbrook, Biggar, and Weyburn, as well as the Premier, to attend the opening of the new hospital in Shellbrook. It's a beautiful facility. And this facility will for years to come provide care for all the neighbours in the nearby communities, so it was an honour to be there with my colleagues and the Premier.

Over the past six years, doctors practising in Saskatchewan has increased by 300 and I was very pleased to see that the Speech from the Throne included that. As I said before, my son-in-law is one of those new doctors that did come to Saskatchewan to stay, and we are very thankful that the newcomers are finding Saskatchewan is a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

There is also a new approach to delivering emergency and primary care in our countryside. Our government established a new record — over 4 million invested in health care with more initiatives such as the hot-spotting pilot program to assist high-risk patients. Mr. Deputy Speaker, being able to see the positive impact that this government is making is very important to measure results.

Saskatchewan has one of the fastest growing economies in Canada, and this government is working with employers and schools to create 1,000 new training seats. This will provide skilled labour for all the people that are in need of it. I know a lot of employers have come to me and said, gee, you know, I've got this huge business in the constituency and we're looking for employees. So this is one of the great advantages in this Speech from the Throne is to help the businesses not only in the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers but the entire province. So if you are competitive in this province, this is the place to be.

An important part of the province's economy is the manufacturing industry, and it continues to grow, providing over 14 billion in annual sales. So the creation of a new manufacturing centre of excellence will focus on labour market development and innovation. That's very important to the business sector as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, based on extensive consultations, our government will respond to anti-bullying recommendations. My seatmate and the member from Saskatoon Fairview has been tasked with this challenge. All of us come from a background where we've gone to school and we have seen this happen, which is unfortunate. But it is a reality of today so I'm very pleased that we are addressing it and we are meeting the challenges, not only of growth, but of working with human beings. And of course that's why we're here. It's all about people. It's about our families and our neighbours and our constituents. It's about the people of Saskatchewan.

[19:15]

I was also very pleased to see, in addition, our government will host a forum during national Anti-Bullying Week in November to discuss the prevention measures. Earlier this month I was privileged to co-host the Dove Self-Esteem Workshop for young women, along with the member from Prince Albert Northcote. So we had a lot of fun working together, and we had over 200 young women attend. So these women were there to address and seek solutions on these very important issues of self-esteem and bullying. It seems to be a common theme in today's society, so I'm happy that some of us are addressing it, whether it be young men or women.

As well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our roles as female mentors or male mentors and community leaders should be to engage young people in becoming the best they can be by giving them the tools they need. Our government is ensuring future

generations thrive by providing support in post-secondary institutions — tuition costs were reduced and investing more than 600 million to build 20 new schools. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Speech from the Throne is about people and helping our people of Saskatchewan. So I'm very pleased that a lot of these things are being addressed in this speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our future is in the hands of future generations. We all realize that. The smallest of ripples can create currents that will carry on. If we provide the education and support to young people, the outcome will be very positive. Our government has provided record support to post-secondary institutions and students — a total of \$4.6 billion since 2008.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, meeting the challenges of growth, this government will not look back. Forward ever, backward never. If you want to touch the past, touch a rock. If you want to touch the future, touch a life. Touch our future generations. We are instruments of change to make our province a better place to live, work, and raise our families. And Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe our government has demonstrated it can be the catalyst towards positive change and growth. As all of my colleagues have gotten up and said their speech, it's about growth and moving forward. It's about making Saskatchewan a better place to live. I hope this Throne Speech reaches out to the people of Saskatchewan, enriching their lives and interacting with the power of great opportunities.

Our government connects. Our government listens to people. We share information. We have dialogue. If the truth be told, 1 per cent of the people make 90 per cent of the noise on Facebook and chatter on coffee row. I myself like to go out into my constituency and touch base with the people there. I like to make eye contact and view the new investments or the businesses, the new additions to their family, the housing, the infrastructure. I like to do that myself.

We are committed to this province and to creating growth. This government continues to make more accountability by establishing an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly to oversee its records and share that with the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government is committed to the values and principles of growth. It's benefiting all the people of Saskatchewan in ensuring that our natural resources become a source of wealth for our future generations.

Constituents are urging us legislators to develop policies that speak to quality of health and education, so building healthy, educated communities in the province is our mandate. We must not always bear that it's an easy thing to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a difficult thing to do. It's hard work, but we must bear that being a politician is not about yourself but the people in whose honour you serve. In this case, I speak of the constituents who use their democratic rights to vote us in and instill governments. This Throne Speech shall remind us to always think of the privilege and confidence that we have voluntarily been given by the people of this province. Let's not just have democracy. Let's build it and continue to grow for our collective prosperity. We shall meet the challenges of growth with solutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, I do support the Throne Speech but not the amendment. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to rise in the Assembly this evening and again this year. I have been very fortunate to represent the constituency of Canora-Pelly for I guess a little over 18 years. And of course that would mean that I should probably have about 18 years of throne speeches that I've listened to from members, and I've listened to the actual throne speeches.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a few moments talking about the kinds of things that are happening with Saskatchewan that probably people didn't anticipate, didn't anticipate in Canora-Pelly, because unfortunately over a long period of time the province was not only stagnated; it was in fact declining. And we're seeing a change. And we're seeing a change, and it's a change in probably the attitude of people. It's a change in how people are reacting to Saskatchewan. And I want to congratulate the people of Saskatchewan for building a province now that has a population of in excess of one point million people. It's one of the provinces that you hear very positive comments about. And I'm going to share some of those things with you, Mr. Speaker.

But before I begin, it's very . . . I think we don't get this opportunity often to publicly thank the people that support us. First of all within my constituency, as every MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] on both sides of the House will indicate, the staff that we have back in the constituency office that respond to cases, that keep us informed, because we don't always get back to the constituency on that much of a basis that they would like us, a frequent basis.

So I want to thank Carol Sleeva and Michele Wiwchar who are my two CAs. Carol does just an outstanding job. She's been with me a long time and probably understands me and my thinking a lot because that's, as my colleagues would say, that might be a little scary at times too. But I do want to thank her for not only doing the great work that she does but also supporting me.

Mr. Speaker, as many have indicated of course, family is very, very important to every one of us. And you know, I'm no different from my colleagues. It's a pleasure to have been the dad to my daughter, Lindsay. Lindsay is of course unfortunately not a resident of Saskatchewan, and I say yet because I do hope that she will consider coming back to a growing province, but she does work in Calgary. And, Mr. Speaker, she did take the opportunity to I think do some self-education in that she left her employment in Calgary and travelled the world, travelled the world for 10 months. And I had the fortune of being on a mission, on a trade mission, to Ukraine. And actually having not seen her for 10 months, it was quite a pleasure to see her, come to visit me, while we were in Ukraine. That's where she met us, and she spent some time with my wife and I as we were doing the business of the province of Saskatchewan.

So she's back in Calgary, back working for the very same

company that she left. And I want to congratulate her for not only what she did in terms of venturing off by herself — she's a very independent person — but she made me very proud.

Of course our son, Bryce, and his wife, Olivia, and our two little granddaughters. And, Mr. Speaker, many people in the Canora-Pelly constituency have just received my latest MLA report, and I've got to tell you that on the back page I had to put a picture of my two little granddaughters on budget day as I was preparing myself to get ready to come into the House. Of course my youngest granddaughter, Scarlett, had to check my flower just to make sure that it was in the right position. So it's great to have a family so close. They live in Yorkton which of course from Invermay is only about an hour away.

And then also our son, Bryce, was very fortunate to I think receive what I would call a promotion. He is a teacher, educator, principal, administrator in the Good Spirit School Division, and he was fortunate to have been the principal in Springside School for I think three years, and now he is the principal for Columbia Elementary school right in the city of Yorkton. So I want to also congratulate him and say, good job.

But most importantly to me of course, the other half. It is my wife Gail. Gail has been so supportive of everything I do. She tries to be with me on many events in my constituency as well here in Regina, whether it be here in the legislature or whether it be attending events which relate to me being a minister.

And also for her she's, as I think many know, she's a superannuated teacher. But she also has started off I think with her dream, and now she writes an article. She writes an article every second week that's published in the *Canora Courier*. And just the other day she was fortunate enough now to have another article printed in *More of Our Canada*. So I want to say congratulations, dear, and keep up the good work.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about a few things that happened in Canora-Pelly this past summer because I think this will clearly show what growth means to the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, on July 12th I had the privilege of being in the Preeceville community. In Preeceville we have the Mackenzie Society, where of course there are many people who, with disabilities, that are looked after by the Mackenzie Society. And what they decided to do was they decided to purchase a miniature golf course that existed already. It had fallen into a state of disrepair. They purchased it and now it's been revamped. There's a brand new little building there. And on July the 12th, we had the opportunity of opening that, where now clients of Mackenzie Society are actually working there. They enjoy it because it's now something that they could do on a regular basis. So I want to thank, you know, the Mackenzie Society for the efforts that they have put in in dealing with people with disabilities.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't too long ago that our government took the stand that said that people who work in those types of jobs that offer assistance to people with disabilities need to be paid in a larger amount. And we changed, and we changed that, Mr. Speaker. And we're seeing now I think a little bit more of a situation where the people are able to

stay because the dollars that they receive is a little bit more comparable to what other jobs in the community would be.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to be also involved in something that occurred in Canora on July 19th. The community of Canora, along with the Kraynick family, that is Chase Kraynick's family, we opened up something called the Chase Kraynick Pay It Forward Splash Park. It's a great splash park for children. And unfortunately it occurred because Chase Kraynick unfortunately was killed in an accident. But now there's something there. Initially the thoughts were that this project would be built. It was going to cost around \$350,000 and, Mr. Speaker, with the support of individuals, of businesses, of communities, in fact the Aviva competition where the Aviva insurance company . . . Actually the town of Canora won first prize and were awarded \$90,000. So anyone travelling in Canora during the summer will see the Chase Kraynick Park, and it's great that the community responded the way they did.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things that occurred in my constituency was on August 9th, where in Kamsack the Yorkton Co-op opened a brand new food store, a \$4 million food store to serve not only the community of Kamsack but as everyone knows, Kamsack is probably what I'll call the gateway to the provincial park, to Duck Mountain Provincial Park. And as a result of that, they understand that there is now a much more significant group of people that need to have the services of a good food store. And I want to congratulate the board and all of the people in, not only in Yorkton and Kamsack, but all of those involved in making that project a reality.

[19:30]

Mr. Speaker, more good news in Canora-Pelly. This summer I had the honour of representing the government at Sturgis, where the 123 Care For Me Child Care centre was opened. The centre was opened on August 26th. And what has occurred, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that within the Sturgis Elementary school there has been a renovation, there has been construction of a new daycare within the elementary school. And now parents who want to have their child in a daycare — whether they are from Preeceville or Sturgis or Stenen or Endeavour — now have an opportunity to take their children to a first-class daycare; the tremendous work by a chairperson there by the name of Lisa Serdachny to bring this about, to ensure that it was constructed. Yes, there were tremendous amounts of volunteer labour but, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan also contributed well over \$700,000 to make this a reality in Sturgis.

Mr. Speaker, in Canora, again it's very fortunate, I was very fortunate to be involved in the opening of three relocatable classrooms. Mr. Speaker, this occurred on September 6th at the Canora Junior Elementary where because of growing enrolment there was a need to ensure that additional classrooms were constructed. And this was done with their opening on September 6th.

Mr. Speaker, that's a far cry from the days in fact when I was a school board member back in what was referred to as the old Canora school division where we had to, we had to pass resolutions to close schools. And we were closing schools, Mr. Speaker, because unfortunately enrolments were dropping.

Enrolments were dropping in Saskatchewan to the tune of about 3,500 students per year, and as a result of that, you know, the movement of families out of rural Saskatchewan because there were no jobs. We lost a lot of families and we had to close schools. Not a very pleasant task, Mr. Speaker. So I can tell you it's a lot better cutting a ribbon to open relocatables than it is to pass a motion to close schools.

Mr. Speaker, on a broader note, our government implemented a project or a change to how we would offer assistance to individual communities. And it's through the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport, and it's referred to as the community rink affordability grant. We heard for years that it was very difficult for communities, whether they be really, really small, as in the case of Togo, Saskatchewan in my constituency, or whether they be a bigger community as is the town of Canora, which of course is my largest community. We implemented a grant where an operational rink, whether that be a curling rink or whether that be a skating rink, we would be granting them up to \$2,500 each so that they could take advantage of lowering their costs.

Mr. Speaker, in this last fiscal year in my constituency, 23 different rinks took advantage of that, including the Cote First Nation who operates an arena. And as a result of that, the monies that were transferred to the Canora-Pelly constituency alone was \$57,500, Mr. Speaker. So again, we are trying to ensure that communities are able to meet their challenges. We have increased revenue sharing. We've done a number of things to ensure that the challenges that communities face are indeed met.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things that has happened is of course close to my constituency but not directly in my constituency, and that's in the community of Invermay. The minister, the member for Kelvington-Wadena, I'm sure will not mind me talking a little bit about Invermay because what happened there, Mr. Speaker, I think shows the commitment of the Minister of Health and Sunrise Regional Health Authority and all of the people in Invermay.

What occurred of course is there's a long-term care facility there. It was constructed in the early '80s. But unfortunately in January of this year there was a failure, a structural failure, as well as there was recognition that there was an air quality problem. So all of the residents — and at that time I believe there were 25 residents — were moved temporarily, relocated to other facilities, whether they were in Foam Lake or whether they were in Canora or elsewhere. And the analysis was done of that facility and the Minister of Health was asked to support a remodelling — I'll call it a remodelling; it's a very extensive project — to ensure that it became again home to so many residents.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know the exact numbers as to the total cost, but the cost is in excess of \$2 million. Those renovations and repairs have been completed throughout the summer. There are a few small things to go yet, Mr. Speaker, but I can tell you that the residents started to return to their home, as they call it, yesterday. And we're probably going to see full occupancy today and tomorrow.

So I want to thank Suann Laurent, the president and CEO [chief

executive officer] of Sunrise, for recognizing that in a smaller community there still is just tremendous need for ensuring that services are delivered. And the Minister of Health again stood firmly behind this project to ensure that it would go.

So when I listen to the concerns raised by many about what's wrong with our health system in some instances, I can tell you this is what's right in our health system, where we recognize that there needs to be . . . There's a challenge and it needs to be met with a commitment. And indeed the government made that commitment and now we're fully operational again.

Mr. Speaker, in a community in what I'll call the regional community that serves the Canora-Pelly constituents, that's Yorkton. Yorkton had an announcement not too long ago, and of course government has been involved in this discussion for a while, and that's called the Parkland Trades and Technology Centre. Mr. Speaker, this is a project that is going to occur within the city of Yorkton, but it is going to have tremendous impact on many, many people. I dare say there might even be people from the Cannington constituency that will benefit from a trades and technology centre that's near us.

Mr. Speaker, this new project will cost anywhere from \$17 to \$18 million, and government has committed our share of \$10 million to this project over a period of time. And my understanding is that they're preparing their documents and will be going to tender in the month of November. So I want to congratulate the Parkland Regional College Board. I want to congratulate the member for Yorkton who has worked tirelessly to move this project forward because it will be of tremendous value to so many. It is anticipated that an additional 360 students will graduate from this expanded facility and the expanded programs.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we look at what can we do better to serve our Aboriginal students and our Aboriginal population, what can we do better to enhance the ability to meet the challenge of an inadequate labour force. Mr. Speaker, we recognize that we're going to need tens of thousands of new people that are going to move into jobs. And, Mr. Speaker, we have to provide that education for them.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to, I want to again congratulate the Ministry of Advanced Education for making that a priority, for ensuring that we move forward on that project and that the end result will be I think a better facility for so many.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move to some issues that of course are a little more provincial in nature, and that of course is all around taxation, Mr. Speaker. As many know, we have made some very significant changes to the taxation system over the last six years. And each and every year, Mr. Speaker, because of something that is called indexation we change the amount of taxes that people will be required to pay in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, that's usually lower, and it's lower because we index for the cost of living.

So this last year, Mr. Speaker, on January 1st, again about \$20 million of tax savings was passed on to the people of Saskatchewan. Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to put that in relative terms because people have to understand that as they're going to fill out their 2013 tax notices and their income tax forms

early in 2014, they're going to look back and they're going to see that the personal exemption for this year is \$15,241.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to understand where that was, you have to realize that in 2007 the personal exemption was just under \$9,000. So, Mr. Speaker, what that means is that \$6,000 — more than \$6,000 — of people's money is now not taxed one cent, Mr. Speaker. So that has put significant dollars into the hands of people. In fact, Mr. Speaker, a family of four now in the province of Saskatchewan, earning nearly \$48,000, will not pay any provincial tax. So that's very significant, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are many economic indicators that are pointing to Saskatchewan that indicate that we're going to lead. We're going to lead, Mr. Speaker, in many areas — key economic indicators like the highest increase in employment, the highest increase in wholesale trade, in manufacturing sales. Mr. Speaker, we're the second highest percentage increase in average weekly earnings. Now that's pretty significant for a province who, not long ago, where people were leaving because number one, there wasn't too many jobs. But number two, there wasn't a great amount of money to be earned. And now of course we're seeing the second highest percentage increase. We have the third highest percentage increase in retail sales and investment in new housing construction.

And Mr. Speaker, I think the final indicator is something that the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses does. And they of course have many, many members, and those members now rank Saskatchewan as the second-best small business-friendly tax system in Canada, behind only Alberta. So that's some pretty significant numbers for the province of Saskatchewan and some pretty significant statistics that have now put us into the position that we are today.

Now Mr. Speaker, when others look at Saskatchewan, we of course are concerned about the financial institutions. What do they say about Saskatchewan now? What is their position? But one of the more important groups are the bond rating agencies, Mr. Speaker. There are three bond rating agencies that have been the bond rating agencies of Saskatchewan for a long, long period of time, and they are of course Moody's, S & P [Standard & Poor's], and DBRS, which of course means Dominion Bond Rating Service.

Now Mr. Speaker, all three of them have changed the rating for the province of Saskatchewan. I'm going to begin with Moody's, and indicate that Moody's now has rated Saskatchewan as a Aa1. And this is an upgrade that they also changed it to something called positive from stable on July 26th, 2012. So now we have a Aa1 positive from Moody's. From DBRS, from the Dominion Bond Rating Service, Mr. Speaker, we have a Aa. And Mr. Speaker, that change occurred on May 24th, 2011, when they changed our position to Aa positive, Mr. Speaker. The third one is S & P, Standard & Poor's, Mr. Speaker, on not too long ago have indicated of course that Saskatchewan for the first time is now AAA.

Now AAA, Mr. Speaker, to maybe people who don't look at, you know, the economics of the province or the need to borrow, have to recognize that when you have a AAA, you have a competition, and that competition is of course amongst a number of provinces. We have a fair number that have been

rated AAA, and as a result of that you now, when you go to the lending institutions, you're in a competition as to whether or not the financial institutions are going to take up your debt. Because, Mr. Speaker, we know that we continue to borrow. We continue to borrow especially for our Crown corporations, whether they're SaskPower or SaskTel. We are a growing province and we need to replace the infrastructure of the past, and we do that by borrowing. And what we have seen, Mr. Speaker, in the last little while is that there has been tremendous interest. There has been tremendous interest in what the financial institutions think about Saskatchewan.

[19:45]

Last week, Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of being in Toronto on Thursday and Friday of last week and I had the opportunity to meet with the financial members of the financial syndicate, as it's referred to. But I also had the opportunity to meet with officials from our co-managers. And in Saskatchewan we have two co-managers. They are RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] and CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce]. And, Mr. Speaker, the phrases, the comments that I heard over and over again for that 48 hours was things like this: Saskatchewan has a realistic, achievable plan. Next quote was again, Saskatchewan is doing a good job in diversifying the economy. And finally, Mr. Speaker, from one of the members I spoke to who said, Saskatchewan is the envy of other provinces. Mr. Speaker, that's a very positive thing.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the people of the province understand that as we look to growth — and that's the whole, I think, conditions of this Throne Speech — we recognize that growth brings challenges. And, Mr. Speaker, it's not a coincidence that the theme of the Throne Speech is "Meeting the Challenges of Growth." Because, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated and others have indicated, we're lucky. We're lucky that the province of Saskatchewan is growing. We have 1.1 million people, and with that comes challenges of growth.

They are in many instances infrastructure challenges. Whether that infrastructure is highways . . . and we look at the fact that we have the Global Transportation Hub occurring just out on the west side of Regina here to meet the challenges of enhancing trade and the ability to move our product through container shipment, but that brings the need for bypasses. That brings the need for interchanges, for all of those things that cost millions and millions, in fact hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to look at the challenge of growth. We're going to continue to spend many dollars on infrastructure. As indicated, our budget this year contains \$847 million for infrastructure, for the building. And we know from the demands, Mr. Speaker, that's not sufficient. And the one that really pops out, and it's something that I've been involved with for a long period of time as an educator and as a school board Chair, is around the construction of schools.

Mr. Speaker, when we became government in 2007, one of the first things that I was asked to do as minister of Education was to allocate additional dollars to see the completion of the Nutana school. The Nutana school, as everyone knows, is in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, that project was announced in 2002

and it wasn't finished. So that tells you, Mr. Speaker, that the former government really didn't have a plan for building schools. They didn't have a plan for growth. Mr. Speaker, there needs to be, there needs to be a better emphasis on construction of schools.

So, Mr. Speaker, we allocated \$13 million in that very first year just to take care of the projects from before. Since then, Mr. Speaker, \$600 million, 20 new schools, significant number of renovated projects. And, Mr. Speaker, have we caught up? Absolutely not. Mr. Speaker, there still is a need. There still is a need because now for the first time . . . As I indicated in my earlier comments, school divisions were declining across the entire province by about 3,500 students per year. Mr. Speaker, for the first time in a long time, this last year the statistics are showing us in the month of September that we have 2,140 new students, additional students in the province of Saskatchewan. That's going to mean that we're going to have to build schools.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're not stuck in an ideology as the members opposite are. We recognize that the need is there; that we have to build these schools. We can't wait to build one school every 10 years or one school every eight years. We're going to have to build a number of schools.

And that is one of the reasons why we're pursuing the investigation of bundling of schools, first of all, Mr. Speaker. And I want to clarify for people who may not understand the difference between bundling and P3s [public-private partnership]. Bundling means we're going to look at similar type schools. They're not going to be identical but they're going to be similar. They're going to be joint-use. And that, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate, I want to congratulate the public school boards who are involved in these nine projects, and the Catholic school boards for being . . . looking at and being able to consider a joint-use school because that's . . . Mr. Speaker, we're going to have to move forward with those projects, and it's great to see the boards of education working on those projects.

But, Mr. Speaker, if we were going to rely on the traditional method of build, the NDP [New Democratic Party] didn't build. So as a result of that, now we've been trying to catch up, Mr. Speaker, and we've been doing as many as three schools per year on average. Some years we've announced a few more. But, Mr. Speaker, dollars today mean that a school of any significant size, you're talking between 20 and \$25 million per school. Now when we talk about nine joint-use projects, of course, where there's two schools in each of these projects, you're talking anywhere between 40 and 50 million per project. So with nine projects, Mr. Speaker, we know that we're going to be looking at in excess of \$400 million. So if we were going to look at only the traditional method of building, we wouldn't build these schools for another 10 years. And in fact, you know, one of the members opposite, there will be a school in his constituency. We wouldn't be building that school. We wouldn't be building that school for another 8 years, 10 years, 12 years. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that the initiative that has been shown by the Ministry of Education, by the position of SaskBuilds as we look at how do we become more competitive in this province, how are we able to meet the challenges of infrastructure, I think are very, very significant.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks this evening by ensuring the people of Saskatchewan that we have made a number of commitments. We have made a number of commitments that we are going to budget on a basis where revenue is going to exceed expenditures, Mr. Speaker — in other words, a balanced budget. That's critical, Mr. Speaker, because we're still struggling with the \$6.8 billion worth of government debt that the former government left us. Yes, we have been successful in paying off \$3 billion of that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, \$3 billion of that has been paid off and we're very fortunate because the end result is we have \$600 million worth of interest saved, and we're building a school in La Ronge, Mr. Speaker, because of that.

Mr. Speaker, there are many more things that we're going to have to do in this province, but, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we're going to have to do is to continue to move forward. We're going to have to continue to move forward with innovative ways of ensuring that we meet the challenges of today. But, Mr. Speaker, I know from my discussions with so many people across this province, one thing that people will tell me all the time is we can never move forward if indeed we have the NDP in control because they're always looking backwards, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments and my remarks, I would like to take my place but before I do I would move adjournment of debate.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

The Speaker: — The Government 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 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 19:55.]

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