



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

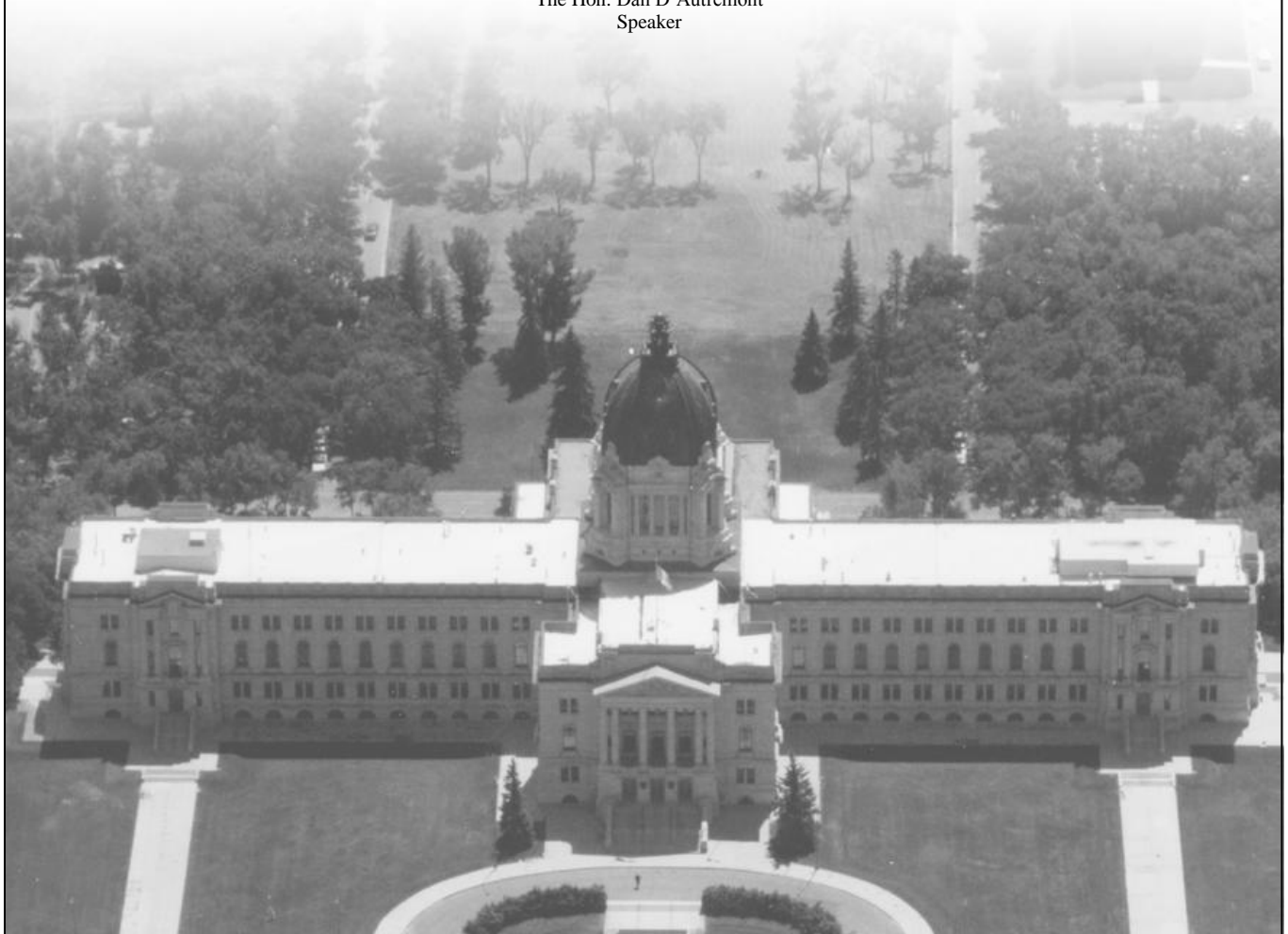
of the

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

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The Provincial Secretary has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly and our assembled guests today, it's my pleasure to introduce and welcome some special guests of our own to the province of Saskatchewan and to our Legislative Building.

I'd like us to welcome His Excellency Charles Murto, the ambassador of Finland to Canada; his spouse, Mrs. Ritva Murto; and with them I'm delighted to introduce our newest honorary consul in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chad Eggerman, who is representing Finland to this province. Mr. Eggerman is a resident of Saskatoon at this time.

This is Ambassador Murto's first official visit to our province, Mr. Speaker. And while in Saskatchewan, His Excellency will meet with the Lieutenant Governor, with representatives of the government, Crown corporations, the Petroleum Technology Research Centre, the University of Regina, and the private sector.

And as two northern jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, it's safe to say that the people of Saskatchewan have a lot in common with the people of Finland, something that probably goes beyond hockey and cold weather, and it's a relationship, Mr. Speaker, that actually dates back some time. Our relationship is really quite strong.

Historically Saskatchewan has been connected to the people of Finland through immigration. Immigrants came from Finland, settling the land as early as 1887. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there's an area of Saskatchewan still near the towns of Esterhazy and Rocanville close to the Manitoba border where to this day residents still refer to that area as new Finland.

Today, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan and Finnish companies are working together to build strong relationships through commerce. Mr. Speaker, I'm eager to continue to strengthen the bonds that we share. We had an excellent conversation today. We enjoyed the company of His Excellency and his spouse and Mr. Eggerman, and we look forward to doing continued work with the embassy and with the great country of Finland.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all members of the legislature to make our guests welcome. Would our guests please rise for our welcome.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to join with the Provincial Secretary in welcoming His Excellency Charles Murto along with his partner, Ms. Ritva Murto, and honorary consul, Mr. Chad Eggerman. It's wonderful to see His Excellency here in the Assembly today as well as Mr. Eggerman. It was good to chat with the honorary consul on the Throne Speech day and the festivities attached to that.

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Secretary is correct. Our ties in the province do go back a long way when it comes to Saskatchewan and Finland. We think of many communities throughout the province that were settled by people from Nordic countries, including Finland. And so the ties are strong there socially. They're also strong in an economic sense, and I think there's a lot we can learn from one another, Mr. Speaker.

In Saskatchewan over the recent while we've had a big discussion about the future of our education system. And I know one of the examples that is held up as a bright light is Finland's in terms of what the country has accomplished.

So I think there's a lot we can learn from each other, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask all members again to welcome His Excellency and honorary consul to the Assembly today and wish them all the best in their meetings over the next while. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the legislature, I have the honour of introducing two very special groups of people today. And not in the order of importance, but I'm going to choose the larger group that are with us today on the floor of the Assembly.

Today I have the honour of introducing some important groups, a group of people who are going to be taking on the very important work of the citizen consultation team that are going to be developing our province-wide disability strategy. Joining us today are the two team Co-Chairs: first of all, Amy Alsop from Regina is the citizen Co-Chair, and Daryl Stubel who is the executive director of the office of disability issues for the ministry. The other members of the team are Merv Bender, Larry Carlson, Roger Carver, Dawn Desautels, Carole Eaton, Lynette Griffin, Charmaine Landrie, Andrea Lavallee, Michael Lavis, Marie Lindenschmitt, Laurie McSymytz, Eugene Paquin, Shaun Soonias, and Ian Wilkinson.

Mr. Speaker, this team is meeting for the very first time today to start preparing for the province-wide consultation. I am honoured to be the lead minister on this file and I'll be supported by the Legislative Secretary for disabilities, the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Regina Coronation Park. Other ministries that are participating in the process are

Health, Education, Advanced Education, Government Relations, Economy, Finance, Justice, and the Attorney General.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to making Saskatchewan the very best place in Canada to live for people with a disability. We're going to take the time to do this right by hearing from as many people as possible on this important issue, and I'm asking all members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome their guests to their Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I also have the honour today of introducing special guests who have dedicated their lives to making life better for Saskatchewan children and youth. Joining us today from the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association is the executive director, Deb Davies. Next to Deb is Tony Nagy who is a dedicated and caring foster parent who lives right here in Regina, and Kevin Harris who is the Chair of the provincial and the Regina foster parents board.

Mr. Speaker, the Nagy family has opened their hearts and their home to foster children for four years, one of which is now playing football for the Notre Dame Hounds on full scholarship.

Mr. Speaker, last week, Foster Family Week was celebrated here in our province, and next year the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association will be celebrating 40 years, a 40th anniversary. Foster families make a huge difference in the lives of our children in our province. In addition to looking after them on a daily basis, they are opening up their homes so they have a place to call home.

I'd like to thank Mr. Nagy and all foster families for all the work they do. On behalf of a grateful province, thank you very much and welcome to your Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the minister in welcoming these people to our legislature. It's very important work. It sounds like they're embarking on, especially the citizen's consultation team, heading out to do a lot of consultations on a very, very important issue.

We agree with the province. This should be the very best province for people with disabilities to live. And we'll work as hard as we can, and we really want to strive for common sense solutions. So that's very, very important. So we wish you all the best in your consultations. And on behalf of the opposition, we want to welcome you to your legislature.

As well I'll take this moment as well to recognize the foster families in the gallery, the Nagy family and the good work that they do. This is also very critical work to make sure that our youth and children in Saskatchewan have safe places they can call home, that they know they'll be well cared for.

I want to especially acknowledge Deb Davies, the executive director of Foster Families. The good work that she's been doing has gone a long way here in Saskatchewan. So thank you, Deb and thank you to the Nagy family. Thank you. Welcome.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and

Sport.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, seated in the west gallery today is a good friend of mine and of many members on this side of the House, Mr. Jeff Sturzuk.

Jeff is a long-time friend of mine who now unfortunately lives in Calgary and cheers for the Flames. But he is a business owner, a businessman, and his wife, Jody, and their two girls, as I said, do reside in Calgary although he is still a very strong supporter of our Premier and of our party.

I have the long history of Jeff of being a roommate at one time. I was in his wedding party. We worked together. And he has found himself quite often at the losing end of our golf games, Mr. Speaker. So it's a pleasure to see Jeff. His business allows him to come back to the province that he was born and bred in and raised in. And we're just delighted to see him here today, and welcome to the Legislative Assembly, Jeff.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister and the member from Saskatoon Centre in welcoming the folks, especially from the Foster Families Association.

And in particular I'd like to say a fond hello and a thank you to Tony Nagy. I'm not surprised to hear that he's a tremendous foster parent because he was once upon a time a tremendous hockey coach, Mr. Speaker. And for whatever . . . sort of claimed any kind of talent in the hockey arena that I might've had, he had a lot to do with it. We had a lot of fun time down at the Kinsmen Arena and rinks throughout the city.

But it doesn't surprise me, Mr. Speaker, that Tony Nagy's a tremendous foster parent because indeed he was a tremendous coach and still is a tremendous member of the North Central community and a good neighbour. So it's really good to see Tony Nagy here today at his Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you, it gives me great pleasure to be able to introduce my wife, Larissa, who is in the gallery. She's no stranger to the House; she's a hard-working public servant of ours here in the provincial government.

And she also has with her our new son Nickson Walter Steinley. He's five and a half months old today and he's pretty good up there. I'm not sure if he's going to heckle very much because his dad doesn't, so I don't think he will. So he's been a perfect baby so far, and he's a growing concern. He's 21 pounds now, Mr. Speaker. And he's a pretty smiley little baby, and we're very blessed to have him in our life. And my wife does a wonderful job being his mother and looking after me as well. So together I'd like to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly, and I don't think it will be the last time they'll be here. So welcome, honey, and Nickson.

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

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to welcome Deb Davies. Deb Davies is a resident of Fairview, a long-term resident, and a foster for over 30 years. And I just wanted to acknowledge her. And she's also a very good friend of mine, so if we could all welcome her to her legislature.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for reasonable funding so all Saskatchewan students can do well. And we know students who need support from educational assistants and other resources are not getting this support because of chronic underfunding. New Canadian students are often not receiving as much support as they need for learning English. And we know the Government of Saskatchewan has chronically underfunded student support, and their agenda must change to reflect the real priorities of Saskatchewan schools today.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to immediately increase financial support for all Saskatchewan students, to include resources to limit class sizes, to provide resources for students with special needs, to support English as an additional language, and to provide more support for Aboriginal education.

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

I do so present. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. Many northern residents benefited from the rental purchase option program, also known as RPO. These families are very proud owners in their communities. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly cause the Sask Party government to restore the RPO rent to own option for responsible renters in northern Saskatchewan, allowing them the dignity of owning their own homes and building community in our province in the beautiful North.

It is signed by many northern residents. I so present.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of replacing the gym at Sacred Heart Community School. Of course there's a temporary gym that has been cobbled together by the school division in conjunction with the

province, but as with any other school, Mr. Speaker, the students need a permanent gym. They need a gym like any other school in the province.

And Sacred Heart Community School is a growing school. There's 450-plus students there. There are, 75 per cent of those students are First Nations and Métis, Mr. Speaker. It is the largest school in North Central Regina and it's a literacy leader. They take reading very seriously, and it's something that the whole school has gotten behind. And of course, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of basic fairness and common sense, Sacred Heart Community School needs a gym. The prayer reads as follows:

To cause the Sask Party provincial government to immediately commit to the replacement of the gymnasium of Sacred Heart Community School.

This petition is signed by citizens from the city of Regina. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Equal Justice for All Reopens

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last year the Saskatoon non-profit group Equal Justice for All, a charitable advocacy organization that helps people with mediation and appeal decisions by government agencies, particularly Social Services, had to close their doors when the government decided they would no longer provide them with funding.

I'm happy to say that on October 18th this very important organization was able to reopen their doors once again, thanks to the support of the community, especially donations from SaskTel, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, the Holy Spirit church, and the University of Saskatchewan.

Before they were shut down last year, Equal Justice for All was helping with an average of 100 cases a month, but their funding was cut because they were told there were enough organizations in the community already doing the same advocacy work as Equal Justice for All.

Mr. Speaker, currently Equal Justice for All is completely staffed by volunteers, many of whom live in poverty themselves and have one or more disabilities. Roberta Fehr, the executive director of Equal Justice for All says, and I quote, "I think people really need to be able to communicate with somebody who has that lived experience, that has gone through what we've gone through or similar, and not be judged."

Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow members of this legislature to congratulate the staff and the board at Equal Justice for All in their valuable struggle to keep their doors open so they can help and support those in need in Saskatoon. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Developing a Disability Strategy

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to inform all members that the Government of Saskatchewan has taken another important step towards making this province the best place to live in Canada for people with disabilities.

This morning we announced the 15 members of the citizen consultation team that will lead the development of a comprehensive disability strategy for the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, those 15 team members were selected from more than 100 applications submitted by members of the public. Our province's disability strategy will focus on the priority areas specified in our government's plan for growth. Other priorities may emerge during the consultation process.

On that subject, the members of the citizen consultation team are getting to work right away on developing the public consultation process and are in fact holding a daylong meeting today here at the legislature. Preliminary plans call for a number of consultation methods to be utilized, including community forums to be held across the province next spring.

Mr. Speaker, our province is growing and we need to ensure that everyone is able to share in the opportunities created by that growth. We'll do that by hearing from as many people and as many different viewpoints as possible in the development of our disability strategy. Thank you.

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

Saskatchewan Wearable Art Gala

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Wearable Art Gala took place this past weekend at the Mercedes-Benz showroom in Saskatoon. The event was organized by the Jack Millikin Centre as a fundraiser for their sustainable build of an all-season facility on the Ness Creek site. It will be a green facility for cultural and ecological activity in northern Saskatchewan, and to nurture and steward cultural land use.

The gala was the brainchild of Lindsay Embree, a Saskatoon artist who has submitted pieces to wearable art shows around the world. She decided it was time to host such a show in Saskatoon. One of her pieces, a dress made from rejection letters she has received throughout her career as an artist, was featured in the first part of the fashion show at the gala.

The gala showcased artists from around the world who had been invited to submit works of wearable art. The pieces were then modelled by dancers from the Alma Flamenco Dance Studio accompanied by live flamenco musicians as they gracefully and powerfully displayed piece after piece of imaginative, absurdly delightful, wearable art. The wearable art was juried and the winners took home cash prizes donated by Lindsay, her husband, Arnfinn Prugger, and PotashCorp. All other monies raised from the evening will be put toward the building of the Jack Milliken Centre. It was a spectacular combination of live music, dance, and art delighting the eyes and ears of all present.

Saskatoon Nutana constituent Carlie Letts did an outstanding job organizing the event and many fellow constituents contributed as volunteers. Please join me in congratulating all the volunteers who made the gala a successful and memorable event. Thank you.

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

Thank You to Foster Families

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House today to continue our recognition of those who support our foster children across the province.

Mr. Speaker, last week we honoured the province's many dedicated foster families during Foster Families Week. And today we're honoured to have with us a member of the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association and also the Nagys, a very caring foster parent family right here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association exists to support and encourage foster families through education and advocacy, helping to create healthy homes, positive environments, and brighter futures for children and youth in care across our province. Foster families make a huge difference in the lives of children and families they serve by providing the most important thing of all, a place to call home.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to honour and recognize those who support and foster our province's children and youth, I ask all members to join me in expressing our most sincere appreciation to the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association and to our province's many foster families for taking on these crucial roles. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Girl Guides Youth Recognition Ceremony

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last Sunday, I had the privilege of bringing greetings at the Girl Guides Youth Recognition ceremony right here in Regina. Mr. Speaker, what an honour it was to recognize the various accomplishments of these bright and promising girl guides.

Young women from across the province were recognized at Sunday's event. And the awards included the Canada Cord Award, Chief Commissioner Bronze Award, Chief Commissioner Silver Award, Chief Commissioner Gold Award, Commonwealth Award, the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award, the Cynthia O'Connor Scholarship, and the Mildred Baldwin Scholarship.

Mr. Speaker, I heard about the young women learning about global and cultural awareness, career exploration, science, technology, business, and the arts. While learning about cyberbullying, self-esteem, and body image, the Girl Guides are also developing the skills required to stand up and speak out and take action on issues that matter to them most. The knowledge and skills and the value of being part of Girl Guides will undoubtedly help these young women face the challenges

and tough decisions that life brings.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly applaud the Girl Guide membership recognition awards ceremony and the Girl Guides organization for the very important work they do.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Trafalgar Day Gala

Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday evening, the member from Wood River and I had the privilege of attending the Trafalgar Day Gala held at HMCS [Her Majesty's Canadian Ship] *Queen*, the Royal Canadian Navy's establishment here in Regina.

Led by her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, the dinner celebrated the decisive victory of Great Britain's Admiral Horatio Nelson over a larger combined force of French and Spanish warships off Cape Trafalgar during the Napoleonic wars 200 years ago. But much more importantly it focused community attention on the present-day contribution of Canada's navy whose regular force and reserve members work hard in challenging locations all over the world to keep our country free.

Proceeds from the dinner will be given to Wounded Warriors Canada. This is the non-profit organization that assists injured military personnel from Canada and now the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia who have returned from deployment in troubled areas, from Bosnia to Afghanistan. Many Saskatchewan residents will recall the fantastic retreats provided to these veterans in beautiful Nipawin over the last two summers.

I want to close by thanking and congratulating Lieutenant Commander Linda Mushanski, commanding officer of HMCS *Queen*, and the splendid team of naval reservists along with friends of the navy members whose exemplary work made the Trafalgar Day Gala a truly great community event. Hats off to Steve Smedley and Ken McCaw, Carolynne Kobelsky, Scott Dyson, Wrahnda Eichhorn, Alaura Campbell, Don Lindsay, Rebecca Miller, Gordon Chan, and Katherine Pitka. You did an outstanding job. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Regina Youth for Christ Hope Dinner

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I had the pleasure of attending the Regina Youth for Christ Hope Dinner 2013 at Conexus Arts Centre along with the member from Yorkton. Close to 500 guests gathered at the dinner to hear about the work of YFC [Youth for Christ] in Regina.

Originally Youth for Christ reached out to youth through community outreach and school programs. Recognizing the need for young people to have a place to call home, Youth for Christ Regina rented a U-turn home for 15- to 18-year-old youth in December of 2009. In the fall of 2010, a house for

youth aged 12 to 16 in the care of Social Services was opened. In 2011 a second U-turn home was opened in Moose Jaw, and a home for youth aged 12 to 16 in the care of Social Services was opened in The Battlefords. In 2012 with the help of Leon Friesen of Westridge Construction and many supporters, the Regina U-turn home moved from a rental unit into their very own brand new house.

Mr. Speaker, all of Youth for Christ's housing provides young people a place to live, a place to learn, and a place to be loved, and they recognize the hope and potential in every young person.

We were also inspired by a message from Geordon Rendle, a former Saanich police officer now president of YFC International, to reach out to the youth of our city, province, and country.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in recognizing Regina Youth For Christ and the crucial work they do for young people across this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Health Care Conditions and Staffing

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Suzanne Stewart is a retired registered nurse. She's worked for 36 years in hospitals and in care facilities throughout Saskatchewan — places like Regina, Saskatoon, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, Swift Current, and Yorkton. And she had this to say, Mr. Speaker: "I have never had to work in a filthy and unsafe environment. The standard of care and level of sanitation was always maintained." But she's been retired a few years, Mr. Speaker, and her recent experiences have left her deeply concerned that our health care system is getting worse.

So my question is for the Premier, Mr. Speaker: how can he explain to Suzanne why our health care system is getting worse?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. One of the first things that this government did when it took office in 2007 was consult with patients around the province, Mr. Speaker, and front-line staff through the Patient First Review, Mr. Speaker. That indicated that there were a number of areas that the citizens of this province wanted to have addressed, Mr. Speaker, including the longest wait times in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province will see that this government has made significant progress in that area, Mr. Speaker, as well as staffing. That was one of the concerns that was raised, Mr. Speaker, and the appropriate level of care that we can provide. Because we had a horrible shortage in staffing, Mr. Speaker, when it came to acute and long-term care facilities, whether that be RNs [registered nurse], Mr. Speaker. We knew we were 800 short in this province, Mr. Speaker. We not only did hire 800 but an additional 200 over that, Mr.

Speaker.

Is there more work to be done? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. But I think this government has been able to demonstrate, on the operational side as well as on the capital spending side, unprecedented investments into health care in this province, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Suzanne Stewart is clear that our health care system has been getting worse in recent years. Mr. Speaker, I'll take the word of an RN with 36 years of experience over the words of this government any day. In her last two times in the hospital as a patient, Suzanne says the hospital was "filthy dirty." And she doesn't blame the front-line staff. She says the staff are "stretched beyond their capacities due to cutbacks."

Mr. Speaker, how does the Premier explain health care facilities that are described as filthy dirty?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite I don't believe has indicated which facility he's referring to, Mr. Speaker. We'd be certainly willing to look into any types of those concerns because we do know that our front-line staff, Mr. Speaker, work to ensure that we have hygienic, safe environments, not only for the patients but as well for the front-line staff, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, we certainly would want to address this particular concern.

But, Mr. Speaker, for anyone I think to say that the health care system has gotten worse in the last two years, Mr. Speaker, I would only have them talk to somebody who only two years ago or four years ago or seven years ago, under the former government, would have been waiting more than 18 months for surgery, Mr. Speaker, in this province. There were nearly 3,000 people in our province at one time, under the NDP [New Democratic Party], waiting longer than 18 months for surgery, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there is more work to do, but we've made significant progress in these areas in the last six years.

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the situation was so bad for Suzanne, and her surroundings were so unsanitary, that her family actually took it upon themselves, Mr. Speaker, to do the cleaning when she was in the hospital as a patient. The family, Mr. Speaker, actually had to clean their loved one's hospital room and their bathroom.

It would be shocking, Mr. Speaker, if we weren't hearing other stories like this. Just yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we heard of the Phillips family who actually had to hire a private care provider to go into the hospital to ensure that their mother received a basic level of services because of short-staffing. Suzanne

Stewart, Mr. Speaker, says the government has "made a system so lean there isn't enough staff to do the basics in cleaning and in basic nursing care."

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier: how does he think this amounts to fairness for families? My question is, how does he think this amounts to fairness for patients, for safety for patients and dignity for patients?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have made, as the member will know, we have made unprecedented investments into the health care system. The health care budget, Mr. Speaker, for our health regions is up 46 per cent in just the last six years, Mr. Speaker, which has resulted in additional staff in every single area, Mr. Speaker, working within the health care field, whether that be nurses or other front-line providers, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I notice that the member opposite doesn't refer specifically to the facility that he's speaking about. Obviously if there are concerns where family members are having to clean the room, Mr. Speaker, we'd want to look into that, Mr. Speaker. But we know that the Leader of the Opposition has a tendency to come into this House and not provide all of the information, Mr. Speaker, when he brings up cases. But in a case like the member opposite raises, we'd be certainly pleased to look into that, Mr. Speaker. We believe that we have made significant progress when it comes to all front-line staff, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan I believe know that.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat surprised that the minister says he wants to look into Suzanne's complaints because Suzanne wrote to the Premier on two occasions and received form-letter replies, Mr. Speaker.

So let's be clear. Yesterday we talked about and heard from the Phillips family who had to hire a private care provider, Mr. Speaker, in order to ensure that their mom received basic help in the hospital for going to the bathroom and receiving her meals. Mr. Speaker, we've heard from the province's nurses who say they are very fearful because of short-staffing and because of this government's drive to cut corners. And now, Mr. Speaker, we hear from Suzanne Stewart, a retired RN who has raised alarm bells about her recent experience as a patient in the health care system. And she says it's getting worse. She says our hospitals are filthy, in her words, again largely because of short-staffing, Mr. Speaker, and this government's drive to cut corners.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier: has he heard enough, Mr. Speaker, to recognize that the concerns in the health care system are alarming? I know this is a joke for the House Leader on the government side, holding up his iPad. But this is serious, Mr. Speaker. Has the Premier heard enough to recognize that the situation is alarming and that their drive to cut corners, their drive, Mr. Speaker, to have short-staffing, is hurting patients here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, what the record will show, Mr. Speaker, is that the health budget in this province is up 42 per cent, Mr. Speaker, in the last six years, all within a balanced budget. Health regions alone, Mr. Speaker, up 46 per cent. Mr. Speaker, \$1 billion in increased funding to the health regions over the last six years. And the member opposite will know — whether we're speaking of RNs, whether we're speaking of LPNs [licensed practical nurse], whether we're speaking of providers who are represented by the unions of CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees], SEIU-West [Service Employees International Union], Mr. Speaker, or the other provider unions, Mr. Speaker — will know that all of those numbers have been up, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we took staffing issues very seriously, Mr. Speaker, for the fact that we knew that in five years of the last NDP government we lost 174 doctors, Mr. Speaker. We lost nearly 500 nurses, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we lost 52 facilities across this province, Mr. Speaker. We have worked very hard to dig ourselves out of a deficit, Mr. Speaker, of health care funding by the members previous to this government, and we'll continue to do that.

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

Proposed Closure of Distribution Centre

Mr. Wotherspoon: — We learned yesterday that Regina will lose 276 jobs as a result of the Sears distribution centre closing up shop here and moving to Calgary after decades of operations here in Regina. Our thoughts are obviously with the families who are affected by this closure and for whom this is very tough news.

My question to the minister: when did his government learn that Sears was considering moving to Calgary and what did it do to make the case for keeping these jobs here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government learned in recent days . . . I'm not exactly sure. I can get clarification in terms of that for the member, when we learned of the news of Sears making the decision to close out these positions.

Any time, any time that there is a loss of jobs in Saskatchewan, our government is concerned about it. That goes without saying. And that's precisely the reason why we deploy the rapid response team to talk to those individuals as soon as we can possibly arrange it, to talk about other opportunities that might be available to them.

We will be contacting Sears as well to see whether there's any possibility . . . I don't know that because we haven't made that contact yet. However we'll be doing that in addition to other steps that we'll be taking to try and help. Mr. Speaker, we do know though that this is not going to happen for a period of time, so it does give some time for these people to transition to other positions.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the question I've been hearing repeatedly since the announcement, and the question I'm relaying to the minister here this morning . . . or this afternoon is this: why did Sears choose Calgary instead of Regina? And if Sears was interested in a new distribution centre, why did this government's Global Transportation Hub fail to attract it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, those are all good questions and that is exactly what we will be posing to Sears, whether or not there's any opportunity to take a look at the Global Transportation Hub.

Businesses make decisions that they feel are in their best interests. And it's unfortunate any time that it results in a loss of employment for people here in Saskatchewan, and we understand that. And we certainly are mindful of the concerns of the individuals that will be losing their jobs as a result of this decision that was made by a private company. We will be working with them to transition as quickly as possible to other jobs. In the meantime the rapid response team will be talking to them.

We do have some time, as the member probably knows. I understand it's about five or six months or perhaps even a little longer than that before this move takes place so it does give I think our administration an opportunity to talk to Sears and see whether there's any opportunity. I don't know that, but we will certainly endeavour to find out.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Involvement by Senators in Provincial Elections

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, when the Premier called on Justin Trudeau to return the speaking fees he had made while serving as a Member of Parliament, he tweeted, "I make no apologies for asking questions about accountability." I agree, Mr. Speaker, and I have questions myself about accountability here in Saskatchewan.

We're happy to see this government and its political party finally agree with Saskatchewan families and the New Democratic Party about the need to abolish the Senate. It's long overdue and what's also long overdue is the end of campaigning by unelected, unaccountable, partisan senators in our provincial elections.

Will the Premier or the designate on that side agree that along with repealing *The Senate Nominee Election Act* we should also be looking to safeguard against senator interference — on the taxpayers' dollar, no less — in our provincial elections?

The Speaker: — This is a party matter. There is no representatives on the government side dealing with party matters. Therefore this question is invalid.

I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, this question pertains to *The Election Act*, which is clearly in the purview of that

government. Senator Pamela Wallin's winter 2012 newsletter contains a glowing report, complete with pictures, about the 2011 election in Saskatchewan. Senator Wallin states, "I spent a few days in Saskatoon with many of our MLAs and candidates. It was a high energy campaign and it generated a lot of interest."

Now Lord knows she wasn't campaigning for her own election as a senator. No, Mr. Speaker, she was campaigning for that party opposite. Moreover Senator Wallin billed the Canadian taxpayer for expenses during the campaign, claiming \$6,700 for her travels . . .

The Speaker: — Again, this question is regarding party politics. The Senate is not represented on the floor of this Assembly, and this question and series are out of order.

I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Proclamation of Workplace Legislation

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's been one year, five months and 14 days since this Assembly passed legislation that significantly increased the fines for employers that violate occupational health and safety rules. My question for the Minister of Labour: why has the government not proclaimed section 24 of that legislation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier the member opposite was highly critical about lack of consultation, wanting us to postpone and delay things. Mr. Speaker, we're going ahead with consultation. We've got a number of advisory committees that are under way. We're optimistic that this proclamation will come about in the early new year.

We are very concerned about the safety of all of the workers in our province. We have an unacceptably high injury rate. We make no secret of that, and we intend to develop and implement a regime that will give us a substantial reduction in the injury rate and hold people accountable for things that take place in our workforce. That process is under way, and the indication I'd like to give the members opposite is that it will take place likely early in the new year. And we look forward to them supporting everything that we're doing in that regard because I'm sure we all have a common purpose in that area.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, here's what the Minister of Labour had to say on May 8th, 2012, and I quote, "These changes will serve as a significant deterrent to ensure that people will follow the Act." They pledged to implement these changes last fall, but when they proclaimed it, they left out section 24 which increases the fines for employers liable for workers' serious injury or death from 300,000 to \$1.5 million. My question to the minister: why has he failed to deliver on what he has correctly called a significant deterrent?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite across and myself both agree on the importance of workplace safety. We both agree on the importance of some significant deterrents. We need to get our regulatory regime in place. We are in the process of training occupational health and safety workers.

As our province grows, we have more and more corporations that are large multinational corporations carrying on business in our province, and it is appropriate that we have fines that are reflective of their ability to pay. We're also aware that we've got many small businesses with one, two, and three employees, and we have to make sure that we've got appropriate methods in place to ensure that those people have fines in place that adequately reflect their ability to pay in their place in the marketplace. When you've got businesses of incredibly disparate size, you have to make allowances for that.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, it does not in any way minimize the obligation of all employers to ensure that their workers are safe, that they're adequately trained, that equipment is in place, and I look forward to having something in the relatively near future, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, in committee last fall the minister said, and I quote, "I find it disappointing that the best way to get people's attention is by prosecuting them and fining them. But the reality of it is that when you talk to the officials that are in this room, that is the most effective way of doing it." That's what he said.

Mr. Speaker, last spring we read into the record 60 names of workers who died on the job last year. And I know that members on both sides of this Assembly said we never want to do that again. Yet for some reason, despite recognizing that increasing fines for employers is the most effective way of improving occupational health and safety, this government has refused to follow through on its promise to implement these changes. My question again for the minister: will this government do so today?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite is aware, we've included occupational health and safety provisions into *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. This Act clearly defines rights and responsibilities of employers and employees. It better protects workers in a great number of ways. We received some 3,800 submissions. We want to make sure that the things that we do are done appropriately and done with some diligence and some caution on the thing.

As much, Mr. Speaker, as I would like to see some things take place immediately, Mr. Speaker, I can advise that the officials within the ministry are working hard to have regulations in place that will adequately and appropriately protect workers.

The member opposite raises the numbers of fatalities and, Mr. Speaker, even one is one too many. One injury is one too many.

The only acceptable number, Mr. Speaker, is zero.

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

Resources for Education

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, through meetings with teachers, school boards, students, parents, we've heard that the Throne Speech was vacuous on the real issues facing classrooms and students. This comes after the government suggested that it had finally listened. The Throne Speech clearly didn't reflect the realities of the classroom that teachers and students face.

To the minister: after failing education for so long and pretending that they recognized this, why did this government fail to address the real pressures and challenges of today's classroom in its Throne Speech?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm rather surprised to hear a question like that coming from the members opposite. Last week we announced an unprecedented announcement with regard to nine new joint-use schools. Why are we doing this, Mr. Speaker? Because of the incredible increase in the number of students. Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what happened with the members opposite. In June of 2001 they used enrolment projections that were produced under the NDP government and they suggested that by the year 2010 there would be only 140,000 students in the province. Today there's over 170,000 — that's growth, and we're working to address that growth, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has failed to listen and work with educational partners, ignoring the voice of teachers, of boards, students, and parents, a government that has failed students and failed education. Mr. Speaker, teachers, school boards, parents, students are working harder than ever before. They're holding up their end of the bargain. But under this government, they're facing larger and more complex classrooms with fewer supports, cuts to hundreds of educational assistants, dismissal, and disrespect. It's past time for this government to step up.

To the minister: in this Throne Speech, why did this government fail to step up to address the challenges facing classrooms, to support teaching, and to ensure students have the supports and one-on-one time that they deserve?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in each and every year, the overall operating grant for school divisions has increased. It has increased over 23 per cent since November 2007. The total funding for pre-K education is now 1.775 billion — that's billion with a "b" — dollars. The funding is over and above the \$600 million record capital investment, and over and above the historic \$165 million relief to property taxes.

Mr. Speaker, we'll take no lessons from the people opposite that planned for and scheduled and lived with decline, and put the people in our province through the misery of 16 years of NDP government. We're not tolerating it anymore, nor will the people in this province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, most everything this government has attempted in education seems to have failed. Maybe that's a consequence of ramming forward with its own agenda, top down, without listening and without consultation. Often it's a different stance on policy and what's on hold and what's not, whether it's the deputy minister, the old minister, or the new minister or the Premier answering the question.

So to the minister: can he clarify once and for all, has his government finally scrapped its expensive standardized testing agenda? And are there immediate actions to redeploy the millions it was diverting to standardized testing to where it counts — in the classroom?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, in 1993 and 1994, the NDP actually reduced the operating grant that was given to schools in our province. The following year, in 1995, they chose not to reduce it. They chose instead to give it a zero. So for the first three years of the NDP government, they were going backwards. Mr. Speaker, we'll take no lessons from the people opposite as to how to fund schools or how to operate schools or how to have a good, onward-looking plan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the enrolment projections that they lived under were ones where they were planning for decline, planning for zero growth, and planning for the out-migration. Mr. Speaker, if they were running schools for the people that were in the province, they'd be building schools in Calgary because that's where most of the people went to under that government.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The question was a pretty straightforward and simple question to the minister, and there wasn't any recognition of the question in that answer. The question is: has that government finally scrapped its ill-conceived standardized testing agenda, and will they place the resources where they matter — in the classroom?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, earlier we announced that a number of initiatives within the ministry were under pause. We paused those things specifically so that we could go ahead and have a careful review and analysis, and do some deep listening and some deep discussions with the teachers of our province. Pursuant to that, Mr. Speaker, we appointed Patricia Prowse, a senior educator from the city of Saskatoon, and Russ Mirasty, retired commissioner of "F" Division, to engage in those consultations across the province. Mr. Speaker, you cannot have two better qualified individuals to undertake such a review. They will make the determinations — what and if

things are paused, what and if things are continued, and how and best we can replicate and move things out across our province.

We want to hear from the teachers in our province. We provide a lot of investment in the education. And the best ones to listen to in our province are the front-line teachers, and we're going to be doing that, Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite.

The Speaker: — Why is the Opposition House Leader on his feet?

Mr. McCall: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. McCall: — During question period I was asking questions that clearly dealt with appropriate behaviour under *The Election Act* and were ruled out of order . . .

The Speaker: — Questioning a decision by the Speaker is not a point of order.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 98 — *The Child Care Act, 2013* *Loi de 2013 sur les garderies d'enfants*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 98, *The Child Care Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 98, *The Child Care Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 99 — *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 99 . . .

The Speaker: — If the members wish to carry on discussions between themselves, they may do so outside of the Chamber. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 99, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 99, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

If the members wish to continue, I will see to it that they're doing it outside of the Chamber.

Bill No. 100 — *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013*

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister of governmental affairs.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 101 — *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 101, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read for a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Advanced Education that Bill No. 101, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Private Bills met earlier today and considered compliance of the rules for the petition of private Bill No. 903, praying to amend *An Act respecting St. Thomas More College*.

Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Private Bills to present its third report. Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatchewan Rivers:

That the third report of the of the Standing Committee on Private Bills now be concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. The motion is carried. Pursuant to rule 98, private Bill No. 903, the *St. Thomas More College Amendment Act, 2013* is deemed to be read the first time and is ordered for second reading on the next private members' day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise here today in response to the Speech from the Throne that was given last week. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin with, as is traditional with many members in this Assembly, with a few thank yous.

First of all in our constituency office in Rosthern-Shellbrook, we have Ms. Sally Fitch who's a constituency assistant there, and the eyes and the ears and really the voice and, thankfully, some days the face of our constituency office to all the constituents of Rosthern-Shellbrook. And I appreciate her effort and her genuine nature that she approaches each and every point of contact with constituents in Rosthern-Shellbrook. So thank you very much, Sally.

[14:30]

Also I'd like to take a moment just to thank all of the staff in this beautiful provincial capital building that we work in, whether it be the caucus staff on both sides, the security staff, the House staff, the committee staff, Mr. Speaker. The effort and the genuine way that they show up and do their work so efficiently each and every day is greatly appreciated and helps us with our daily tasks.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to thank my family, as many in here have done. Firstly with my children, Carter and Taryn. My son is at university now, so I don't see him too much as he's moved out of the house during the winters and he returns home for the summers. And my daughter is in grade 10 back in Shellbrook. And I know I miss volleyball games and dance competitions. And I missed a speech last night that she gave, Mr. Speaker, in preparation for the Student Leadership Council provincial conference that they're hosting in Shellbrook. And I wasn't able to make that, but I am going to get it by email or YouTube here later today, and I look forward to it. I think I probably miss spending time with her more than she misses spending it with me. She's quite content with the amount of time that we spend together, but I do thank her for what I think is a sacrifice.

And my wife, Krista — what else do you say but thank you for allowing me to take the time to represent the constituents of Rosthern-Shellbrook in this capital? So thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin with some comments to the Speech from the Throne that was delivered here last week, I would like to provide a little context on the vision of the Speech from the Throne and more specifically, its theme of "Meeting the Challenges of Growth."

In the spring of 2012, Mr. Speaker, about a year and a half ago, as the legislature closed, the Premier asked us as government MLAs, as we went out into our constituencies and met with constituents and community groups and community leadership groups, Mr. Speaker, that we inquire with them as to the growth that has happened in our province and inquire with them as to

the positive effects of this growth, but also as to the challenges that they view that may be arising with that growth. Well, Mr. Speaker, this consultation was extensive and it was thorough, and the result of this consultation by all government MLAs was the forming and ultimate release last fall of *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond*. And, Mr. Speaker, *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* states, and I quote:

... identifies principles, goals, and actions to ensure that Saskatchewan is capturing the opportunities and meeting the challenges of a growing province.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is not a narrow plan that sets our province's goals in one sector or one ministry, but it's a broad, multidisciplinary plan with very specific goals. Many of these goals are centred around fostering growth in our province. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of that growth is not growth for growth's sake, but growth to secure a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan residents. Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of another recent government document that has been created with such a vast and thorough consultation process or a document that so precisely sets out the plan for growth for the province.

The Saskatchewan plan for growth is authored by the people of Saskatchewan and its guidance by the very people that we in this Chamber represent, and a vision that this government will move to realize. Mr. Speaker, budgets and announcements, as well as the Speech from the Throne last week, are rungs in the ladder, if you will, in providing a framework to achieve the goals that were stated in the Saskatchewan plan for growth.

Mr. Speaker, with the growth of our economy comes challenges with regards to transportation. Transportation in Saskatchewan is predominantly on our provincial highways as well as our urban and rural road systems. Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook, we have recently observed the resurfacing of Highway No. 40 as well as upgrades to the access road into the community of Laird. And, Mr. Speaker, just this past Friday my colleagues from Prince Albert and Batoche were at the completion — not the opening announcement, but the completion announcement — of the twinning of Highway No. 11 from Saskatoon to Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, from the southeast part of the Rosthern-Shellbrook constituency, I cannot express to you how it has been expressed to me by constituents in that area, how this road and the twinning of this highway has made not only transportation easier for our export commodities, but also the highway is much safer.

We always must understand there's much more to accomplish in the way of highway investment. And it's all too important in an exporting economy such as Saskatchewan. And I would however be remiss if I did not remind members of the estimated \$1 billion highway infrastructure deficit that this government inherited in 2007 due to lack of appropriate investment in prior years.

Mr. Speaker, spending on highways has increased 76 per cent in the last six years over the six years prior, and that includes the \$500 million investment this year. This translates into almost \$50 million that's been spent in the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook in the last six years, Mr. Speaker.

Housing challenges have been discussed in this Chamber, but more importantly those same housing challenges have been discussed in our communities. Expansions of the life lease program and broadening the Headstart on a Home program to improve housing options in Saskatchewan are options that Saskatchewan people have asked for and this government is addressing. Expanding the housing supply by adding or rejuvenating 12,600 units, and backing this up with \$344 million is a very ambitious goal, Mr. Speaker. And it's another initiative that was requested and will be delivered on by this government.

In Rosthern-Shellbrook the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation consists of 14 housing authorities governing 327 units. It's through the appreciated efforts of these volunteers that we were able to offer the housing options that we have. Mr. Speaker, this fall, on behalf of our minister, I had the opportunity to join with Chief Cliff Tawpisin of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nations in the grand opening of five homes in the community of Blaine Lake. This was a joint project between Muskeg Lake First Nations and the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. Later in the day, Chief Tawpisin and myself also had the opportunity to turn sod for an additional three homes in another joint project. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chief Cliff Tawpisin and the community of Muskeg Lake Cree Nations for their joint partnership in this important housing initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I had the opportunity to stand in this Assembly and speak, and I did not take that opportunity to speak about rural health care, as Rosthern-Shellbrook is a very rural constituency. And I do have some comments I would like to make on health care. But prior to that I do have a couple of statements that I would like to enter in on the record here.

And first I quote from the September 3rd edition of the 2010 . . . the local paper where I live, the *Shellbrook Chronicle*. And it goes such as this, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "As you are no doubt aware, your area includes one of 13 Saskatchewan communities to have its new long-term care facility or hospital cancelled in the Wall government's 2010 budget." And that's signed by NDP Health critic, Ms. Judy Junor.

Mr. Speaker, a year later Ms. Junor went on to state, and in *The Southwest Booster* in August of 2011, "The 13 communities who were promised newer renovated facilities in the 2009 budget have yet to see those promises fulfilled. They are still dreaming almost three years later."

Mr. Speaker, it's my experience that a dream disappears when you wake up. In families and communities across this province that had ambitious goals to replace or rebuild those 13 facilities, that was never a dream to them, Mr. Speaker. It definitely wasn't. The people in the area of Shellbrook were not dreaming, Mr. Speaker, and I doubt whether the other 12 communities were as well.

At the very time of that NDP Health critic's letters to the editor, Mr. Speaker, the very people in those 13 communities — and the NDP dismissed them as dreaming — were working with their respective health regions, the government officials, and different fundraising groups within their respective communities all in the effort to build their respective facility, one of the 13, Mr. Speaker.

At the time I read those letters to the editor from the NDP Health critic, I could not understand why she would refer to the communities' and individual's goals as dreams. And I thought about it, Mr. Speaker, and the more I thought about it the more it started to make sense. And to the NDP, those always were dreams, Mr. Speaker. The NDP could do nothing but dream of building long-term care and health care facilities as they were far too busy, quite frankly, closing them — 52 hospitals and pulled 1,200 long-term care beds from the provincial . . . Mr. Speaker, thankfully in 2009 these facilities received commitment from their newly elected government, and it was not a dream as the NDP so callously suggested.

Mr. Speaker, a little over a week ago I had the opportunity, with our Premier, our Minister of Health, our Minister of Rural and Remote Health, and my colleague from Saskatchewan Rivers to attend the grand opening of the Parkland Integrated Health Centre. This was one of those 13 facilities, and it was the first integrated facility, with 34 long-term care beds, 20 acute care beds, a full complement of community services, and a fully functioning emergency department.

It was noted by many in the region at this opening and in the days after, Mr. Speaker, how this new integrated facility would ensure that all the hospital and long-term care staff have an efficient workplace so that they may provide the very best care to the patients and residents within. And sadly, Mr. Speaker, just a couple of weeks ago in a press release, the NDP were again not accurate with their statements, and I quote: "The government has already reduced hours and shut doors on emergency rooms in dozens of communities." That was the NDP government, Mr. Speaker. They closed the 52 hospitals and they pulled the 1,200 long-term care beds from the provincial system.

The press release goes on to indicate that Shellbrook was one of the communities that faced closed emergency room doors and reduced medical services because of doctor shortages. Mr. Speaker, that emergency department is open, in part due to Health ministers on this side that have made efforts to build Saskatchewan's complement of medical professionals.

And, Mr. Speaker, that emergency department is open in a new facility, in part due to this government's belief that hospital and long-term care facilities were necessary goals for the people of Saskatchewan and not just dreams. Mr. Speaker, it was the NDP that denied provincial approval for these facilities while they were in government. It's the NDP that recently referred to Saskatchewan people's goals as dreams, and today it's the same old NDP that doesn't have their facts straight.

Mr. Speaker, a little more relevant to the Speech from the Throne, regarding CECs or collaborative emergency centres. And firstly, at the outset I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate and thank the community of Maidstone as well as all those involved from the Prairie North Health Region, the providers, on the opening of the very first collaborative emergency centre in the province of Saskatchewan. This innovative approach to improve access to both primary health care and emergency services is a boost for rural communities, and it's something that they've asked for for many years.

This model also provides a framework of sustainable access for

all our rural communities. In the coming months other collaborative emergency centres will open in Shaunavon, Spiritwood, Wakaw, and Canora, goes the Throne Speech. Mr. Speaker, in 2006 under the NDP government, the facility in Spiritwood lost its emergency services. When this facility had a service disruption, there was an outreach from the community. They wanted to contact the NDP Health minister of the day, Mr. Speaker, without success. This was indicative of how the NDP handled service disruptions in rural Saskatchewan, and that was quite simply just to ignore them.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker, health facilities such as the one in Spiritwood offer an important service to the residents not only from the community of Spiritwood but all of the surrounding communities. And it's this present government, specifically the Minister of Health along with the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, and their willingness to look at different initiatives and different models of care such as a collaborative emergency centre, and this will provide access to emergency and primary health care services to all of our Saskatchewan communities.

It's at this point with the announcement of the additional sites for CECs, or collaborative emergency centres, that I thank the Prince Albert Health Authority for their support and acknowledge the health providers in Spiritwood for their support for the system. And I would also like to acknowledge the people from Spiritwood and the surrounding communities. They've worked so diligently over the past number of years to improve the recruitment and retention efforts in their community and also advocate for greater services. Your government's announcement of your collaborative emergency centre is a result of the commitment of individuals, and improved access of health care services in the communities around Spiritwood will be the result.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not enter a few comments about agriculture. Rosthern-Shellbrook is a very diverse rural area, but there is no question that agricultural production, agricultural service, and agricultural processing industries make up a very large percentage of the economic activity in the area. And this consequently is also the case for our province of Saskatchewan.

[14:45]

In 2012, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan exported just over \$32 billion of exports; \$11.2 billion of these exports were agricultural exports. 2012 was a record year for Saskatchewan ag exports. However it should be noted that we're in a great position to add to these numbers in 2013. In 2013, in the first six months, our ag exports are up 13 per cent, and this is with producers recently placing a very valuable crop in the bin and a value-added industry that is poised to expand.

Mr. Speaker, if we're going to reach 9 billion people in this world, we're going to need to produce more food worldwide and here in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is poised to and will be required to be an integral agricultural producer and exporter to the world. To enhance Saskatchewan's position in a world market, we need to continue to encourage our research and our innovation agendas. We need to ensure continued and expanded international market access for our producers and our exporters,

and we need to increase the value of our agricultural products that we export.

Mr. Speaker, the agricultural economy in Saskatchewan is extremely diverse — many different eggs in many different baskets, if you will. It ranges from traditional crop production on numerous different crops destined for numerous different markets all around the world, each with a different processing option, many which take place right here in this province.

We also have numerous different types of livestock also which are destined for all over the world. The future is bright for food producing nations, Mr. Speaker. Our agri-food industry in our province is in a great position to supply the world with the safe and sustainable food production system that we have become so well known for.

Mr. Speaker, in Rosthern-Shellbrook we had a busy spring with . . . We had a large snow melt with a large runoff, and we had 10 to 12 inches of rain in May and June. And the result of that, Mr. Speaker, was we had a lot of roads that were washed out. I can think of one RM [rural municipality] in particular that had an excess of 130 roads that were inaccessible.

And I would like to just take a minute to recognize the rural and urban municipal councils and the effort that they gave this spring in putting their communities and their infrastructure back together. And I would also like to make note of programs such as the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program, Mr. Speaker, the FDRP [Flood Damage Reduction Program] program for . . . just to help a little bit with these communities as they put their infrastructure back together after the excess of moisture that we had this spring.

Mr. Speaker, it's also been recently announced that Saskatchewan recently reached 1.1 million people. Many thought this achievement was not possible in this province. The Saskatchewan plan for growth has recently set the population goal at 1.2 million people by the year 2020. It would be interesting to note if those same people that thought the first 100,000 wasn't possible, if they're on board for the second 100,000, whether they support that or not, Mr. Speaker.

Rosthern-Shellbrook, as I said, could be considered quite a rural constituency, but yet we've had significant population growth in Rosthern-Shellbrook, Mr. Speaker. After experiencing a decline in population during the census years of 2001-2006 of negative 10 per cent, for example, the community of Hafford in the latest census recorded positive 10 per cent growth.

Mr. Speaker, those same years under the NDP, Rosthern was negative 8 per cent. Now Rosthern is over 13 per cent growth, Mr. Speaker. And the community that I live in, Mr. Speaker, in Shellbrook, under the NDP was negative 4.8 per cent growth. Now, sixteen and a half per cent growth, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, all of the towns in Rosthern-Shellbrook have experienced positive population growth in the last census. This is quite indicative of what's happening in the province with 80 per cent of our rural towns are now experiencing positive population growth, Mr. Speaker. And this is in stark contrast to just a few years ago.

Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is no longer closing schools. We're

building them. Saskatchewan is no longer removing health care services and infrastructure. We are adding and we are investing in them. Saskatchewan is no longer nationalizing corporations. We are attracting companies and their investment. Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is no longer attacking rural infrastructure and agriculture. We are most definitely investing in it. Saskatchewan is no longer the place where we manage for population decline.

We're taking steps, some of them in this year's Speech from the Throne, to achieve the people's vision of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that's the Saskatchewan plan for growth.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I'll end my comments with regard to the Speech from the Throne and I would like to indicate that I will not be supporting the amendment. I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne moved by my colleague from Regina Dewdney, seconded by my colleague from Sutherland. Thank you.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and colleague. I just want to start off by saying it's an honour for me to be able to rise in this House and contribute to the conversation and to the debate about the Speech from the Throne.

There's a few people I'm going to thank before I get into the meat of my Throne Speech response. And first and foremost, I'd like to thank my beautiful wife, Larissa. She is my constant companion and she gives me wonderful feedback and keeps me grounded. And I think, obviously, we all owe our spouses a wonderful round of applause for the work they do at home. They keep the home running. They keep the home running while we're away. Obviously we're not at home as much as we'd like.

And my new son Nickson's here as well in the legislature for the first time. And he doesn't get to see dad as much. The last couple days I haven't been home as much as I was before and he's already playing shy with me. And he might be mom's boy here for the next five or six years, I think. So he's heckling me already, Mr. Speaker. So I just want to say hi to my family which is always great that they can make it out to the legislature.

Honestly, we do a lot of work away from the office as well, and there's some people in our constituencies that we need to thank. Our CAs [constituency assistant] do a pile of work for us. They do a lot of casework when we have our constituents calling when they need a helping hand, and these people do a lot for us and make sure our office runs smoothly. So I want to thank Heather Howell-Shiplack. She's been my CA since we were first elected, and she does a wonderful job and an admirable job and she's a pleasure to work with, and I'm very happy to have her as part of my team.

Mr. Speaker, obviously I'm proud to stand and speak on behalf of the people of Regina Walsh Acres. It's a privilege to speak on their behalf. And every time I get up to speak in the House, I want to thank them for giving me the honour and giving me the

ability to speak on their behalf and talk about the Speech from the Throne and talk about some of the things that they think our government's doing right in moving this province forward.

And right now, I want to talk about the Speech from the Throne and say that, meeting the challenges of growth, that's what we're talking about, Mr. Speaker, a challenge to the growth in Saskatchewan.

A month ago we reached populations of 1.1 million which many people thought was farcical, thought it was just a dream, something that couldn't happen, Mr. Speaker. And these people, they're representative, Mr. Speaker. One of these people, I'll quote:

So, Mr. Speaker, I say their plan flies in the face of reality, Mr. Speaker. Now, it may 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 is this plan will fail, Mr. Speaker.

And that was a former Finance minister, Harry Van Mulligen. A former Finance minister says, your plan, NDP Finance minister, your plan is doomed to fail. It's going to cost you billions of dollars because this province will never be more than 1 million people.

With planning like that, Mr. Speaker, it's no wonder that when you look at the province under the NDP's term, 16 years in government, there's no wonder why it took them 72 years to grow the population by 100,000 people. And fortunately with some good fortune, we were able to reach our population in seven years, Mr. Speaker. A hundred thousand people came to our province in seven years. And I think that's indicative of how they feel the government's been running this province, Mr. Speaker. It's not the government. Government doesn't get credit for this growth, Mr. Speaker. It's the hard-working people of Saskatchewan, the business people, the entrepreneurs, the young entrepreneurs that are contributing to the growth of our province, Mr. Speaker.

And I think . . . There's a couple of stories I'd like to tell about people that live in my area, the young entrepreneurs that are doing well, and one is JLB Electric. He's a good friend of mine. He used to work for Town & Country. He got his journeyman, became a journeyman electrician, and he had the confidence, the confidence in our province, the confidence that our province is going to continue to grow, to leave a very good job and go and start his own company.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to say that JLB Electric is a growing company, Mr. Speaker. He's bought more new trucks. He's hiring more people. And, Mr. Speaker, that is how you grow an economy — by giving people the optimism and the confidence that things are going to keep continuing to grow, to be able to spend some money, spend some of their hard-earned money, invest it into a company, and take the opportunities that are given to them and take the opportunity to be your own boss, Mr. Speaker. And I think that was something that was missing

for a long, long time in Saskatchewan — the confidence that our province is going to continue to grow. People didn't have that, Mr. Speaker, a long time ago, a long time ago back in the days of the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Young people, they were fleeing. Fleeing for the border. Fleeing for Alberta. Fleeing for Ontario. Fleeing, just trying to get away because they didn't see that there was a future in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad that those days are gone, and I'm glad to say like that's one of the reasons that I wanted to get into politics is because I think Saskatchewan was going to become a much greater province than it was under the NDP.

We had the resources. We had the hard-working people. We had the work ethic, Mr. Speaker. We just didn't have confidence in our leaders. And that has more to do with the NDP than any of the people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we can't underestimate the role that the government can play with creating a sense of optimism in our province. It's not the government that's going to go and create jobs. It's not the government that's going to start up companies or start up businesses. But it is the government that can create the opportunity and the optimism and the confidence of people to want to come and invest here.

And I think that's one of our most important jobs, so that people know you can come to Saskatchewan. You're going to have a stable tax regulatory system. You're going to have a stable regime in government. You're going to have people that are going to be willing to work hard. You're going to have an employment force, Mr. Speaker. That's one of the challenges we're facing is that we need more people to work.

One of the challenges in Saskatchewan is that we don't have enough people to work. Can you believe that, Mr. Speaker? Before we didn't have enough jobs, and now we don't have enough people to work. And we're going to meet that challenge head-on, and that is one of the challenges of growth.

An unemployment of 3 per cent is very low. It's good that people have jobs, Mr. Speaker, but that shows that we need to open up more training spaces. We need to train more people to work, Mr. Speaker. And that's why our government in this Throne Speech sets out a plan of opening up 1,000 more training spaces, Mr. Speaker, which I think is very important, and making more investments in SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], investments in post-secondary education. Because our young people have the opportunities. And we've got to ensure that they have the opportunities to become skilled labourers, to ensure that they know that they have a government that wants to make sure that they can go to SIAST and get that plumbing education, go to SIAST and become an electrician, become an electrician, go and work for a company like Town and Country.

And then if they have the confidence in a growing economy, they can go and start their own business. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that I think we've set out that framework where government has given people the confidence to go and try and make it on their own, which is a far cry away from what was happening under the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

There's a few things I'd like to discuss. Some of our colleagues across the way have made some comments in a few of their speeches, and one I'd like to give credit. And I don't do this often, Mr. Speaker, but I'd love to give credit to the member from Athabasca. I know that may sound a little off, but I'll give credit where credit is due. And one of the quotes from him, from the member from Athabasca during his speech was, "This government has not had a major problem right now since they've been in government because they've spent the money."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I take that as a compliment because — I think I may be paraphrasing for the member from Athabasca — but he's saying the government has put money in the right places. We've spent money in housing. We've spent on highways because we inherited a gigantic deficit in the highways budget, Mr. Speaker. We spent over \$3 billion on highways, Mr. Speaker, and that's a huge investment to ensure that our highways are safe.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, I know that I had some opportunities, along with the member from Riversdale and the member from Cumberland. We were on the highway Traffic Safety Committee. So we went all over Saskatchewan this summer, along with the Chair from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton and the member from North Battleford and myself and the member from Saskatoon Meewasin. And going all over our beautiful province during the summer, we had the opportunity to hear some of the concerns from people all across the province of how to make our highways safer, where we need to invest in infrastructure, where we need to invest some more policing, Mr. Speaker.

And I think going out and hearing from these people . . . I know I had the opportunity to go out to Pelican Narrows. And I had never been up north that far, Mr. Speaker, and it was a great experience for us to go up and listen to some of the people's concerns up there.

And I think that leads us to another conversation. Our government has been listening to the people of Saskatchewan. That was a great consultation tour we took across the province, Mr. Speaker, and I think it was fantastic to hear the concerns that some of the people had with our highways, with some of our infrastructure, wanting to make guardrails. Guardrails were an issue up in northern Saskatchewan, and the member from Cumberland knows that. And that was wonderful to hear because sometimes maybe we don't think of the things like that.

And I think it's very important that governments take the time to listen to the people that they have the privilege to in government, that put them in that place. And I don't think this government's lost that, and I think it will continue to listen to the people of Saskatchewan to ensure that our priorities are meeting their priorities.

And another opportunity that we were able to have is we . . . Headstart on a Home, Mr. Speaker. Affordable housing is an issue in Regina. We know that our vacancy is going up, but that's not good enough. There's more work to do. And I commend the Minister of Social Services on the Headstart on a Home program, Mr. Speaker. I think it's probably the best

housing program out there for affordable housing in the country. It's a wonderful program.

I've been able to attend a few of the ceremonies where people are coming to get their key ceremonies, Mr. Speaker. And to know that these people without this program would not have a place to call home, not have a place to take their children, a safe place, Mr. Speaker, I think that's one of the things government has to do. They are judged by how the most vulnerable in our society are treated, Mr. Speaker, and I think I'd go out on an election campaign and say I'm okay with being judged on that. Headstart on a Home is giving people the opportunity to have four walls, to have a safe place to call home, and to build a family. And I think building a family, having a secure place is very important, especially for young families with kids.

And, Mr. Speaker, another program that we've invested time, resources, and money in is SAID, the Saskatchewan assured income for disability, Mr. Speaker. And SAID wasn't around, wasn't around before 2007, Mr. Speaker. And it's a program where I know we celebrated 10,000 people who were enrolled in the SAID program. And that's ensuring people have income for regular things, things that we probably all take a little bit for granted, Mr. Speaker.

And when you talk to people that are enrolled in the SAID program — now I've had a couple to come to my office — and it's just heartwarming, Mr. Speaker, to hear the stories they tell about being able to buy a bed for the first time or being able to go out for a nice meal at a restaurant sometimes, things that we do take for granted, Mr. Speaker. And I think that program, the SAID program, the Headstart on a Home program, speaks to the monumental work our Social Services minister is doing, who I think is probably the best, who'll go down as the best Social Services minister in our province's history.

Mr. Speaker, there's a few more things. And our member from Regina Rosemont, I know sometimes he gets off on tangents and sometimes his maybe mouth moving quicker than his brain. And I think that a couple of these situations would be talking about Pioneer Village, Mr. Speaker. And he said:

And the degradation and continued degradation of the facility without maintenance, support for maintenance and rehabilitation, or what I hear from many is the need for a rebuild, Mr. Speaker — we just don't hear anything about that.

And that was said by the member from Regina Rosemont, talking about Pioneer Village. And it's a seniors' complex on Dewdney here in Regina. And I wanted to see if that was true because if it's true, that's a very alarming statement. And sometimes that other side can be a bit of an alarmist, and they put some statements before fact checking. Mr. Speaker, since 2008-2009, Pioneer Village has received \$14,595,550 for maintenance and repairs, plus upcoming repairs worth an estimated \$584,000. So, Mr. Speaker, that's \$15 million since '08-09. I would say that's not a small per cent of change, Mr. Speaker.

And I think for alarmist issues, like the member from Rosemont says, you know, there's the roof's falling in. There's no maintenance. There's no repairs. I think it's just another scare

tactic of the NDP, which is pretty much high on their Rolodex of tricks to try and play on the people of Saskatchewan, saying the sky is falling; the sky is falling, like Henny Penny. I believe the member from Coronation Park likes to use that saying a fair bit, or the doomsday nine or whatever he calls them over there.

Mr. Speaker, there's some more conversations I'd like to have about some of the statements made by the members opposite, the members from across the aisle, and that's our record on health care, Mr. Speaker. And I think I would take our record on health care over the 72 or whatever years they were in power, Mr. Speaker. I think our record in health care speaks for itself.

You know the NDP, sometimes they talk about what they would do, and they don't really remember that they do have a record. They have a record of 16 years of failure, Mr. Speaker. Their record was they had the worst doctor and nurse retention rate in the country. Between '08 and '06, the NDP's last five full years in office, the province lost. And, Mr. Speaker, this is what they lost: 1,160 total health care workers; 455 RNs and RPNs [registered psychiatric nurse]; 173 physicians; 155 pharmacists; and 95 physiotherapists, Mr. Speaker. And they get on their soapbox, and the leader from Massey Place gets on his soapbox and cries about — obviously there's more work to be done for us, Mr. Speaker — but he talks about what they would do, what they would do.

Well I'm fond of a saying that our caucus Chair has, Mr. Speaker, that the best indication of future behaviour is past behaviour. And this is their past behaviour, which they seem to have amnesia and not remember that they do have a record over there, Mr. Speaker. And when they're talking about what they would do, well this is what they did do when they had the opportunity and the privilege to be in government, which we don't take lightly, Mr. Speaker. We know it's an honour to be in government. We know it's a privilege that we don't take lightly, and we want the people of Saskatchewan to continue to have faith in us. So that's why we really continue to do what we say we're going to do, Mr. Speaker.

So a little bit on our record on health care. People in the last . . . what we've been doing in the last six years, Mr. Speaker. Twenty per cent more nurses call Saskatchewan home than they did six years ago. Mr. Speaker, we have 18 per cent more RNs, 37 more LPNs, 58 more nurse practitioners, and 18 more nurses per capita than the Canadian average.

Mr. Speaker, I know that those are just numbers but, Mr. Speaker, they're numbers that show a government that is working hard to ensure that Saskatchewan residents have the health care that they so richly deserve. We are proud of our health care record, Mr. Speaker. There is more work to be done. But we're proud of the hard-working health care workers within Saskatchewan that are working hard to deliver the quality of care, the best quality of care they can, and they're doing a fantastic job, Mr. Speaker. Health care workers are some of the hardest workers in our province, Mr. Speaker. And we think that they're doing a fantastic job, and we're proud of what they're doing.

Mr. Speaker, there's a few more issues I'd like to bring up here, and one is with physicians, Mr. Speaker. And I know I enjoy

quoting the member from Regina Rosemont because I think he's a great young man. He's just a little off base on a few things, Mr. Speaker. "I think as well of the challenges that so many are facing as it relates to access to a family doctor, to a general practitioner, to a GP." So many constituents do not get access to a family doctor. And this is a direct quote from the member from Regina Rosemont.

So I wanted to go around and see how long it would take us to find some names of people that are accepting patients as a GP, Mr. Speaker. So I hopped on the Internet here, and I did a search on the Regina Qu'Appelle website to find a GP. Within five seconds, 21 physicians popped up that are taking new patients.

So, Mr. Speaker, if he has constituents that are having a hard time finding a general practitioner, check the website, Mr. Speaker. There's 21 in Regina Qu'Appelle Valley right now that are accepting new patients. So I hope I can help him out and he can get his constituency assistant to give these people a call and say, check the website; there's 21 physicians accepting new patients right now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our government's worked hard to create an opportunity for doctors to come to Saskatchewan. We've recruited 300 more doctors in our time as government. We created Saskdocs to work with RHAs [regional health authority] on physician recruitment, SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] to facilitate integration of internationally trained doctors into practice.

This has brought 91 doctors to date — and I think my colleague from Saskatchewan Rivers brought one on her own actually — Mr. Speaker, and added 40 medical training seats to the College of Medicine, so that's 60 to 100; doubled medical residency positions to 120; and there's a 10.5 per cent premium on earnings for rural physicians adopting the scope of practice. In rural Saskatchewan, we added 20 doctor locum, and we've given an opportunity for new graduates of the College of Medicine to have some of their loan forgiven, up to \$120,000, if they practise in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there's a conversation going on in Saskatchewan, and our Health minister did a wonderful job having the CEOs [chief executive officer] go out and look at all the long-term care homes across our province. Our seniors are the people that built this province. They were the pioneers. They did the hard work to make sure that Saskatchewan got set on a solid foundation. And, Mr. Speaker, obviously we all have grandparents, parents, and we're all concerned about how our seniors are treated and their quality of life.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a few things though that fail to make sense when the member from Massey Place gets up and talks about . . . Because once again the NDP forget that they have a record. They had the privilege to govern. They have a record, and obviously the best indication of future behaviour is past behaviour, Mr. Speaker. So what did the NDP, when they had the privilege to govern our province . . . NDP failed to increase the senior income plan benefits for 16 years — 16 years, not a percentage increase to seniors for their income plan.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP closed 1,200 long-term care beds.

Obviously long-term care beds are a conversation right now; the NDP closed 1,200 of them. NDP eliminated 60 long-term care facilities. NDP closed 52 hospitals. And Judy Junor had this to say about the NDP plan to phase out long-term care beds. This is what Judy Junor, the former MLA from Eastview, Saskatoon Eastview, said about long-term care beds and their plans to phase them out: these plans will lead to a better quality of long-term care overall.

So I haven't had the . . . I don't know a lot about long-term care, but to close long-term care homes and to shut down long-term care beds will lead to a better quality of long-term care overall, I'm not quite sure how that works out, Mr. Speaker. But I would think that closing beds probably doesn't lead to people having a better quality of long-term care.

Mr. Speaker, I know that we've had the ability, the pleasure to open up, are on the verge of building 13 long-term care homes throughout rural Saskatchewan to look after our seniors, build a long-term care home in Saskatoon to help look after our seniors, Mr. Speaker. And I think that obviously there's going to be some issues, Mr. Speaker, because when you close 1,200 or close 1,400 long-term care beds, you have some work to get back up to that infrastructure to ensure that there's the quality of care there for our seniors. And I think our Health minister's done an admirable job of working on this, Mr. Speaker. And I think there's more work to be done, and we're going to work hard to ensure that our seniors are looked after because they are the pioneers of our province and they've set a grand foundation for us to be experiencing some wonderful growth right now.

Mr. Speaker, obviously meeting the challenges of growth is what our Throne Speech is all about. And we look at, right now looking at the city of Regina, I see growth all over, Mr. Speaker. There's land being cleared for a new area up in the Northwest close to Regina Walsh Acres. There's new homes being built in Regina Walsh Acres, infill in new areas.

And I think that these growths do come with some challenges. And one is housing. Another is infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. And I was able to attend the Regina west bypass, which our Minister of Highways got done ahead of schedule I might add, Mr. Speaker. And the Regina west bypass is another connecting peg in the Global Transportation Hub, Mr. Speaker, which is a wonderful opportunity. It's creating jobs. It's creating economic spinoff, Mr. Speaker. The GTH [Global Transportation Hub] just west of Regina, close to the constituency of Walsh Acres is a cog in the wheel of our economy. I think it's going to show some great benefits going down the line, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to say the west bypass is rerouting truck traffic. So there's not much truck traffic going on Dewdney, going through the city, which makes our city streets safer, Mr. Speaker. I think that Dewdney served as an alternative route for a bit till the bypass was opened. And that bypass is creating a lot more throughway traffic and easing the truck congestion going through the city of Regina right now.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, I did have the opportunity to attend a lot of events and a lot of openings over the summer. And I was able to talk to a lot of constituents. And the constituents are saying . . . And go

out door knocking. And that's one of the favourite parts of our job, Mr. Speaker, is going and door knocking in our constituency and talking to constituents and seeing how they feel we're doing because we need that feedback. We need our constituents to let us know if they think we're on the right path, Mr. Speaker. And I think that the constituents of Regina Walsh Acres, I've talked to many of them, and they feel our government is on the right path. And they're feeling that our government is maintaining the priorities that they have. Their priorities are continuing to grow, continuing to welcome more people to our province, Mr. Speaker — immigrants, people, expats, people that are coming back from Alberta.

When I was graduating high school, Mr. Speaker, a lot of my friends went to Alberta. And we decided to stay because I think Saskatchewan can be a better province than it had been under the NDP. They're coming back now, Mr. Speaker. I've got a friend coming back, working with Halliburton; Halliburton who moved their shop from Medicine Hat to Regina, Mr. Speaker, which is a fantastic sign. And I have friends that moved home. And they're in Swift Current right now, and I'm happy that they made it back.

And our growing province, Mr. Speaker, are 1.1 million people, and then we have a great growth plan that's going to look at having our province be 1.2 million people by 2020. So that is why I wholeheartedly support this Speech from the Throne, and I will not be voting for the amendment put forward by the member for Rosemont. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the House today to join the debate on the Throne Speech. And, Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking about vision, leadership, and the great province of Saskatchewan.

First though, I have a few very important people that I would like to thank that are important to me personally and important to me in my work as MLA. First of all of course is my beautiful wife, April, whose strength and support have very much made me who I am today, and let me say that that continues to be a work in progress. Thank you to my family . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It's a work in progress. Thank you to my family: Kelli and Howard, Brandi and Zack, Brendan and Carly, Reilly and Felisha, as well as their children or, as grandparents, we think more importantly, our grandchildren. And well, as all grandparents do, we love them all equally.

My eldest grandson, Justice Smith, plays with the Maple Creek Redmen down in the southwest corner. Last weekend he made the Sask-first basketball team for the North American Indigenous Games. And that's quite a feat, and he's a heck of a basketball player. At 14 years old, he's about the same height as I am, but I still have a little bit of bulk on him, probably a fair amount. And as we are aware . . .

An Hon. Member: — But you taught him everything he knows.

Mr. Phillips: — Taught him everything, yes. No, that ended early. As we are all aware that our CAs make it possible to keep the offices running while we are in the legislature. And they

keep it running efficiently when they're gone, and they do their darndest to keep it running efficiently when we're there. But I'm very pleased in the last couple of years to have had the opportunity to work with Laurie Hookway and Peggy Gordon who are wonderful people, and I acknowledge their great efforts in the Chamber today.

The people of the Melfort constituency have always been very kind to me as I travel around, in meeting with municipal leaders and attending many events in their communities. And we always talk that it's the people of this province that make this province great. And I think that is never more true than in the Melfort constituency.

And as I have the floor today, I'd also like to make note of some of the businesses and the industries of my constituency and the constituency that I've been so honoured to represent.

And of course we have all heard about BHP Billiton potash mine near LeRoy. No matter what the other member may say, it's in my constituency . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The hole is in my constituency, the potash may be in yours. This is a project that has just been . . . received an extra \$2.6 billion — an extra \$2.6 billion. This one project will make a difference, a positive difference to every person in Saskatchewan.

And last Tuesday I had the opportunity on the way down here to stop in and visit with Bourgault Industries and Bourgault Tillage Tools as I was going through St. Brieux. And I stopped in and I picked up their product catalog, and it was maybe a quarter to a half inch thick at each place. And I could understand the word Bourgault, and everything else in that book was written in Russia. This is more Saskatchewan companies that are serving the world.

And you know, we have so many more businesses and industries in the iron triangle, as it's called, that make this constituency so special. And I would like to mention that when I was out at Bourgault Industries, I noticed they were putting up an addition to their plant. The addition to the plant is 186,000 square feet. It is huge. And as I passed by Englefeld, I noticed Schulte Industries is putting a very large addition on the back of their building. And that's great. It's great to see business coming along in every part of Saskatchewan.

Something else I would like to mention about the constituency is the transition house that was approved in last year's budget. We talk about making life better in Saskatchewan for all our residents, and that will go to help some people who are very much in need. And it's an important step. It's now in the project planning and in tendering, and we look forward to 2014 during the constructive. And it is, and it's been mentioned before that it's the first transition house built since 1989. Now we mention that, but let's not forget that the party opposite were not in power in 1989. I remember that very well because the Riders won the Grey Cup, and they never do that if they're in power.

But as far as the transition house goes, I would like to congratulate the North East Outreach Services and especially Louise Schweitzer for her dedicated efforts in there, in that project.

If I sound proud, Mr. Speaker, of the businesses, organizations,

and people of the Melfort constituency, there's a very good reason because I am so proud to represent this constituency.

Mr. Speaker, one of the opportunities we get as members at this time is to express our feelings about things as they relate to the budget. And there was a line on . . . or the Throne Speech. And there was a line on Monday evening that it was a bit of a pet peeve of mine. And I've heard it before and it's something I expect to hear from, let's say Thomas Mulcair — you know, somebody who doesn't know Saskatchewan. Somebody who hasn't got a clue about Saskatchewan and who thinks our economy is a disease. I expect that. That's what they do. But to have somebody stand up in the legislature in Saskatchewan and talk about Saskatchewan leading the per capita nation, leading the nation in greenhouse gases per capita, sounds to me like somebody who has never been in Saskatchewan.

You know, like I don't doubt it's the truth. I really don't doubt that it's the truth. And I want to say, I've done my part because I did trade off my SUV [sport-utility vehicle], and I'm driving a car with about 70 per cent better gas mileage. But some of my neighbours and friends back home, you know, they drive these huge four-by-fours, you know, and they go around and around town. I've heard they go around and around all day long. And sometimes they even have eight wheels on these four-by-fours and they're pulling seeders and they're pulling cultivators and they're pulling things that farmers should be pulling.

Don't they know that our farmers use fuel? And why do they do that? They do it so they can grow food for a world that has seven billion people. But somewhere we've missed that. All it is . . . I'll bet you one of those tractors on a hard day of harvest from 6 in the morning till midnight that night, I bet you it uses enough fuel for an entire high-rise in Toronto.

But that's what happens in Saskatchewan. That's what we are. We produce food for the world and maybe, unfortunately for the party opposite, that this year we even burned more fuel this year because we had a tremendous harvest. And people are going to eat just a little bit better because of that. But could it also be, could it also be that we have the harshest weather in all of Canada? Could it be that? Like it takes a little more heat, a little more energy to heat my house than it does to heat somebody who's in Victoria. It does. It just does. And yes, Victoria.

You know, and what fascinates me about it? In Saskatchewan, people . . . We take a perverse pride in the fact of our harsh winters. And I remember a day, Mr. Speaker, when I was outside in my shirt sleeves in a day with a wind chill factor of minus 75 below. It was chilly. And it's probably a story best told for another place and another time. But there was a bit of pride in there that I've been in that day. And that's the way we are.

We also have the most roads in all of Canada. That's because we have 41 per cent of the arable land in Canada, and we have roads all over the place because we need roads all over the place. And you know, we measure distance in hours. I live three hours north of Regina. We do that. And often the nearest quart of milk or loaf of bread is 30, 40 miles away. That's us.

Now Thomas Mulcair may not understand that. He's probably

never been in the country in Saskatchewan. He may never understand that. And I don't think he's overly welcome here anyway. But you know, and another thing that happens here in Saskatchewan and something that I take a lot of pride in is our people in Saskatchewan produce more products per person for export than anywhere else in Canada. But it takes energy, and that may be a bad thing. And that may be. But when you come out with this rhetoric about that you've heard your national leader talk about and you have this saying that everybody always says about Saskatchewan, just stop, listen, and make some sense of it.

And now that I've got that off my chest, I feel so much better. And I would like to start the next part by complimenting the party across the Chamber. And I feel strange because I believe the speaker before me, the member from Shellbrook, did the same thing, or the member from Walsh Acres . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And no, it wasn't you. No. And it was . . . But I do want to compliment them that true to their name, the official opposition, they're opposed to everything. They're opposed to business. They're opposed to new schools. They're opposed to growth in Saskatchewan, opposed to additional long-term care beds, and in so many cases, just opposed to Saskatchewan, you know. And if I may I'd like to spend a few more minutes on that but later on in the speech.

You know, but first I would like to bring the House up to date on what I've been up to since February 7th when I was appointed Legislative Secretary for regional municipal co-operation. I've had the very big pleasure to talk to many, many rural municipalities and cities and towns and villages around this province in regards to additional co-operation in infrastructure, in equipment, and in personnel.

You know, and regional co-operation is something . . . There's 150 buildings in Saskatchewan that have more than one municipality in the building. There's many administrators that look after two or more municipalities. You know, regional municipal co-operation is there today and it will be there tomorrow. But the reason, and what I feel my job is, is that to take full advantage of the opportunities we have today and so much we have on the table, that we have to co-operate in this province as never before in order for the municipalities to continue to grow and prosper, and grow and prosper as a province.

[15:30]

This past June I had the opportunity to attend five of six SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] regional meetings across the province. I would like to thank the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford for standing in for me at the Battleford meeting, and I understand he did an excellent job. But I did go back anyway to the next meeting.

I also had the opportunity to attend seven SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] regional meetings this fall. And it again took me right across this beautiful province from side to side, end to end, and it was a great experience. And one thing I did notice, and I would like to compliment the Minister of Highways, that in all the kilometres I travelled across Saskatchewan there was only one road that I would call bad. And I think that may have been my own fault as

I followed my GPS [Global Positioning System] when there was . . . Yes, I shouldn't have followed my GPS . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, there was no highway involved. It was a grid road for about 30 miles, and it was good grid road. I just wasn't supposed to be on it.

And I would like to thank President Dave Marit of SARM and President Deb Button of SUMA for their welcomeness and for allowing me to join the meetings and to speak at the meetings. And I'd like to say I'm very proud of Her Worship as Deb is the first lady to lead SUMA in its 100-year-plus history. So I'm pleased to know her, and she is a good friend. And it was a great four weeks I guess being on the road with the two.

And as a former mayor myself, I was so at home with these excited municipal leaders from across the province. When I had the opportunity to speak to each gathering, I would say, I know that you have challenges of growth and they're serious challenges. However the challenges are always part of being a council and of serving your community.

Councils 15 years ago, 10 years ago even, had the serious challenge of survival — working to keep their schools open, working to keep their hospital, long-term care beds, shrinking commercial sector. And if at the end of the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if at the end of the day they could leave their community as they found it, they were satisfied. I will take the challenges of growth any time over watching your community die a slow death.

These municipal leaders had one thing very much in common: they know they had a government that would work with them to meet the challenges of growth. This is a government that is a willing partner in the continued growth of municipalities and the province. Part of the commitment is to work with the federal government in their replacement or extension of the Canada builds grant.

Now there is a quote that is very relevant to this conversation and my speech in particular. And we've heard it many times because it is so outlandish, but I'm going to say it again just because I want to. And the quote is, the Saskatchewan Party proposed:

. . . to increase the population of Saskatchewan by 100,000 over . . . I forget . . . [how many] years, Mr. Speaker.

Well it is so over the top, it is so farcical, Mr. Speaker, that it flies in the face of reality.

And I think, Mr. Speaker — and that was the end of the quote — and I think, Mr. Speaker, why I want that in my speech is because he was a minister of Municipal Affairs when I was elected to be the mayor of the city of Melfort. When I was at the sitting mayors conference, this was the NDP government leader who would come to us and break us a bad news about declining population, about no more money, about growing nothing. This was their leader of the Municipal Affairs — farcical. Doesn't it sound farcical today to use that quote? It just couldn't happen.

And you know, I don't know. This place itself is somewhat amusing at times because you see the same thing coming up day after day. And I know the opposition is trying to get something

that sticks and that type of thing. But I had to chuckle last Thursday in the Chamber when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition came out with the line: debt is debt is debt. And you know, it was such a good line that the Leader of the Opposition repeated it the next day in a radio interview. And it was such a good line that the member for Athabasca repeated it on Tuesday, yesterday. Well you know, that's a great line, but let's look at what the NDP doesn't like to look at and that's 16 years in power. Let's talk about debt is debt is debt.

When we talk about their 16 years, well yes, we didn't accomplish a lot and we had to do a lot of cutting, but we were caught by the debt. We were suppressed in what we could do by this debt. And I know the member for Athabasca loves to say that, but what did they do about the debt?

When we took over government, when the Sask Party took over government in 2007, we had a deficit, a debt, that has cost us already \$3.7 billion in highways alone — \$3.7 billion. And what did the NDP do? They raised taxes. That's what they do. They close.

And the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in his passionate remarks yesterday, I believe, said that schools are the heart of our community. Schools are the heart of our community. They closed, they closed 176 schools, tearing the heart of how many communities. I find it disingenuous when they stand up and then say a line like that because I think we believe that. I don't think they ever did.

Now they left a deficit in education. They failed to maintain other schools. They'd left a debt that we're working on. In fact we just announced nine new schools — 18 new schools together — last week, and now they're against that. You know, it's just they're good at the opposition. You know, they leave that debt. And what did they do after they close the schools? They raise taxes. Then they went out; they closed 52 hospitals.

An Hon. Member: — How many?

Mr. Phillips: — Fifty-two hospitals. They closed 52 hospitals, leaving a debt, a deficit in health care infrastructure. And you know what else they did? They raised taxes. Over the years . . .

An Hon. Member: — They raised the PST [provincial sales tax].

Mr. Phillips: — They raised everything. Over the years they received over \$4 billion in equalization because they turned our proud province into a have-not province. They took \$4 billion. I believe the figure was about \$4.4 billion in their last time in government.

And you know what else they did? They raised taxes. And they raised taxes. And then they wondered why everybody's leaving. But there's more for the rest of us, they say. You know, you name it. Whatever they got their hands on, they've buried it in debt. And then they stand up and they say, debt is debt is debt. We saw it all. We saw your debt.

Saskatchewan is now a growing province, the fastest growing province in population, in wage increases, in so many things. We are a province today that will take a back seat to no one

anywhere in the world. That is the kind of government, that is the kind of province that the people of Saskatchewan deserve.

In 2007, almost in 2003, people of Saskatchewan maybe listened to a voice in the wilderness, a few Saskatchewan Party upstarts who said things could be different. Things could be better. We are not and should not be a have-not province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And after that election in 2007, things were different. Things have been different.

But you know, since then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, since then it has changed again because now it's the people of Saskatchewan, the 1.1 million people of Saskatchewan, that are the leaders. They're the ones that believe . . . In fact they're the ones that know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what Saskatchewan could be. And today they are the true leaders. They work, they invest, and they grow Saskatchewan. And now today it's a nimble nine across a floor that are the voices in the wilderness. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a very good thing.

The Speech from the Throne is part of the plan that builds towards 2020, part of the plan that was introduced a year ago as the Saskatchewan plan for growth. It's a plan that has targets — targets. We put targets into a plan, and they're targets that are very hard to reach — maybe even farcical, somebody might say — but targets that everybody can see. And they can judge us by the targets we set, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Saskatchewan plan for growth has a crystal clear vision of this province for the next seven years. And this year's Throne Speech shows that it is a reflection of that plan and shows you what we're going to do in the next 12 months to get to that plan. This vision, the vision for Saskatchewan, is simply to make Saskatchewan the best place in the country, the best place in our great country to live, to work, to raise a family, and to start a business.

Too many times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have seen the visionary approach to throne speeches — visionary — and then the next year we see another visionary approach to throne speeches. And they go this way, and they go that way, and they're kind of like something shiny, something shiny. But we have a plan, and we're heading towards that plan. We've set out the plan, and we're following the plan, and we have the vision. And as I said to municipal leaders right from one end of Saskatchewan to another, I said we are going to make some mistakes, but we are going to make those mistakes going forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You see, standing still or moving backwards — and believe me there's an opportunity maybe ever to move backwards — is the biggest mistake that we can ever make.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to present my thoughts today on this important document. I will be supporting the motion, and I will be continuing to support the growth and the strength of the province of Saskatchewan. And I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to get in and join in the conversation and I guess to bring a message to the government on behalf of the residents of the Cumberland constituency and also some of the residents that have shared some of the stories when I've been visiting other constituencies and meeting with some of the residents who are facing many challenges.

But before I start getting into some of the comments and bringing the words from some of the leaders and community members in northern Saskatchewan throughout the communities I visited, and people have shared with me some of their concerns and frustration, I just want to acknowledge of course my family who support me — my wife and my children, my 17 grandchildren who keep me in line and know why I'm here doing this job and making sure that there is a province that they can be proud of and that they're a part of and is important.

And not only do I have First Nations but I have Métis grandchildren, and I'm very proud to let them know we'll work hard. And I'll do all I can to make sure they're a part of this province, and they should feel a part of the province. As residents, they all should feel that way, that this is their home, and they should be proud and not feel any different than any other resident in this beautiful province. They have a right to take part in the economy, an education, and to feel truly I guess accepted in this beautiful province by government, by opposition, by all residents of the province. They should feel that way, and I want to say that I will work hard to make sure they have that.

I also wanted to acknowledge my wife and again, Sandra, say thank you for the support that she gives me and the support she gives to our family. I also would like to just acknowledge my CA, Devin Bernatchez, who works in my office and my CA who was Al Rivard, who retired and decided to say he put in a long career. And we wish him well on his retirement and thank him for the years he put into the province.

And Al as a CA was great, but he also . . . he worked on many organizations. He was appointed to the health board but, unfortunately, for whatever reason, changes came, he did not get reappointed. He thought he was going to and then didn't. And he made decisions, based on many boards that he sat on, whether he was with Métis Nation as area director, president on the Kikinahk board. And I just want to acknowledge the years the he put into northern Saskatchewan.

He's now retired. He went to BC [British Columbia] to join his son and his grandchildren, and I wish him well over there in his retirement and thank him for his good friendship over many years and the strength that he brought to the northern table, lobbying for northern individuals and Métis, and his leadership. So with that, you know, I thank him for that.

Also Pearl Doris Morin, I just want to acknowledge her as a CA that comes in part-time at the office. I acknowledge her good work. But also the executive and everyone else in the Cumberland constituency who works hard to raise the issues and the concerns of the Cumberland constituency and work hard, I just want to thank them for their supporting me and all the good work that they do to let northern people know that our party is doing our part, and I will do my part.

Having said that, I would like to get into some of the areas that I guess individuals have raised to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And clearly the concerns are there. I think this Throne Speech was an opportunity for the government to, you know, put the brakes on and have a look at what they're doing and the way they're handling things and the way they're handling organizations, individuals, and the concerns that they're supposed to be hearing.

And I can reassure you from the conversations I've had with individuals, with just listening to what's going on in the coffee shops and individuals that are contacting my office and I know the members opposite office, there are concerns, and the concerns are many.

Yes, you know, you could say the economy is doing good, and we want to encourage the business to come to this province. And we support that 100 per cent. It's important. Our leader supports business. I know our party does, and we'll continue to let business people, entrepreneurs know that as official opposition we'll work with them, and should at some time, you know, they need assistance, we'll gladly do that. And we wish them well. And we wish . . .

When I talk about entrepreneurs too, I want to talk, Mr. Deputy Speaker, clearly about some of the family businesses that go on in this province. There's many of them, entrepreneurs who are family, and they run family businesses. And it's interesting to see the support. And they create so many jobs, you know. Sometimes they're small businesses that create so many jobs in this province and give opportunity to so many people.

And I give credit where credit is due with that, and it is the family who have created, you know, and the business families that have created a lot of the jobs of the small, you know, operations. They're not the big ones where they have hundreds but that have, you know, small numbers of employees. But they're local and they do a great job. And they find as entrepreneurs where they can assist and work with industry, and they find opportunities where we say, well we're not sure if a big business is looking at that. So I want to give them credit where credit is due, and it's to the job numbers that are in our province. Yes, it's to big business, but also to the small family business. I want to be clear on that, and we see that.

Some of the other positive things that go on in the province, we see leadership. And our municipal governments are working hard trying to represent the residents in northern Saskatchewan. But also I see and I get to meet with some of the leadership in other municipalities, and you hear some of their concerns. And we wish them well as they try to represent the individuals and the residents they've been asked to represent. But it's also very concerning when you hear some of the challenges that they're facing with infrastructure and some of those challenges.

And government can say all they want. And I know this current administration likes to pat themselves on the back and, you know, they did it their way and it's their idea and continue, you know, good news. And it's always doom and gloom and, you know, from the NDP. And I want to make it very clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not. We do see some good things happening and we see industry coming in. We see family business, and I talk about that. We see some of the changes

happening in our communities, and we see infrastructure. We want residents to have that opportunity and we want to make sure . . . And that's good.

But when you see the challenges that some of our municipalities are facing, whether it's infrastructure, and I guess the message that they're sharing, whether it's . . . When I think about Prince Albert, you know, and I want to talk about Prince Albert. The community of Prince Albert has done a great job to raise the concerns about a second bridge for Prince Albert. And you know, we've had good talks, and I know the critic for — and member from Athabasca — for Highways has carried that message on behalf of the residents of Prince Albert.

And it's too bad that the members that represent Prince Albert, Sask Party members, don't stand up and have not fought for Prince Albert and a second bridge and some of the challenges that Prince Albert is facing. And you know, the members can, you know, yell out all they like. That's fine. It's interesting, it's interesting that they want to . . . Maybe they should speak up when they're in Prince Albert and fighting at the . . . [inaudible] . . . oh, that's right. Those are challenges that . . . sometimes opportunities. So I would encourage those members to speak up for Prince Albert because I know we will be speaking up for residents of Prince Albert for their second bridge.

And you know, you think about some of the challenges and some of the concerns. Like, you look at the laundry facilities. The regional hospital had a laundry facility. And you know, unfortunately this government has made a decision, and it's impacting Prince Albert's economy when you lose the type of jobs that the regional laundry facility was doing and, you know, would continue to do and was doing a great job. Why would we change that when it gave Prince Albert residents an opportunity at a good income? They had homes that they could take care of. They take care of their family. And you see government making decisions like this. So P.A. has not done well being represented by the Sask Party members, and I think those members should pay attention.

And whether it's Moose Jaw, the members over there as well, they've got some challenges. And I think the people of this province are going to send a message. And you know, we watch what's going on, and you hear the conversations. And yes, some people are saying, you know, the province is doing really great and, you know, the numbers. And they can talk about that and brag, give themselves a pat on the back. But when you see families and individuals that are struggling in this province to make ends meet, and whether it's in northern Saskatchewan, the urban area, rural Saskatchewan, we see many families that are not feeling a part of the economic boom, and they're struggling with the cost of living. So there are challenges that individuals are facing, families are facing.

And we see the challenge that this government is bringing forward and, you know, I want to go through some of the challenges. And I think about northern Saskatchewan and some of the commitments that this government has made. And I think about the Wollaston Lake road, the all-season road, all-weather road that was announced in 2008 by the current government who made that announcement, commitment. I've seen the announcement. It was . . . You know, they said it. It was a commitment to the leadership. And it's pretty sad. We had the

chief and council here.

So I was thinking well, you know, they talk about all this money they're putting into highways, and they want to talk about record spending on highways, you know. They really like patting themselves on their back. But when they make commitments to communities like Wollaston Lake, they should honour that. So those chief and council, the residents, the mayor and council, they should respect. When a government makes a commitment and announcement and says you will have an all-weather road, it will be completed by the fall of 2012, and then they turn their back on those community members and they talk about oh, we have other priorities. Yet they want to get up here and they want to talk about all the great things they're doing, record spending, when it's about safety. And you know, Wollaston Lake, and it's unfortunate again, you know, when you think about the loss of life on the ice roads travelling to Wollaston Lake. In 2010 there was a tragedy — we lost a teacher. And to see this government not fulfill that honour and obligation that they said they would fulfill, they did not. Wollaston Lake did not get the road, and it's a safety issue. And I've listened to the leadership, the community members, the petition. The chief and council came to this legislature to ask the government to honour their commitment, and what did they get told? No.

So I was thinking of this opportunity, maybe the government could put the brakes on and say hey, you know, we are doing record spending. Let's do the right thing and let's honour our commitment, our announcements to, you know, an all-weather road, all-season road to the community of Wollaston Lake.

So it just goes to show . . . And I say this to individuals out there, when you have a government that's willing to make announcements and put out the press release and photo ops, which this government likes to do, but there is a commitment. And they announce about facilities, you know, all the different facilities they're building and stuff. And we're going to get into that and I'm going to get a chance to talk about some of that stuff. And we will, you know, give some credit where credit is due but also criticize where it needs to be, and the concerns of northern residents and the residents that I represent. And we, in the opposition, hear the concerns and bring forward to this Legislative Assembly whether it's through question period, whether it's through petitions, whether it's in committee, we can raise those concerns and we will raise the concerns of Saskatchewan residents.

When the government like the Sask Party government quits listening to those individuals, we will stand up. We'll do the right thing and we will raise their concerns so that this government can say, oh we didn't know about that. Yes you did know about it. You chose not to have it as your priority, and shame on you in some of those areas.

Now having said that, we look at some of the northern roads, and I know the government likes to announce certain key roads that it has, its priorities, but there was commitments by previous governments and money allocated. We know that. This government has not given its fair share to northern residents when it comes to infrastructure and roads. We know that. And we've raised that many times in this House, and it gives the government a time to look at that. So on that case, I give the

government, you know, a grade. If you want to talk about school, they would get an F on that when it comes to roads in northern Saskatchewan.

And I know that we'll be serving petitions for some of the roads in northern Saskatchewan. Some of the residents, whether it's respiratory problems from dust, some of those travelling, or safety. We'll be raising those concerns, but also we'll be raising petitions in the House and coming clearly showing that.

You know, we talk about education and education is important. And northern Saskatchewan, we have a young population of First Nations, Métis, and northern residents. And you know, we work together in the school division. They do a great job trying to lobby and advocate for northern children to make sure that residents in northern Saskatchewan have the same opportunity to education.

And you know, you watch the teachers. And you know, I want to say to the teachers and the support staff that are there . . . you know, keep doing the great job you're doing. I know sometimes it's frustrating when you see a government lay out a plan without consulting, without talking to teachers, without talking to the students, without talking to the families, the parents, without talking to the boards of education. And they roll out their plans, and they say this is the direction we're going to go. You know, without doing the right thing. And the right thing is to talk to the individuals, the front-line individuals.

And we're talking about teachers who are truly committed. And I've seen so many of them who do so much. That you know, it's not just the hours, from the school hours that they operate. It's early mornings. It's late evenings. Whether they're coaching, whether they're going on trips, whether they're bringing them to this Legislative Assembly to see what goes on here — it's the challenges.

But when you take teachers, students, boards of education, and parents for granted, you will pay a price. And you can ignore them and you could say oh, we've done the right thing. And you can pat yourselves on the back all you want and you can brag about all the reports that you're doing and where you're going. But when you see the outcomes of some of the reports and no action from this government on some of their reports and very little action . . .

[16:00]

But you know, I want to give credit. And I'll say a small area where they chose to go on First Nations, you know, driver education program — yes, it's a start, and I give credit to that. But they chose to pick some small part that's not going to cost them a lot of money. Not a lot of money to say, yes we're going to . . . There was so much they could have done from . . . You know, when you look at the committee and the task force that went on education for First Nations, you know, and you look at the report that came out, how do we improve? There was some great recommendations from that report. Gary Merasty was on there. There was other devoted individuals who did a great job, and I thank them for that.

And unfortunately this government chose to again put that report on the shelf and use very little of it. When you ask them

about it, it's like they're . . . So we see that.

Now it's KidsFirst, I think, is the model they're going to use. They're going to go around and try this differently now. They're going to have another group go around and consult with KidsFirst or . . . You know, I'm not sure of the term right now they're going to use, what they're going to call that report. But I'm not . . . You know, it's great to see these individuals volunteer and do their part to be committed to going around doing these reports and visiting and consulting with kids.

But at the end of the day, the good work that those reports do, if government doesn't act on those, then shame on the government. Because what have you done? All you've done is taken a group of individuals who are committed, individuals who have put their time and effort into saying, yes here's what we need, here's what we think would work, and here's what we're hearing out there, and here's our report. And the government says, well that's great. Thank you very much. And we'll take the photo ops and make a big deal, big announcement, and then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they don't act on it. Shame on this government and shame on the minister who should be moving this forward, clearly, with education.

Now having said that, you know, we look at the NORTEP program [northern teacher education program]. The NORTEP program in northern Saskatchewan had an opportunity to educate many of our northern residents to become teachers to support in their local communities after they get their education. And many of those have gone on to get their master's, and they go back in their home communities. They teach the kids. They encourage them. They're role models. They're mentors. And it's such a program . . . And I happen to be, for years, sitting as a board of governor on there before I came to this Legislative Assembly representing the people and the good people of the Cumberland constituency.

Now having said that, they need a stand-alone facility. We talk about record spending. We talk about commitment to all children in northern Saskatchewan to the education and to the commitment of Saskatchewan residents. And here is an organization who's begging and saying, look, here's the numbers. Here's the proof. Here's what we've achieved. We're retaining our teachers. We're doing our part, and the northern residents, the teachers in the NORTEP program, the staff, the faculty, the board of governors are doing a great job and they're doing their part, and the government is not doing their part, by ignoring, not giving them a stand-alone facility, something that they've been lobbying, fighting hard for.

So again, unfortunately the government, here's an opportunity to put their brakes on, to do some right things, and to do the right thing means supporting facilities in northern Saskatchewan — whether it's for the northern teacher education program, schools, whether it's long-term care. And I want to get into that because there are many areas where this government is failing northern Saskatchewan.

And you know, when I think about seniors, and you look at the report. The health region, health authority in the community that I represent, and, you know, we took La Ronge and area, Mamawetan Churchill River Health Authority, you look at their board and you look at their commitment. And in 2010 they

went ahead and said it was a need. They've seen a need for long-term care so they conducted and found, you know, the Croft report that was, I think, came out in 2009 to them and '10, they made it public. Clearly identified long-term care, the need for our elders or seniors to be respected, and that we only have 16 beds in northern Saskatchewan for that health region. Fourteen were for long-term care, two were for respite. And that's pretty sad. The report came out, I believe it was 46 have identified they put in the category of code red — critical shortage of long-term care. And it's unfortunate that you'd have to have, you know, triple, triple the amount of beds to cover our residents in northern Saskatchewan. And you know, you raise those concerns with government and they say, oh yes, we're going to listen. We hear your concerns.

And I know there's been a large group and more and more . . . And I want to talk about this. And I want to talk about when communities come together we see how some governments and some organizations will split and they'll try to put a wedge between communities and organizations and, you know, a government like SaskParty who tries to drive that wedge. And I want to show them about don't drive wedges between Saskatchewan residents. Do not do that. It's the wrong place to go.

We're a province that's very proud and we've always worked together in northern Saskatchewan, southern Saskatchewan. So we've come together and we will work together and continue. And I want to use northern Saskatchewan as example. And truly they can show this government here's how it's done. You don't take communities and you don't take organizations and try to split them and play them one-on-one. You try to work together with them.

And here's what northern Saskatchewan is doing. The La Ronge and area working with the health region and, you know, watching the leadership; the mayor from La Ronge and his council; the mayor of Air Ronge and his council; Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, La Ronge Indian Band . . . I look at the health region. I look at community members, residents that are coming together. And on October 21st there was a large meeting, a public meeting on long-term care and, you know, it was over 80 people showed up at the meeting to hear the concerns and they're watching it.

And you know, when you have family members come into the office as the MLA and they thought they could take their loved one — whether it's mushom, kohkom, their mom or dad — into a long-term care facility in northern Saskatchewan in La Ronge and they make arrangements and they think that they're going to go in there and their loved one is going to be with them and they're going to stay around northern Saskatchewan where they're used to the culture, where they're used to their family being around, where they're used to having their loved one close to them in a facility, and they find out that there is no room and they're on a waiting list of 40-some to get into there, that it would be years before they would get in.

And given, you know, the circumstances, the government has known this because they've got the Croft report. They've got the plan from the health region. So it can't be any surprise. I believe that some of the leadership has shared that with the minister and the ministry. And I think the health region has

done a great job of bringing those concerns forward saying, it is such a need. It's a crisis.

But I just want to show how you can take those individuals in northern Saskatchewan, whether they're from the First Nations community, whether they're from the Métis that represent . . . have a Métis local and they're residents that are Métis, residents of the First Nations, residents from Air Ronge, La Ronge. It doesn't matter where they live. They're working together. They're not trying to divide and separate on a cause, and a cause is long-term care. They're grandparents. They're mushom. They're kohkom. They're mom and dad. They're fighting. They're going to work, and they're going to lobby. And they're going to do whatever it takes to make sure long-term care gets the attention of the government. And I commend our leader for raising the concerns about northern Saskatchewan and long-term care. He has clearly identified it.

And you know, we've had residents who have had many challenges. And last session it was brought up in the House by a resident that we've seen wasn't treated so great when it came her opportunity to get into a long-term care facility. She couldn't get in so they placed her in another place where, you know, she said she was treated great, but it wasn't a long-term care. It was in a hospital. And that's sad and that's wrong. This government has an opportunity to fix that.

And I hope when this group that's come together with so many . . . And like I said, October 21st they came together. They're committed to having more meetings and doing whatever they need, what the action plan is. What's the next plan to make sure this government hears the concern, whether it's lobbying, whatever it needs to be done. They want to work together. They're not divided and going separate ways. They're going to work together. So you have municipalities. You have First Nations. You have Métis individuals that are coming together. And I commend the work. And I just want to say it's important that they're not trying to drive a wedge like this government has tried to do on many occasions and has done. And that's sad and they should be ashamed of themselves for that. We need to work together. And our province is very proud of the culture. It's very proud of different minorities, of different groups that come here, new residents to this province. We will all work together and we try to make sure people feel . . .

So I think this government has a challenge on their hand and I think the individuals back home have a challenge. But they're going to raise it, and I hope the government will look at that.

Now we look at some of the other challenges that we see. And some of those are trappers, our northern trappers. You know, we were hoping that the government would deal with our Northern Trappers Association fairly and would work with the leadership. And you know, I have to say I've seen the PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council]. They're trying to work with the trappers. The Métis Nation has signed an agreement. They're going to work with PAGC. And they're going to come together with northern trappers to support them in certain ways. And I commend that they're doing that to try to make sure that our trappers are treated with respect.

And many trappers, you know, they're on their traditional traplines. And we have industry and sometimes industry comes

in . . . They're supposed to consult and they're supposed to not just go in an area where somebody has their family trapline. And they might be there for generations, very proud of what they have. They may not have a lot, but they're proud of their trapper cabin, their trapline that their mushom and kohkom, their grandparents, their parents, maybe were born and raised on, on that trapline. And they respect it and they do that. And they do, you know, cherish the culture for their grandchildren, their children. And they're trying to hand it off to the next generation to show. And unfortunately industry is going into some of their traditional territory without consulting them, whether it's SaskPower. And those are issues we're going to be raising because we have trappers right now who are currently frustrated, you know. SaskPower goes in there and does what it wants to do.

So industry has to make sure that they're respecting the trapper. They're not against industry and they're not against, you know, working with industry to move ahead, and they encourage that and they want it. But all they're asking for is to be shown the respect, to be consulted, to make sure when there's areas that they want to be accommodated, they can be accommodated. And that's what they're asking for. They're not asking for a lot. They want to work in partnership.

So we see different groups in northern Saskatchewan that work in partnership and work good. And I used the example of long-term care. There's a partnership that's being developed from many community members, from leaders in the community. It's a partnership. It's working together for what's better for Saskatchewan, for northern residents and that's very important.

So when you look at the trappers, I think we'll be pushing hard on that and I again commend the good work that the northern trapper is doing. We see an industry that, you know, we see the fur prices going up. And I wish them well. We're coming up to that season where they'll be out harvesting furs, and we want to make sure that they get the support. And unfortunately right now this current government has not supported these individuals that are lobbying hard.

So I just want to make it very clear that government needs to do a better job of consulting and working with the Northern Trappers Association. And the PAGC, I want to give them, you know, great credit for the good work they're doing to work with . . . And the Métis Nation has signed an agreement.

So having said that, you know, I see those are challenges. But we also look at our commercial fishing industry in northern Saskatchewan. Commercial fishermen, they're, you know, family business again. Small, but they try to do a great job and, you know, there's a lot of cost to it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of cost. They used to have a freight subsidy for transporting their fish to market and this government, not only did it say, well you weren't using the money, you didn't use it all, so we're just going to cut the whole program, we're going to scrap it. I'm hoping that this government will go back . . . And I didn't see that in the Throne Speech, where they're going to work with industry. You know, we're going to put the brakes on, we're going to talk and we're going to get an opportunity here to talk with the commercial fishermen and see if maybe we did some . . . And I know they did some wrong things and they

can change that.

And I'm going to encourage the government and I hope the ministry within the government, to say, okay, you know, we've made some errors. Let's stop here. Let's stop and think a little bit about this. How are we impacting families and northern people? How are we impacting those individuals who live a traditional lifestyle? Maybe we were too quick to act on this and maybe we should have consulted and talked. Maybe they have better ideas to support them in a very supportive way, instead of saying, no, we're just going to go ahead. We're going to put our blinders on. We're going to do what we want to do, and we're just going to go ahead. And that's unfortunate that that happened.

But the government, and even the government, instead of patting yourselves always on the back and it's all your great work that the province is doing . . . It's six years they want to talk about, always six years. They don't want . . . And when they want to reflect back on any other administration, they want to talk about how negative it is. Well you know what? At the end of the day, people are going to see what's going on. And you know, I talked about some of the conversations that are happening in restaurants, and individuals. And I say this: members, people who I know supported the Sask Party government, this government, this administration, who are starting to wonder. They're starting to say, whoa, whoa, this wasn't what we were told. You know, that stuff like challenges that individuals see. And you know, three more MLAs is another one. You know, these are things that they're talking about and cost. They can rethink these ideas.

[16:15]

So having said that, as these individuals are saying, how come our costs of utilities are going up so much, whether it's SaskPower rates increasing . . . Well that's your government. That's the Sask Party government who's achieving that. Give themselves another pat on the back. You're putting more costs on Saskatchewan residents because of the way you've handled things, so give yourselves another pat on the back. You seem to want to do that. So pat yourself on the back for that.

Why is it when Saskatchewan residents are struggling and struggling, this government doesn't want to take . . . Oh, no, no, no, they don't want to be in the photo ops, they don't want to be anywhere near it. But the minute there's a photo op to take where they're going to get some good, they want to be right there. It's amazing to watch. But after the fact, they don't want to be anywhere near it. They don't want to touch it. It's amazing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how it goes, you know. They just don't want to be there. So they don't want to take any credit for the cost of living going up, rents. They had opportunities, and they had opportunities to stop and think, you know, about rents. And we look at the rents that are going on in this province right now. People cannot . . . Families are struggling to make ends meet. You know, you can talk about the good times but you see families struggling. And then we talk about a northern housing and the Minister Responsible for Housing and you know, interesting to watch, said she would consult before. And I was in a meeting in Sandy Bay where she said before, before we implement and make any changes in northern Saskatchewan, we'll consult. Well we're still waiting to see

when she's coming to consult and who she's going to consult with.

And maybe this government will say, oh yes, it's time; we're moving ahead with some plans. But you know, unfortunately they haven't consulted. Who have they consulted with? I haven't heard who they have. So who are they talking with? And what meetings have they had? And is it public meetings that they're holding to consult? Is it individuals? How are they doing their consultation process with renters before they implemented the changes? But yet we know people have got letters. They're getting increases. They're wondering why. They're frustrated, 30 per cent.

Yet you look at the cost in northern Saskatchewan. The home ownership program, I've raised petitions in this House about home ownership. Individuals signing petitions, hundreds of individuals upset and saying implement back and bring back. Don't take away a housing program that gave renters an opportunity to own their home, to be proud. And they are. And they take care of their yards and they do a great job.

So the government said, no we're not going to consult. We're just going to scrap that. Why would you do that to northern residents and any resident that had an opportunity in this province? But we look at the cost, the cost of living in northern Saskatchewan. And you talk to individuals whether it's for food, clothing, heat to provide for your families, the cost is so much higher.

Why would you even talk about increasing rents and the rents to individuals when they're struggling? And we know. You look at poverty. You look at all the challenges families are in, and addictions. And you look at the rate of suicide and you wonder why, and how a government can say, well we're going to do this, this without consulting. How is it that all these challenges are having, addictions and all the challenges, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are facing northern Saskatchewan and residents?

And it's not just northern Saskatchewan. There's many communities struggling — we know that — and families struggling. They're doing their part. They're doing their part as families. They're trying to work. They're trying to raise their families. They're doing their part but the government is failing them. The government's not doing their part on behalf of many Saskatchewan families. Let me tell you that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, very clearly.

We're hearing that, and the frustration by individuals, families. But does this government care? Do they listen? No. They're so busy patting themselves on the back, patting themselves on the back for every good thing that happens in the province. It's their doing. Everything happened the day they got in and it all changed. You know, if they want to believe that, continue with that.

But I tell you, one day, one day Saskatchewan people will have enough of it, and they will say, that's enough. You haven't done . . . We trusted you, and we gave you — and I've said that before in this House — an opportunity, you know. We're going to work hard on this side of the House to make sure we earn the trust of Saskatchewan people. And I know that we will work hard and we will do all we can — and I know my colleagues

will — to raise the concerns being raised out there when there's challenges, whether it's long-term care, whether it's individuals who are struggling with family, whether they're in the hospital, they're in long-term care. All those challenges . . .

You know, they talk about all the facilities, you building all these facilities. Well I'm telling you, we've heard a lot of concerns about staffing. And the great work that the front-line workers are doing in hospitals, our RNs, our long-term care, those individuals are working hard. They're doing their part, whether it's the caretakers. They're doing their part. They're doing their best.

But when they're short of staff and they're short of resources to do the good job that they want to do . . . And you hear the frustrations from the RNs. You hear the frustrations from individuals, families who are struggling. This government should be ashamed of themselves. Don't pat yourselves on the back. Don't talk about all the money you're spending and all the great facilities you're building. Make sure that you have adequate resources for the facilities that are there, the respect that our seniors deserve, our parents deserve. That's what you need to do. And that should be where your focus is, not on patting yourselves on the back the way you do.

You come in here. You talk about all the great things you're doing. Are you not hearing the challenges? You know, there's smart growth. Yes, there's smart growth. We realize that. When good things are going in this province, good for the people of Saskatchewan, but when there's many people struggling and aren't feeling a part of that boom and the growth, you have to stop and wonder. You know, you're elected here. Stop. The backbenchers, are you doing the right things for Saskatchewan people?

An Hon. Member: — Yes. Yes, we are.

Mr. Vermette: — Oh yes, yes. You are. Okay. You keep yelling that. The member from Moose Jaw North, keep yelling that because we'll see in Moose Jaw how good you're treating the residents in Moose Jaw and how you represent them. But that's good. We'll just let those individuals deal with that.

And I have said to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've said this very clearly, individuals can pat themselves on the back, take credit for all that's going on, the good work of many Saskatchewan people. There was a lot of work put in by Saskatchewan residents in the 16 years of the NDP government, the previous . . . Yes, and I'll say that. There was a lot of good work that Saskatchewan people did working with that administration to try to change things. We came out of a mess and we know where that mess is. But they don't want to talk about that. They just want to talk about the bad years of our 16 years. Well you know what? There was clearly many years where Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan people did a lot of good work to clean up the mess of the years of the Conservative government. I tell you that, but they forget about that. But that's okay. Saskatchewan people don't forget. I listen to them. I watch. So these individuals can go around and pat themselves on the back all they want, and that's fine.

But you know, I want to get back into some of the areas where I think truly we're dealing with. And I talked about the cost of

living. I've talked about SaskPower. And I want to talk about Sandy Bay. There's a community in Sandy Bay. Many of those community members are very concerned about the way SaskPower, at the dam, has dealt with their community members — whether they're First Nations, Métis, whether they live in the municipality — the way they were uprooted when the dam came in. There's a lot of challenges and concerns raised to me about compensation, about different issues facing them. And this government has to face that. It's time to do the right thing. It's time to work with those communities, the organizations that represent the residents, and make sure that those families and those individuals that feel they were not treated right and that justice wasn't done to them, they deserve that. And that needs to happen.

So I would encourage this government to focus on that and deal with some of those challenges. But of course, you know, they want to pat themselves on the back. Do that, and then pat yourselves. Work on some of those problems that are going on in our province that we hear from residents, not just in northern Saskatchewan, not just in Cumberland, but all over the province that are feeling. Then they can pat themselves on the back when they've said they've done some good things to correct some of the concerns that they don't want to hear or acknowledge. So I say that.

You know, we look at the fire policy currently that this government has run on. We had the towers. The towers in northern Saskatchewan and in the South, they observe fires. The fire towers they were called. Individuals would go up and they would monitor the fire season, and they did a great job. I've talked to some of the members that worked there and were supervisors years ago and have retired and said, you know, the use of those towers were truly amazing. It gave . . . Whether it was hunters in the area, that there was people picking berries, they seen there was a tower there. They knew somebody was there should they get into trouble. That was a good thing that you had somebody there close, and that's good. So I've heard that kind of stuff.

But they talk about the change, and the loss of jobs. And some of these individuals, oh sure they say, oh we'll give you some compensation. But unfortunately the government needs to do the right thing and put the towers back in, put the brakes on. And you can deal with that.

And you can say, you know what, maybe we acted too quickly. Maybe we didn't consult again. It shows again the government, the current government, you know, the Sask government does not consult, doesn't like to consult. I don't know why that is. They don't like to. Oh they say, oh, they do. Oh yes, we do. But it's hard to find. Why are so many people saying the same story, you know? You don't consult. You just do it, do it, do it, and then you pat yourselves on the back. You know, people are tired of that. But you know, I don't want to go on too long about that because let them deal that up. Let the people of Saskatchewan do the judging. And they will, and I know that, you know.

Now we've talked about a lot of different issues in the House, and my colleagues have raised a lot of concerns, whether it's education, long-term care, whether it's about our trappers, our fishermen. And I've raised those issues, whether it's roads,

whether it's cell service in northern Saskatchewan, you know, the home ownership program that this government scrapped, changes that this government's going to make and costing northern families more throughout the province.

And I've asked this, why? Why can't you just stop and rethink this? Why can't you put the brakes on and say, you know what? Maybe we are doing this too quickly. Maybe we should stop and think this. They can stop. I encourage them. Stop. The minister had the power, and the ministry's to say, whoa, maybe we've gone too quick on this. We need to consult and talk to individuals.

But let's make sure. And I mean, I'm going to be asking more questions because I know there's a lot of people in northern Saskatchewan when it comes to housing, you know, want to make sure they have a home that they call their home, that they have a place for their family. And we see the overcrowding and we see the crumbling houses that are in northern Saskatchewan. There's a lot of work to be done. And you know, I keep hearing the government say, we know there's more work to be done. Well it's time that they do some of that work in northern Saskatchewan and quit ignoring northern people. It's time to work.

We're a province that is supposed to be working together. And for many people, you know, we talk about the strength and the partnerships, and in northern Saskatchewan we do that. And I commend northern Saskatchewan — the different organizations, the leaders — whether it's education, whether it's post-secondary, they're always doing their part. They're doing their part to hold up their end of the deal, Saskatchewan families are, but this government is failing them terribly, terribly, the way this government is treating them.

Now they expect northern Saskatchewan to do their part, and they do. But they're going to hold this government to account for not doing their part, and I think Saskatchewan people will see that and will say that. So when I go back to some of this . . . You know, it's interesting about consulting and talking with individuals.

I think of the new provincial park, the provincial park. And I raised this to the minister from Parks, and it was interesting. I know that La Ronge Indian Band was concerned about the provincial park and the Blue Heron Provincial Park, the new provincial park that the government announced in its campaign. And they put it in a brochure, or their commitment was two provincial parks, and they're going ahead with that. That's the sad reality, you know, sad reality. Here's the First Nations in a letter telling them, do not go ahead. We want to be consulted. We want to talk. We have concerns. We want to talk to you about this before you go ahead. Uh-uh, they're firing ahead with it. It didn't matter. We don't care, First Nations, your traditional territory. We're going to go ahead.

So where is that showing respect to the First Nations leaders? Where is that? How is that showing respect? Here you have a provincial park, a new one. And you have a First Nations telling you they've got concerns. They want to sit down and talk, and you don't. You just fire ahead with it, and you do it. So having said that, that's pretty sad.

And I wanted to put that in and commend the chief and council for their good work and trying to bring, you know, the concerns that they're raising with their traditional territory. But they should be consulted. And they should agree with it. And you don't just go out and do what you want. If you're not willing to work with them, then don't just announce this. So they can make all the announcements with the people going in.

And you know, we encourage — and so do they — we encourage people to come to our parks. We have a beautiful North. We have beautiful parks, whether they're regional, provincial. We know we have the national park. That's great. We want people to come here. It's good for the economy. Nobody's about that. But you don't make announcements, and you don't go through the process and say, well we don't have to consult the traditional territory of La Ronge Indian Band and others in the area that have an entitlement to that traditional territory. Let's be very clear, and I make that statement very clear.

[16:30]

Now having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've raised a number of different issues, whether it's education, housing in northern Saskatchewan, and some of the challenges. But I just want to say this last little bit clearly. We need to work together for all Saskatchewan people. We cannot be using, you know, and driving a wedge between residents of our province. It is wrong. It's a wrong message to send. It is not the right message to send to our children, our seniors, our residents, wherever they come from, newcomers.

We've got to be working together, and the government has to do a better job. And the way the government is driving wedges is wrong, and they should be ashamed of themselves. We should not be doing that. We should be all working together — northern Saskatchewan, southern — as a team in true partnership. That is true partnership. And when I see this government doing that — going out there, consulting, and making sure that everyone feels a part of this province in a partnership, then I will say, pat yourselves on the back. But till that time comes, quit patting yourselves on the back because you do not deserve it. The Saskatchewan people do. They earned it. They should be giving themselves a pat on the back. But no, you want to take the credit for it. They will come to judge you for this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's been an opportunity to share some of the frustration, but also some of the good work that has been done in certain areas. You know, and I've said that clearly, at this point I will not be supporting the Speech from the Throne, but I will be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And now we will hear the rest of the story, Mr. Speaker. I'm trusting that I can paint a little bit different picture of the province of Saskatchewan than we've just heard.

Mr. Speaker, thank you. It's with pleasure that I rise in the

House today and enter debate on the provincial Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to begin by reiterating what a privilege it is for me to represent the people of Regina Douglas Park who saw fit to represent me.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I moved around the constituency over the summer and the past little while, I couldn't help but be absolutely thrilled to see the redevelopment that's taking place in Regina Douglas Park. You see, Regina Douglas Park is one of the older parts of Regina. Our first immigrants in the early 1900s came, and many of them came from the eastern European countries and settled in what's now Regina Douglas Park. In fact we used to call it old Germantown, Mr. Speaker, and these people built their houses on little 25-foot lots, clapboard houses.

And today, Mr. Speaker, those little 25-foot lots have seen new houses being erected, the old being torn down and these new houses going up, being taken over by young people, Mr. Speaker, building environmentally friendly houses, Mr. Speaker, energy efficient houses. It's an absolute joy to see the rejuvenation of Regina Douglas Park, especially the older part of Regina Douglas Park, that part that's a little bit north of Broadway Avenue in the city, Mr. Speaker. It's an absolute joy to see.

And as I travel around the province — and I had a little opportunity to do that, Mr. Speaker, when I was minister — not only the constituency, but our great province, Mr. Speaker, it was just encouraging to be reminded of how great this province of ours is and how great the people of Saskatchewan are.

This past summer, Mr. Speaker, four of my colleagues and I — the Minister of Health, the Minister of Social Services, the Minister of Government Relations, and the Minister of . . . help me out — visited Pinehouse Lake, Mr. Speaker. And I want to just take a second to recount that experience. It's an experience that will stay with me forever. It was just an eye-opener, and I came to appreciate first-hand just how special the North is and how special the people of the North are.

And the area . . . We were met at the plane by His Worship, the mayor of Pinehouse Lake, Mike Natomagan and his council. And we had a quick visit in the auditorium, Mr. Speaker, and then we toured the school. The absolute joy and pride of the principal that showed us around that school is the best I've seen, Mr. Speaker. It was just an awesome experience. And then the Minister of Health and I had an opportunity to tour the health facility, and again the pride of the people was clearly expressed.

But the highlight of the day, Mr. Speaker, was the journey out to Recovery Lake and the recovery lodge. We were invited to a celebration that was taking place, Mr. Speaker, where a young couple, who had fallen on a bit of hard times and had their children taken away from them, were reunited with their children. They had spent two weeks with community support in the recovery centre, and it was an absolute wonderful celebration of the accomplishments of this young couple.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't too long ago that Pinehouse Lake was given the label of the drinking capital of North America, I'm going to say. CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] did an article on *the fifth estate*. To see the

transition, to see the transformation of that particular community is just testament to the strength and the will of our people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and in particular the people of that community and of our North.

As well, Mr. Speaker, my family and I have kind of rekindled a relationship with holidaying in the area around Prince Albert National Park, in particular Elk Ridge. We used to go to the North when the kids were young and spend a week up there. And just over the last couple of years, we've been able to get back up north, partly because of the job that we're presently doing. To see the development, to see the growth, to see the excitement, to see the wonderful residences of the people that have made the North their recreation destination and their home, Mr. Speaker, again is just testament to the growth, to the vitality, to the vibrance that we call Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is the new Saskatchewan, and it's exciting to be from Saskatchewan. The pace has picked up. Although when you try to get from the north end of Saskatoon to the south end of Saskatoon at five o'clock, it's a little bit, it can be a little bit frustrating. But, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the challenges of growth.

The pace has picked up. There's a sense of optimism, Mr. Speaker. And a sense of, well, there's a sense simply of we're number one, Mr. Speaker. And that never happened before.

You know, last week the member from Regina Dewdney reminded me of how Saskatchewan used to be the butt of many jokes, Mr. Speaker. And the three lanes to Alberta and the one lane coming back to Saskatchewan reminded me of those days that weren't very happy days. The days that we were closing schools. The days that we were closing hospitals. The days that there was the great migration to the west, Mr. Speaker. Just not a very happy time. But, Mr. Speaker, you know, that's not happening in Saskatchewan any more.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we can claim to be number one in many, many different areas. The lowest unemployment rate in the country, Mr. Speaker. Second highest average weekly earnings, Mr. Speaker. Saskatoon and Regina lead the country in economic growth. Saskatchewan is Canada's largest exporter per capita than anywhere else in the country, Mr. Speaker. We're on the world stage in many, many fronts, and a couple of fronts that are dear to me.

Graham DeLaet is one of Saskatchewan's products, Mr. Speaker. I had the great opportunity when I was a little younger to be involved with the junior golf program at a golf club that I worked at. And every year we had a junior tournament. And my job — I had nothing to do with Graham DeLaet's golf career, I can assure you — I was the official starter for the golf tournament, Mr. Speaker. And I can recall very clearly standing on the first tee and announcing, and now on the first tee from Weyburn, Saskatchewan, 9-year-old Graham DeLaet. And I had the great chance to do that on two occasions, Mr. Speaker.

To see where Graham DeLaet is today, on the world stage, bringing this interest and intrigue to the province is an absolute delight, not just for me, Mr. Speaker, but for all of Saskatchewan. In fact during one golf tournament this past golf season, it was hard to . . . Well, it wasn't that hard actually. But

coming down the fairway on a Saturday was Graham DeLaet in the Saskatchewan colours, these brilliant green pants with this wonderful yellow golf shirt on. And, Mr. Speaker, emblazoned across his chest were the words, "Think Saskatchewan." Now that doesn't happen very often, Mr. Speaker. That's the new Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And how can I mention Graham DeLaet in one breath and not on the other hand mention Mark McMorris and his brother Craig and their accomplishments about bringing Saskatchewan and the whole picture of Saskatchewan on the world stage. Not bad for a province that doesn't have any mountains on which to snowboard, Mr. Speaker. So Saskatchewan clearly is on the world stage.

Mr. Speaker, the benefits of growth and the energy of the new Saskatchewan are visible throughout all of our constituencies, and Regina Douglas Park is no exception. Mr. Speaker, I spoke a little bit about the rejuvenation of Douglas Park in terms of the housing that's taking place there, and let me just elaborate on a couple of other of the signs of growth and prosperity in Regina Douglas Park.

Two new schools, Mr. Speaker. Arcola Community School, Mr. Speaker, and Douglas Park School, two absolutely beautiful new schools that provide an abundance of learning environment and atmosphere that are so challenging and conducive to learning, Mr. Speaker. I had the good fortune to be on hand when we opened those schools, Mr. Speaker, and to see the learning spaces, to see the fine arts facility, the new gymnasiums, the learning stations, Mr. Speaker. The opportunity for students and teachers to be creative is second to none, Mr. Speaker, part of the new Saskatchewan.

New residence going up at the University of Regina in Douglas Park, Mr. Speaker. The SIAST nursing program expansion, Mr. Speaker, new child care spaces at the U of R [University of Regina].

On College Avenue, the part of Douglas Park where I grew up, just a little bit west of Balfour Collegiate, Mr. Speaker, College Park Retirement Residence, an absolutely delightful residence for our seniors to retire. The programs that are offered at College Park are an absolute joy to partake in. And I know that some of my colleagues and I have had the opportunity to visit there and participate in some of the activities, bring greetings, and opening it. And annually, Mr. Speaker, they have the senior Olympics. Next year, I might be a participant. But the actual activities that take place just lend credence to the joy and the fun that our seniors are having in some of the residences that we have for them.

McEwen house, Mr. Speaker, a new residence for some of our most vulnerable. Milton Heights is another one.

One of the memorable experiences that have taken place of course this past year was the 100th anniversary of the legislature and the grounds. For a long time, Mr. Speaker, and long overdue, we had the opportunity to recognize our first premier, Walter Scott. And I was at the unveiling of the beautiful statue that adorns the grounds in front of the legislature. The one Sunday morning, Mr. Speaker, my wife and I were taking our usual Sunday morning walk and, as we

approached the statue, we noticed a young couple were standing lake side of the statue and gazing up at Walter Scott holding the diagram of our legislature. And they were trying to line up, they were trying to line up the cut-out of the weld of the dome with the actual dome, Mr. Speaker. And you could almost read their minds with them trying to articulate the vision that Walter Scott must have had for this building and for this great province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I'm happy to say that I'm in a position today where I'm able to partake in the new vision for Saskatchewan, the vision going forward, one of growth and one of sustainability, Mr. Speaker.

There's an absolutely poignant story . . . And another landmark for me is the construction of the new Leibel Field on the east side of Regina. I had the opportunity when I was a young boy to play football on the old Leibel Field, Mr. Speaker. We had night games and there was one bulb on a post in the centre of the field. We had some shacks that we were able to change into our football gear with, Mr. Speaker, and a couple of uprights, and we played football. Today, Mr. Speaker, Leibel Field is an absolute monument to the work that our community has done in terms of being able to provide a facility for our young people to play football and soccer. It's a bowl, Mr. Speaker, that's second to none, that provides that opportunity for our young kids to play football. And I know that my colleague from Regina Dewdney's had the opportunity to do some coaching over there, Mr. Speaker, and I'm just delighted. That's just some of the activities and progress that is taking place in Regina Douglas Park.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't take a couple of minutes now to recognize some of the people that are important in my life. First of all of course my family, my wife, my partner, and my best friend, Karen, who's kind of been . . . not kind of. She's been with me every step of the way throughout these . . .

[Applause]

Mr. Marchuk: — Thanks. Throughout these first two years. You don't ever want to say kind of, do you? You never want to say kind of when you're talking about your wife. I married up. I'm hearing that I married up, and she's . . . Anyway, throughout these couple of years, Mr. Speaker, a couple of years that have produced some great experiences, some great challenges, some laughs, some great insights, and most importantly, Mr. Speaker, great friendships — friendships here in this House, my colleagues and their spouses, members from the opposite side, great friendships, Mr. Speaker.

This business that we do here is absolutely serious business, Mr. Speaker, but because of the democracy that we live in, we're able to talk with each other, cajole, argue, and at the end of the day, we can walk away from here and say hi to each other. And, Mr. Speaker, I respect that element very dearly.

Mr. Speaker, I need to mention my constituency assistant, Becky Mason, as well as Ron Naidu and Brittany who share our offices. You know that three of us share an office over there on the east side. I know that the three of them work hand in hand to meet the needs of our constituents. And without their co-operation and help, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't be where we

are.

My brother Pat and his family who still live in Regina Douglas Park. My older brother started a paint contracting company back in the early '60s, Mr. Speaker. He's been delivering paint services to families and businesses in and around Regina for quite some time. His son Martin now has taken over the business, and so we've got two generations of paint contractors contributing to this economy, Mr. Speaker, and still living in Regina Douglas Park. My sister Lois and her husband, Brian, who were most instrumental in my election and remain supportive as we move forward.

I have also been very fortunate to be surrounded by great people all my life, Mr. Speaker, and this experience has been no different. I want to thank the Legislative Assembly staff, constituency association volunteers, office staff, my cabinet colleagues, and my caucus colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, the work that is accomplished here happens only because there is a group of people with like minds, a team of very committed loyal individuals who look after each other, support each other, as we discussed, and as I said, debate, agree, disagree, cajole, and bother. And, Mr. Speaker, I've experienced all of those this year. And so on behalf of my family and the constituency of Regina Douglas Park, I want to thank all of you for the work that you do and your loyalty to helping me along. Thanks, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our leader. To the Premier, and on behalf of Regina Douglas Park and my family, I want to thank him for his leadership. And, Mr. Speaker, I might take a minute to just talk a little bit about that leadership. You know, Mr. Speaker, there's many reasons why we're here where we are, why we are where we are in Saskatchewan. Some of those reasons we've had control over, and some we didn't, Mr. Speaker — the market timing, the weather, the Riders. But, Mr. Speaker, key in all of our success, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we have a leader who stands up for Saskatchewan — that's right, Mr. Speaker — stands up for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we know the ratings. We know where our leader stands in the province and in the country in terms of popularity. And, Mr. Speaker, that's important. But, Mr. Speaker, the important part is that we have a leader that stands up for Saskatchewan. I can't say it enough. Every chance he gets, he talks Saskatchewan, thinks Saskatchewan, promotes Saskatchewan at every turn.

Mr. Speaker, I think you'll agree. I think you'll agree that most people that we encounter in our daily lives, most people are down to earth. They call a spade a spade, and they expect the same in return. Mr. Speaker, the people I talk to appreciate a leader who demonstrates those qualities and, Mr. Speaker, because this is Saskatchewan, again I have to say, a leader who stands up for Saskatchewan, a leader with a plan, Saskatchewan, a plan to move us forward.

Mr. Speaker, we want to invest in infrastructure. We want to educate, train, and develop a skilled workforce. We want to ensure our competitiveness, Mr. Speaker. We want to support increased trade, investments, and exports. We want to advance our resource strength, Mr. Speaker. And we want to do that all in a very fiscal and responsible way. Six BB's — Mr. Speaker,

that would be balanced budgets — six consecutive balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker, that's . . . Mr. Speaker, that record speaks volumes about our leader.

And as I said, our plan is about goals and targets. Target: 1.2 million people by 2020; \$2.5 billion in infrastructure spending, Mr. Speaker; eliminate wait times in emergency rooms; investing in housing; eliminate the wait list for adult basic education programs; and the list goes on. Mr. Speaker, leadership is about promises made and promises kept — over 140 promises made, 140 promises kept.

Leadership is about being accessible to the people, Mr. Speaker, about being down to earth. Leaders that take a position, Mr. Speaker, and let the people know where they stand. Our leader has provided our position on Keystone, Mr. Speaker, on potash, on uranium, on resource sharing — all based on a common sense foundation, Mr. Speaker.

We all know the story of the family car and how common sense prevailed and the family that lives in our province and had difficulties with their vehicle. Common sense prevailed, Mr. Speaker, and now those people are in a position to look after their family. A leader that is committed and stands up for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, he also plays the banjo, Mr. Speaker. How much more down to earth can you get than that?

Mr. Speaker, as I said, a plan to sustain growth and meet the challenges of growth, this is serious work. And all those mentioned deserve serious recognition for the job they do and a job very well done. Again, Mr. Speaker, our plan is about growth, economic growth on the one hand and social growth on the other, growth not just for growth's sake, not just for the sake of growth but growth so that we will all become the best place in Canada to live, to raise a family, and build a future.

Mr. Speaker, as I and my colleagues have already stated, this is the new Saskatchewan. It was really only a matter of time, Mr. Speaker. And as our Premier has stated, and I quote:

And I think we can all be pretty proud of what we have accomplished together. The lowest unemployment rate in the country, a balanced budget, lower provincial taxes, and most importantly, Mr. Speaker, a new sense of optimism and confidence in every part of the province.

I want to talk a little bit about this new attitude and I want to do that, Mr. Speaker, by sharing a story with you. It's Rachel's story, Rachel Mielke of Hillberg & Berk jewellery, Mr. Speaker, and a former constituent of Regina Douglas Park. I was introduced to Rachel by my eldest daughter when the two of them were in grade 9, Mr. Speaker. They met for the first time standing beside each other at their respective lockers trying to figure out how to open their combination locks. So picture these two 14-year-old girls not knowing how to do this, Mr. Speaker. They began a conversation and they have been best friends ever since, in fact matrons of honour at their respective weddings. Mr. Speaker, for the two of them, high school was pretty normal. They were involved in everything: choir, cheerleading, fascinators — not the kind you wear in your hair, Mr. Speaker; I think fascinators then would have been boys — the odd clinking overnight bag, Mr. Speaker, and then of course graduation, and the rest is history.

Today, Mr. Speaker, Rachel Mielke is undeniably . . . I'm reading this from her dossier, Mr. Speaker:

Today Rachel Mielke is undeniably an inspiration to young entrepreneurs across the globe. By the age of 29 she had been invited to attend a 2008 pre-Oscar Luxury Gifting Lounge in Los Angeles, participated in Toronto's Fashion Incubator's press and buyers breakfast, Canadian Country Music Awards, and the Geminis, just to name a few.

Rachel has been being featured in the magazines *Lou Lou Fashion*, *Western Living* as well as on Sweet Spot.ca, CTV news *Canada AM*, Global TV, and in newspapers internationally. With awards and recognition including the Regina Chamber of Commerce's Young Entrepreneur of the Year, the YWCA's Young Women of Distinction, the Woman Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan's Emerging Business of the Year, and a Business Development Bank of Canada's 2011 Young Entrepreneur award, Rachel truly knows what it takes a small business a huge success.

After winning on the hit television series CBC's *Dragons' Den*, she partnered with business mogul and philanthropist W. Brett Wilson. Hillberg & Berk is now considered the strongest designer jewellery line in Canada and there is no end in sight for this brilliant young woman [from Saskatchewan]. Rachel is not, however an overnight success. She is a marketing and branding guru and has used her passion for guerrilla marketing techniques and strong insight into branding to set Hillberg and Berk . . .

And I could go on, Mr. Speaker. You see, the rest is history. Rachel had a dream and Saskatchewan was where she wanted to make that dream come true. And Saskatchewan, the new Saskatchewan, is where she made that happen. You see, she wanted to stay home, get married, raise a family. And this new Saskatchewan has allowed her to do that, Mr. Speaker. She married an entrepreneur, has a lovely new daughter, and keeps on walking the talk, Mr. Speaker. You see, just recently Rachel was commissioned by our Lieutenant Governor to create a brooch to present to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and that took place just a few short weeks ago. And so, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's artwork now resides in Buckingham Palace.

But that's not the key to the whole story, Mr. Speaker. Rachel, in all of her showings, works with a charity, and in this particular case it's the Malala foundation, obviously in aid of Malala Yousafzai who was shot by the Taliban for speaking out, for speaking in favour of education for women and girls, Mr. Speaker. So you see, Rachel is on the world stage. This is the new Saskatchewan and we're very proud to have that kind of impetus to provide that environment for our young entrepreneurs.

Mr. Speaker, our young people are staying home because they can. Our young people are returning because there's something here for them. There is excitement in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We hosted the Junos, Paul McCartney, Elton John, the Eagles, the Rolling Stones, world junior hockey, the Grey Cup, and I've already mentioned Graham DeLaet, Craig and Mark McMorris.

That's the new attitude, Mr. Speaker. That's the atmosphere

that has allowed the people of Saskatchewan to be the best they can be and to challenge themselves and to grow personally, like Rachel, like Craig, like Mark, etc. We have always known it was good to be from Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We were simply heads bowed, insecure, or embarrassed to proclaim it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit more about our growth plan and the Throne Speech in particular. We are all well aware of the tremendous growth our province is experiencing. We are all very well aware of the challenges that this kind of growth brings. Those challenges are the ones that our people face on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker — health care, housing, seniors, child care, recreation, highways, and other infrastructure demands.

And so, Mr. Speaker, let me enumerate for a minute, if I may: a new program to enable some seniors with complex issues to receive home care from physicians, nurse practitioners, and other health care providers; new collaborative emergency centres in rural Saskatchewan; hot-spotting pilot programs to take the pressure off emergency rooms; a new student-first approach in education that will include wide-ranging consultations with teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

You know, Mr. Speaker, as I travelled around the province and I've spent time in my classrooms and schools, Mr. Speaker, somewhere in this province every issue that we ever faced is being met head-on and solved by a creative group of teachers and students and principals in our system. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility to find out where those are and to celebrate those across the province and bring those into every classroom so that every teacher and every child has the benefit of that expertise, Mr. Speaker.

Further highway twinning in high-traffic areas, including Highway 6 and 39 from Regina to Estevan. New measures to improve traffic safety. Significant infrastructure investments, Mr. Speaker. A thousand new training seats including 300 new apprenticeship seats and 700 new adult basic education seats, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard the members opposite talk about smart growth. I'm just not sure what smart growth means. But, Mr. Speaker, what do you call it when you set goals and attain them? Mr. Speaker, what do you call it when you make promises and keep them? Mr. Speaker, when you're the only jurisdiction in the country with a balanced budget, when you lead the country in economic development, Mr. Speaker, what do you call that? What do you call that, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, I could go on. We're drawing close to 5 o'clock here . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Talk out the clock? I'll talk out the clock, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is all about growth, not decline; a plan going forward, not backward; a realistic plan, Mr. Speaker, a plan, not rhetoric, a plan of fiscal responsibility and balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have seven grandchildren, and I can think of nothing better than to have all of them here in Saskatchewan with me. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne and not the amendment, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being the time of adjournment, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Elhard	3735
Broten	3735
Draude	3735
Forbes	3736
Doherty	3736
McCall	3736
Steinley	3736
Campeau	3737

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Forbes	3737
Vermette	3737
McCall	3737

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Equal Justice for All Reopens	
Forbes	3737
Developing a Disability Strategy	
Docherty	3738
Saskatchewan Wearable Art Gala	
Sproule	3738
Thank You to Foster Families	
Lawrence	3738
Girl Guides Youth Recognition Ceremony	
Ross	3738
Trafalgar Day Gala	
Hutchinson	3739
Regina Youth for Christ Hope Dinner	
Toth	3739

QUESTION PERIOD

Health Care Conditions and Staffing	
Broten	3739
Duncan	3739
Proposed Closure of Distribution Centre	
Wotherspoon	3741
Boyd	3741
Involvement by Senators in Provincial Elections	
McCall	3741
The Speaker	3741
Proclamation of Workplace Legislation	
Forbes	3742
Morgan	3742
Resources for Education	
Wotherspoon	3743
Morgan	3743

POINT OF ORDER

McCall	3744
The Speaker	3744

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 98 — <i>The Child Care Act, 2013/Loi de 2013 sur les garderies d'enfants</i>	
Morgan	3744
Bill No. 99 — <i>The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Krawetz	3744
Bill No. 100 — <i>The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Reiter	3744
Bill No. 101 — <i>The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Norris	3744

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Private Bills	
Wilson	3745

**ORDERS OF THE DAY
SPECIAL ORDER
ADJOURNED DEBATES
ADDRESS IN REPLY**

Moe	3745
Steinley	3748
Phillips	3752
Vermette	3756
Marchuk	3763

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

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

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Kevin Doherty

Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. June Draude

Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Health

Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Nancy Heppner

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

Hon. Ken Krawetz

Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Tim McMillan

Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Trade
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Don McMorris

Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds

Hon. Don Morgan

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

Hon. Rob Norris

Minister of Advanced Education

Hon. Jim Reiter

Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs

Hon. Lyle Stewart

Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell

Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing

Hon. Randy Weekes

Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Gordon Wyant

Minister of Justice and Attorney General