



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

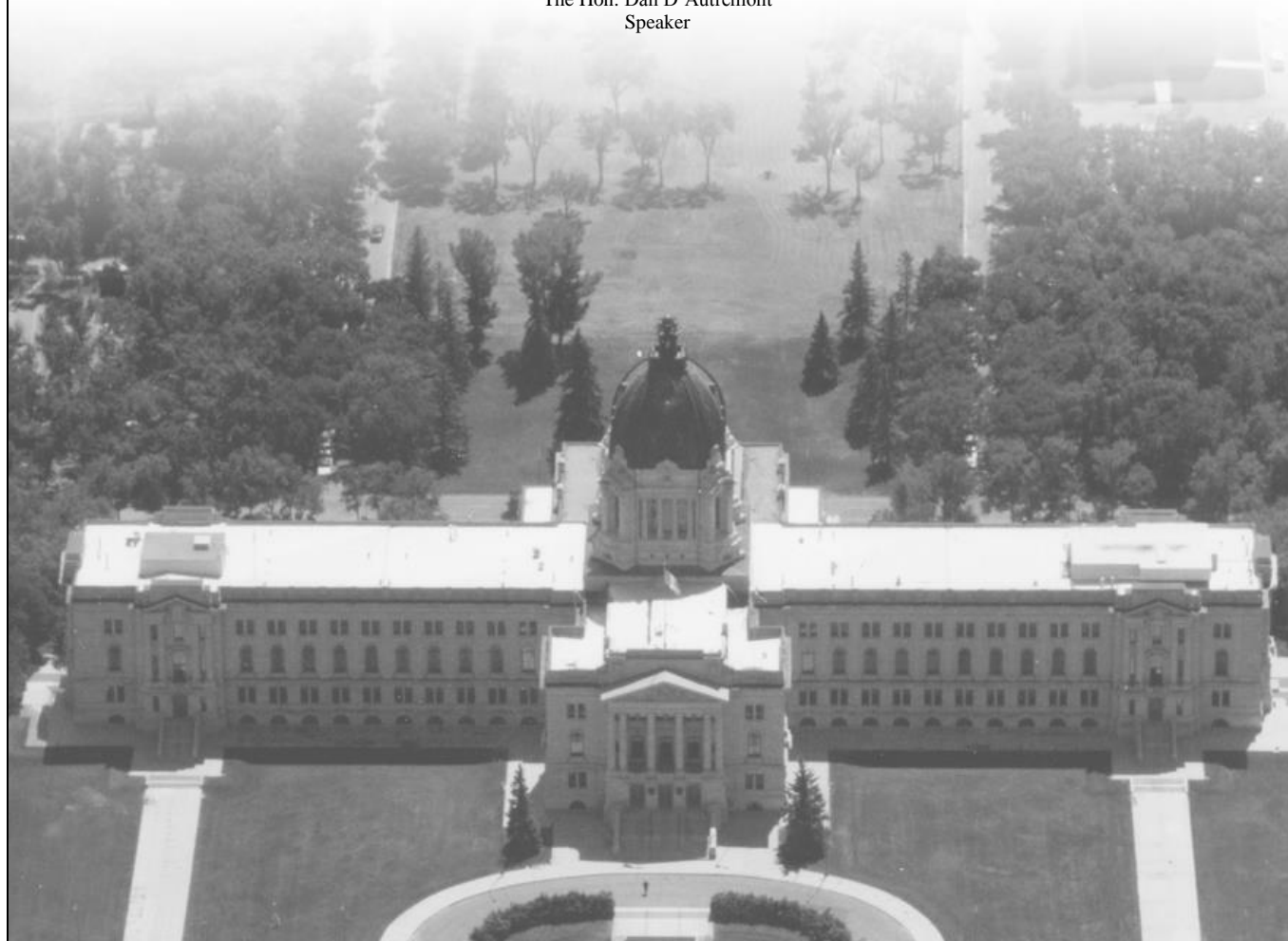
of the

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, Hon. 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, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
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
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Hon. 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, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Vacant		Lloydminster

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — It is my pleasure to introduce and welcome to the province of Saskatchewan and to the Legislative Assembly very special guests from Germany, seated in the Speaker's gallery. As part of a Partnership of Parliaments program with Germany, our members and legislative officials had the opportunity to travel to Germany in 2013 to study their system of government and economy. The Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan is now pleased to reciprocate that visit. Our guests arrived in Saskatchewan on October 25th and will depart on November the 1st.

Please stand as I introduce you: the Hon. Beate Schlupp, MdL, Deputy Speaker of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania legislature; the Hon. Gerd Körner, head of the delegation, former deputy mayor of Weiterstadt, member of the city council of Weiterstadt; Ms. Maria Steinhagen, staff of the Mecklenburg-Pomerania legislature, department head, central services; and Mr. Janneck Herre, Partnership of Parliaments. I'd ask all members to welcome them here today.

I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to take a moment to thank the members of the inter-ministerial committee on interpersonal violence and abuse who are seated in your gallery. With us today, Betty Ann Pottruff, Rod McKendrick, Frankie Jordan, Pamela Burkholder, all from the Ministry of Justice; Pat Faulconbridge and Betty Deis from the Ministry of Social Services; and Trish LaFontaine from the Ministry of Government Relations. Mr. Speaker, they are responsible for ensuring that when it comes to working to stop interpersonal violence against women, men, children, youth, and the elderly in Saskatchewan that our policies are coordinated and strategic.

Mr. Speaker, they do a terrific job, and I'm very proud of the work that they do. We'll hear more about their good work shortly, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming these dedicated individuals to their legislature today. Thank you.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join the minister in welcoming the members of this team to the legislature. I appreciate the fact that some very experienced, capable people who have been capable servants of the province have been given this very, very important task to deal with violence issues. And so I join too with the welcome. Thank you.

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 that calls for greater protection for Saskatchewan citizens from developers defaulting on fixed-priced contracts. And we know that in September this year this government walked away from a new 48-unit, low-income affordable housing project in Regina, allowing a private developer to instead take control of and rent the units at full market price. Essentially this government allowed the private developer to back out of a fixed-price contract without any penalty, setting a dangerous precedent for this type of default. I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to recognize that there are indeed desperate homeless people in our province and to immediately reverse its policy of now allowing private developers with whom the government has close relations to default on fixed-price contracts for affordable housing projects.

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions as it relates to the unacceptable danger on Dewdney Avenue created by that government, the failure of that government to address a problem, a safety concern that they've created, and call on that government to finally act in an immediate way to provide safety for those along Dewdney Avenue. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting the heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents from Regina and Kenaston. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan Literacy Awards of Merit

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on April 23rd, the 2014 Saskatchewan Literacy Awards of Merit were held at Government House here in Regina.

A constituent of Saskatoon Centre, Sylvia Obrigewitsch was recognized for her many years of service with a Volunteer

Service Award. Sylvia has been involved in literacy education for 30 years, including establishing a tutoring program in Edmonton for the local John Howard Society, but she has now joined the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, tutoring students with Read Saskatoon and helping people advance themselves through the grade 12 GED [General Educational Development] program offered in schools. Sylvia is currently working with new arrivals to Saskatoon at the Global Gathering Place.

Other winners included Ms. Carol Cundall, executive director of the Estevan Diversified Services Inc. who received the Professional Leadership in Literacy Award. The Gordon Retail Centre on the George Gordon First Nation won for Workplace Training Excellence. The workplace literacy program for newcomers at the Regina Food Bank won the Outstanding Literacy Project. And Mr. Lindsay Brittain, a youth worker and culture program coordinator at the Nipawin Oasis Community Centre, received the Cameco Literacy Learner Award and Bursary for all his hard work and achievements.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members join me in congratulating these hard-working people dedicated to improving literacy here in Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Saskatchewan Good for Entrepreneurs

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 20th, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, CFIB, released its rankings for the best places to start and grow a business in 2014 in Canada. I'm excited to announce today, Mr. Speaker, that both Saskatoon and Regina ranked in the top 10 out of almost 120 cities and economic regions throughout Canada. In addition to this, Lloydminster ranked first in mid-size Canadian cities.

CFIB's report marks the start of the Small Business Week in Canada. Each city or region is ranked on a number of indicators across three major categories: presence, perspective, and policy. Saskatoon ranked third out of all major Canadian cities while Regina ranked fourth.

Mr. Speaker, it is exciting to see that the Prairies, and indeed Saskatchewan, often sees higher economic activity because of many opportunities that our province holds for entrepreneurs. This report confirms what our government knows to be true. Not only is Saskatchewan still one of the top places to live in Canada, but it is also one of the top places to work in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating our entrepreneurs for the good work they continue to do while driving our economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Women's History Month

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House

today to recognize Women's History Month. In Canada, Women's History Month is celebrated each year in October because it coincides with the anniversary of an important landmark in the history of the women's movement in Canada — the Persons Case.

Women's History Month seeks to recognize the contributions of women in Canada and around the world. This year's theme: Canadian Business Women — A Growing Economic Force. It highlights the significant contributions made by women in business, but acknowledges that there is still work to be done to remove the structural barriers that women still face in the workforce. Women are still paid less than men in the workplace and are still seen as less valuable or uncommitted by many employers. Even after all the progress made in the last 100 years, there are only 26 women leading Fortune 500 companies today. Women are disproportionately found in precarious, low-paid positions, and women and girls continue to be the targets of violence.

The education of women and girls must be a priority if inequality in the workplace is to be addressed in the future. The inspiring work of young women like Malala Yousafzai serves as an example of what we can all do to stand up and demand equality for women and girls.

And finally on a political level, I encourage all members of this Legislative Assembly to continue to encourage women to become active in politics. We need our legislature to reflect our community, and we should not rest until we have gender parity in this Chamber. Now that would go down in the history books. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Autism Awareness Month

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you. I'm very pleased to acknowledge that October is Autism Awareness Month. Autism spectrum disorder encompasses a continuum of complex neurodevelopmental impairments that affect many people to varying degrees.

Increased attention to these disorders over the last decade has given us insight into its increasing prevalence. However even with improved detection, diagnosis, and awareness, research and support is continually needed to not only help the individuals who are affected but also their families.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we support a comprehensive approach and responsive system for individuals and families affected by autism. In 2014-15 we are investing a total of \$7.55 million toward targeted autism supports, a 1,400 per cent increase from '07. This investment goes towards education and training, specialists and support workers, diagnostic assessment and intervention, and respite care.

While we continue to make progress in helping and supporting individuals and families who live with ASD [autism spectrum disorder], we know that it touches an increasing number of people across the province. Our government, along with the health regions, works very closely with our community partners to build comprehensive autism services in Saskatchewan, and

we will continue to do so.

Earlier this month, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health raised the autism awareness flag at the legislature to bring awareness to this condition. Mr. Speaker, we all have responsibilities to raise awareness, to provide support, and to be involved in addressing autism. Please join me in recognizing Autism Awareness Month.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Agriculture Month

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the Minister of Agriculture proclaimed October as Agriculture Month in Saskatchewan.

Agriculture is one of the largest economic engines in Saskatchewan, contributing 10 per cent to Saskatchewan's gross domestic product and generating more than 50,000 jobs in the province. In fact last year we produced 96 per cent of Canada's lentils, 82 per cent of Canada's flax seed, and 87 per cent of Canada's durum. We also exported more than \$100 million in sales to 16 different world markets.

Mr. Speaker, this year's theme for agriculture month is Think Ag. We are focusing on the vast opportunities there are to offer in agriculture and are asking youth to think ag when considering a future career path. High schools throughout the province are holding speaker series where presentations are being given by dynamic young people who have launched their careers in agriculture. A new web presence has also been developed at saskatchewan.ca that profiles Saskatchewan people employed in the ag industry, interactive career features, ag scholarship information, and teacher resources. In addition to the website, a Think Ag Facebook page has been launched to give current and potential ag employees a forum to discuss careers in agriculture and what the industry has to offer.

I ask all members of the legislature in the Assembly to join me in encouraging our youth to consider agriculture in their future career plans, and also to say thank you to our many farmers and ranchers for their hard work and commitment to the agriculture industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Carlton.

Violence Prevention Week

Mr. Hickie: — Mr. Speaker, I stand to speak to an issue that affects all of us, if not directly, then through our concern for our fellow citizens. Today marks the beginning of the province's first Violence Prevention Week, a time we will use to focus on improving our provincial response to violence and reducing the harm it causes to individuals and communities.

I would like to thank the University of Regina who came forward with this request. It too has dedicated this week to violence awareness. Working with our community partners, there will be important initiatives coming forward in the coming days in recognition of Violence Prevention Week.

As announced in the Throne Speech, amendments will soon be introduced to *The Victims of Domestic Violence Act* to expand the ability of police and the justice system to protect victims of interpersonal violence and abuse. Regina's Sexual Assault Response Team, also known as SART, will conduct a new pilot project in Regina to expand reporting options for victims of sexual assault.

The CellArm program will be made available in more areas of the province, providing frequent victims of family violence quicker access to emergency responders. It also bears mentioning that earlier this month the victims compensation program underwent its largest enhancement since 1992 to better assist victims with the immediate costs associated with victimization. This is all thanks to the hard work of the Interministerial Committee on Interpersonal Violence and Abuse, some of who are in attendance today.

Violence prevention is everyone's responsibility. Through awareness we can work to minimize violence in this province and the harms that come with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

United Nations International Day of the Girl

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, October the 11th was designated by the United Nations as International Day of the Girl. The member from Regina Wascana Plains and myself had the pleasure of hosting in Regina a screening for the documentary, *Raising Ms. President*. This amazing documentary is about raising the next generation of female leaders and encouraging them to think about the possibilities of political life.

Mr. Speaker, we want to see capable, competent women seek public office. This documentary was shown in 50 states and 2 provinces, including our own. It was viewed in hundreds of cities as a way to celebrate the Day of the Girl.

Mr. Speaker, our event was attended by over 150 women and girls in Regina and surrounding area. My colleague from Regina Wascana Plains and I were pleased to have the opportunity to host this event to share our own personal experiences in politics and in serving the public.

Mr. Speaker, it is so important that we encourage women and girls to engage in politics and to consider pursuing a career in public life. I would like to thank all the women and girls who attended our event to celebrate the International Day of the Girl. I ask that the members join me in encouraging women and girls to step off the sidelines, take an active role in leadership, and consider seeking public office. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Leadership in Saskatoon Health Region

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan taxpayers have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars having the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatoon Health Region certified as a lean leader — hundreds of thousands of dollars.

But now the CEO of the health region has had her contract terminated, and she will receive a severance of \$400,000 of taxpayers' money. An explanation that has been given by the board Chair to date, Mr. Speaker, is completely, completely, not even remotely satisfactory. It does not add up. With \$400,000 being paid out in severance, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve to know the real reason why her contract was terminated. To the Premier: what is the reason for the CEO's termination and the massive \$400,000 severance package?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as all of our regional health authorities do, is look at succession planning within their regional health authorities, within the senior leadership, and of course with the CEOs. There has been a discussion for some time between the board, the board Chair, and the CEO of Saskatoon Health Region regarding her future and the determination of when she would be leaving as the CEO of the health region.

The board felt this was an opportunity to take advantage of renewing the leadership of that health region and therefore unanimously agreed that they would ask for her resignation. And that, Mr. Speaker, is what they did, and that resignation was tendered and was accepted by the board.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the question was to the Premier. At least he normally answers at least one question that he doesn't want to answer here, Mr. Speaker. But the story is not adding up in the least bit, Mr. Speaker. The minister says they took advantage. They are having to pay \$400,000 in severance for what appears to be no good reason, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan families can't stomach the \$400,000 severance package.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon Health Region asked for 38 care aids to start to improve the quality of care. What did this government give them? They gave them 19 care aids. Well, Mr. Speaker, \$400,000 would pay for 8 more full-time care aids. The Saskatoon Health Region desperately needs more ceiling tracks for lifts for patients and residents, Mr. Speaker. \$400,000 could pay for 27 desperately needed lifts.

My question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker: why on earth would they pay a \$400,000 severance? Why would they terminate the contract for the CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region when the needs are so great in the health region, Mr. Speaker? The Premier needs to give a response. Why did they terminate the CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly Saskatoon Health Region, the board has followed all provisions, either within the contract of the CEO or within Saskatchewan labour and employment legislation, in determining what would be appropriate in this case, as she was the CEO, is the CEO, and has been for nearly 10 years. And I think that that is what has been deemed appropriate in this case.

The region and the board and the board Chair have had conversations with the CEO regarding her future and what her plans were going to be. There has been some talk for some time about her decision to end her time as CEO. The board felt that they wanted to take advantage of an opportunity to move on in terms of finding a new CEO, and that's what they decided to do.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, why did this government then choose to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars into her lean certification, Mr. Speaker? I've seen the certificate. There's been tons of so-called work that she went through, away from her regular job. Why on earth would they spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on that, Mr. Speaker, at the same time as there are the huge needs in the health region?

Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker: it is this government that triggered this. Presumably they would know what the severance would have to be paid out, Mr. Speaker. But it makes no sense. There was no need. But my question to the Premier is, why would they go through this? Why would they trigger this, especially when the needs are so great?

We do know, Mr. Speaker, that Maura Davies was the first individual to effectively stand up to this government's \$40 million American consultant. She was the first to take him on. And we know, Mr. Speaker, from last week that John Black and his team love to tattle. They love to tattle on leaders who would have the audacity to question the approach that John Black is suggesting through his dogma.

So my question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: did John Black's team raise any concerns about Maura Davies, and is that why she was terminated and now will receive a \$400,000 severance?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm a little bit, I guess, confused by the Leader of the Opposition and his premise. I would take that to mean that the Leader of the Opposition believes that becoming a lean certified leader within the health region is good thing, which I believe it is, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, what has been identified through Saskatoon Health Region is the fact that they are leaders within this province when it comes to the lean deployment. In fact, during the review of the contract and which led up to the contract, it was noted that Saskatoon Health Region is largely self-sufficient and has completed 87 lean events, many with very good results.

Mr. Speaker, this was an opportunity that the board decided to

take to find a new CEO, new leadership for the Saskatoon Health Region. This is something that boards need to be mindful of, considering the fact that nearly half of our CEOs are nearing that retirement age over the next two to three years. And Saskatoon Health Region certainly was in that position.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the question remains why this government would trigger her termination and be forced to pay out a \$400,000 contract at a time when there are huge needs in health care throughout the province.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that Maura Davies was the first person to stand up to John Black, and we know this through internal documentation that we've obtained. But we also know, Mr. Speaker, that Maura Davies was increasingly critical of this government for its failure, for its inability to address the basics that are so needed. Here's a quote that the CEO gave, Mr. Speaker:

Since 2007, we've received approximately \$10 million per year to maintain and repair our buildings. That is less than a fifth of what we need for routine maintenance. Virtually all the dollars are, of necessity, spent on emergency building failures.

And she also called for "... a multi-year plan to address the current, unacceptable situation."

My question to the Premier: the fact that Maura Davies was raising concerns about this government's failure to properly address infrastructure in health care, is that a reason why her contract was terminated and she will now receive \$400,000 in severance?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the public, Mr. Speaker, will know that this government has invested record funding into regional health authorities, including Saskatoon Health Region, to the point where regional health authority budgets have nearly doubled over the last seven years.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the Leader of the Opposition wanted to bring up the issue of funding into the health regions for capital and for maintenance because here is the record. Over the last seven years, block funding for maintenance, the Saskatoon Health Region under this government is \$48 million. Over the previous seven years under the NDP [New Democratic Party] government, Saskatoon Health Region block funding for maintenance, \$6.8 million. A 606 per cent increase under this government.

Mr. Speaker, the issues that we're facing when it comes to maintaining capital would not be in the case that they are today had the members opposite not invested in health care.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, with that kind of head-in-the-sand approach that we see from this government, it's no wonder that

they might be a little angry at Maura Davies for saying that she was only getting one-fifth of what was needed in order to properly maintain buildings. It's no wonder that they might be agitated over that, Mr. Speaker.

We know that Maura Davies was the first person to actually stand up to John Black, someone who loves to tattle on leaders, who would have the audacity to say that he might be on the wrong track. We know, Mr. Speaker, that Maura Davies was saying she was only getting one-fifth of what was actually needed to properly do preventative maintenance and things on buildings. We also know, Mr. Speaker, that Maura Davies was also critical of this government for failing to address the things that actually would help seniors, would improve seniors' care.

Here's a quote that she said: "... we know that the complexity of the residents in long term care is much higher than it used to be and our staffing levels haven't kept up." And "There are lots of unmet needs in this province. [So] we do not have adequate resources and programs to meet the needs of our seniors."

My question to the Premier: is it because Maura Davies was raising, highlighting the failure of this government to actually meet the senior care needs in this province, is that the reason why her contract was terminated and she'll receive \$400,000 in severance?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Leader of the Opposition's question, the answer is no.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well, Mr. Speaker, they have not come up with a good rationale, a good explanation as to why they would trigger the termination of the CEO of the health region, and at a time when there are huge needs in health care they would be happy to shovel out the door \$400,000 in severance. Everything about this termination, Mr. Speaker, and the severance is bizarre, and the answers or the lack of answers in the transparency we see today only makes the situation more strange.

What's also bizarre is the government's start to finding a replacement for Maura Davies. And they said, we want someone, the board Chair said, "We want someone that has depth and passion in our lean management system." And I guess that's not surprising, Mr. Speaker, because we know how John Black and his team love to tattle and have created a completely toxic atmosphere when it comes to those in leadership and those on the front lines. So it's not surprising that this government wouldn't want a CEO with fresh insights, the ability to critically think, Mr. Speaker, or bring a new perspective to things. But it seems strange, Mr. Speaker, and it seems like it's an unwise approach for finding a replacement.

My question to the Premier: will John Black be consulted in any way in the hiring of a new CEO for the Saskatoon Health Region?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Leader of the Opposition, to his question, the answer is no.

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

Agreement with Smart Meter Supplier

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, even the government's own internal investigation shows this government didn't undertake proper due diligence on the smart meter file. The procurement process was far from adequate. The government ignored advice to have it in a staged process which would have allowed problems to be better identified.

And the biggest concern is that that government completely failed to even consider the safety of people and families. It didn't even bother thinking about safety, despite the fact there had been major problems in Philadelphia and Alabama.

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: how is it that this government didn't even take into consideration the safety of families and homes?

[14:00]

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the safety of people here in Saskatchewan is the highest priority of this government. That's clear. Unfortunately SaskPower didn't consider the safety of people to the same extent that the government does. We believe that this program was ill fated. We believe that it was simply not handled in the appropriate fashion, and that's why it was shut down once the problems became apparent to the government. At that point we also undertook to initiate with Sensus, the company, to recover the taxpayers' dollars, which we did.

In addition to that, we wanted to get to the bottom of the problems with the contract as well as to look at the safety aspects of it, as well as look at the technical aspects of it also. That was undertaken. The report was released this morning, and as a result of that, the report, the CEO and president, Robert Watson, took full responsibility and resigned.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, there were warnings from Saskatchewan experts, and the government's own internal investigation now exposes that this government received direct warnings about Sensus from a company with solid industry knowledge, a direct warning. But did that government listen, that Premier, that minister? Not a bit. As a result of that, we've had 18 meter failures and fires big enough to do real damage and devastate the lives of many. In total, there have 359 meter failures.

To the minister: how could this government completely ignore direct warnings about this particular company and sell out Saskatchewan people?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — With respect, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the failures that the member references, the member, I'm sure he had the representation at the review over there, the findings this morning. And the folks from Ritenburg made it very, very clear that there were eight incidents, and any incidents that there were in the testing phase were not related to fires. They were related to other problems with the smart meters — problems with the metering system, problems with other things totally and completely unrelated. And the member opposite would know that to be true, but he chooses to torque this issue rather than to present the facts as was found.

What the report indicated, that there was no evidence to indicate the fires were the result of improper installation or hot sockets. That's clearly what happened here. The meters themselves, they failed and, as a result, that there was some problems obviously with that. The government took the right actions at that point and stopped them right then. And now we're going through the process of removing them.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that minister's a bit of a latecomer to accountability on this file when he's been a big part of the failures every step of the way. The government's own internal report shows that the procurement process needs to be significantly improved. But the next round of smart meters won't even go through an improved procurement process because this government has tied the hands of Saskatchewan people with an \$18 million store credit and a \$5 million research credit to Sensus — a gift to Sensus on behalf of Saskatchewan ratepayers.

To the minister: what kind of sense does it make to keep using this company especially after 359 meter failures?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the installation of smart meters, if we ever do go down that path again here in Saskatchewan, it'll only be under the most rigorous of testing under Saskatchewan climatic conditions.

In addition to that, we would only go forward with any kind of smart meters in the future if an independent research firm like the CSA [Canadian Standards Association] or United Laboratories or independent firms like them were to approve them for their installation in Saskatchewan. That would be the only way that we would proceed with respect to meters in the future.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, again it's sort of interesting to hear from the minister who has actually let a credit sit on the books of Sensus instead of getting the dollars back for Saskatchewan people. If Saskatchewan people purchase something and it turned out to be a complete failure and a safety risk, they'd demand a full refund and they'd work with likely a better company and a better product, Mr. Speaker. They certainly wouldn't accept a store credit. They'd want and deserve their bucks back.

To the minister: why on earth did this government fail to demand and secure a full refund on this horribly flawed and dangerous product?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, as we have said on numerous occasions that people of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers of this province will get their full refund if their full refund is due to them. We will continue to work with Sensus and look at the meters that they are manufacturing now.

We will put them through rigorous testing here in Saskatchewan. If they meet the standards of CSA at that time, we may consider using them again. If, for example, if they are not able to meet the standards here in Saskatchewan, the rest of the money would be recovered by the taxpayers of our province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that's an incredibly weak position from that government with millions of dollars of ratepayers' dollars. There has been warnings every step of the way: red flags that should have been listened to by this government, warnings from experts, direct warnings from a company with industry knowledge, failures of product in Philadelphia and Alabama. That should have been enough for that government to realize they shouldn't have been inking contracts for \$200 million with Grid One and millions of dollars with Sensus. But even if they rammed forward, you'd think they would have had the good sense, Mr. Speaker, to protect Saskatchewan people in that contract.

Why did that government, why did that minister fail to protect Saskatchewan people in the contracts he entered into?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, as indicated, the people of Saskatchewan will recover all dollars with respect to this program. If Sensus is unable to come up with a meter that meets the needs of the people here in Saskatchewan, we will recover all of those dollars.

And perhaps the member opposite would indicate to the people of Saskatchewan, when you people were in charge, when you people were in charge and there were problems, why didn't you recover all of the money? In fact you recovered none of the money, Mr. Speaker. There are incident after incident after incident in this province where, when you people were in government, you received nothing back.

The Speaker: — I'd like to remind both the government and the opposition to put their questions and responses through the Chair. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it seems the minister is a tad worked up. Maybe it's because he had a scapegoat for lunch, Mr. Speaker. What part of Minister Responsible for SaskPower doesn't that minister understand? The minister's fingerprints are all over this file. For the minister to throw SaskPower under the bus but refuse to take responsibility

himself is utterly shameful. The safety and property of Saskatchewan families were put at risk by this government. That minister failed to do his homework and sold out Saskatchewan people, their safety, and their hard-earned money.

To the minister: why won't he do the right thing finally here today, take responsibility, and submit his resignation as minister? And if not, will the Premier do the right thing and scrap that minister's responsibilities?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, even if I believe this warranted a ministerial resignation, and I do not, it was actually not this minister in place in terms of SaskPower responsibility at the outset when these decisions were taken over at SaskPower.

Having said that, I do not believe this incident warrants a ministerial resignation or the call for a resignation. And here's why, Mr. Speaker: I think Saskatchewan people want those in elected office to act in the interests of their safety. And as soon as there was a concern with respect of safety — Mr. Speaker, on the part of the minister, not SaskPower — on the part of the minister, action was taken to remove the meters.

We would also, I think Saskatchewan people would expect that the ministers of the Crown would act to ensure the financial interests of the taxpayers. And in this case all the money will be recovered, all the interests are assured. I think Saskatchewan people would also want a minister of the Crown to act transparently. And in this case with the Minister of SaskPower and the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], a thorough review has been conducted that looked at the legal implications here, the technical aspects of it, and the financial aspects. And, Mr. Speaker, all of it was released to the public.

That member called into question these three groups, Ritenburg & Associates, the law firm in PwC [PricewaterhouseCoopers], called into question their independence. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is a full, independent report was done, released to the public. The transparency is there. That is exactly I think the actions that the people of this province expect on behalf of ministers of the Crown. And that's exactly what happened in this case.

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

Lloydminster Seniors' Care Facility

Ms. Chartier: — There's a group in Lloydminster called Concerned Citizens for Senior Care, and they have a good plan to improve seniors' care in their region. They want to save and refurbish the Dr. Cooke Extended Care Centre because of the tremendous need for more seniors' care spaces and services in their community. But they say this government refuses to listen to them. Instead this government continues to be full of excuses and keeps hiding behind the fact that Lloydminster is a border city. But that excuse doesn't fly, Mr. Speaker.

This government just updated the bi-provincial health agreement for that city, and the Dr. Cooke facility is officially listed as an asset of the Saskatchewan's Prairie North Health Region. Why is this government ignoring the people of Lloydminster who have good ideas about how to improve seniors' care in their community?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we are responding to the health care needs of people of Lloydminster. That's why we put together a committee that involved both Alberta Health Services, the Ministry of Health, Prairie North Health Region, members of the community. That's why we now have a new MOU [memorandum of understanding] that will guide the actions of all of those agencies over the next number of years. That's why we have put money into primary health care in terms of the Co-op Plaza Building, which thankfully Alberta has also put, invested dollars into that facility to bring primary care under one roof.

We've also invested in Home First/Quick Response. Lloydminster is our fourth community to have that \$750,000 program to help those seniors in their own homes, stay in their own home longer, especially after an acute care episode where they do not need long-term care. Alberta has invested into that program, and we're thankful for that.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that Alberta has agreed to build a new 60-bed long-term care facility which will replace the 55 beds that have been called for to be demolished over the next number of years, and so we'll actually have a net five-bed increase in Lloydminster.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, the seniors in Lloydminster say they are sick and tired of falling through the cracks because they live in a border city. It is absolutely unacceptable for this government to pretend it can't do anything to stop the closure of a major wing of the Dr. Cooke Extended Care Centre. This government has a bi-provincial health agreement with the Government of Alberta, and once again the Dr. Cooke facility is officially listed as an asset of Saskatchewan's Prairie North Health Region.

To the minister: when will he stop with the unbelievable excuses and start delivering for the seniors of Lloydminster?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the Dr. Cooke building is operated by Prairie North Health Region but it is owned by the Government of Alberta. There have been two reports calling for that wing of the Dr. Cooke facility to be demolished — one written under this government, the first written when the NDP were the government. So this is a long-term . . . This has been something a long time coming, Mr. Speaker.

Alberta, what they have decided to do, based on the fact that they own the Dr. Cooke facility, they've agreed to demolish the

55-bed wing. But they've agreed to build a 60-bed facility that will be on the Alberta side of the border, but that will be operated by Prairie North Health Region, which means the people of Lloydminster not only will have Home First/Quick Response to help those seniors stay at home longer, but they'll actually have five additional beds than what they currently have today in Lloydminster.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Immigration and Tourism.

Edible Oils Dispute

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to inform members of the Legislative Assembly about the latest developments in the internal trade dispute our government has with the Government of Quebec over edible oils. Members will recall that back in January we successfully challenged Quebec through an AIT [Agreement on Internal Trade] trade dispute resolution process.

We challenged Quebec's restrictions preventing the sale and marketing of certain margarines, coffee whiteners, and dessert toppings in their market. Those restrictions deny market opportunities to Western oilseed producers and processors and fly in the face of well-established internal trade rules.

[14:15]

Our challenge was supported by the governments of Alberta, British Columbia, and Manitoba. A dispute resolution panel established under the AIT came down with its decision on April 30th ruling in our favour. The panel ruled that Quebec's restrictions unfairly deny market opportunities for our Western oilseed farmers and processors and are contrary to Quebec's trade obligations under the Agreement on Internal Trade.

The panel instructed Quebec to bring its dairy regulations in line with its AIT obligations. Quebec decided to appeal the panel's decision, which brings us to today and the public appeal panel hearing that's taking place here in Regina. The Quebec government presented its case this morning and our lawyers have been arguing our case this afternoon before the panel. I should note that this is the first time that the appeal process has been used under the AIT, so we're in new territory for the role of an appeal panel. The panel will make its ruling on the appeal within 90 days.

Mr. Speaker, our government's confident that the panel will once again rule in favour of Saskatchewan and the other Western provinces that have supported our challenge. The challenge has also been backed by producers from the Vegetable Oil Industry of Canada. Saskatchewan's committed to fighting for free trade within Canada, and Saskatchewan continues to stand up for our oilseed producers and processors in their quest to market and sell their products in all parts of Canada.

I know that all members of this House will join with me in supporting our government's principled stand in this fight for trade fairness in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the minister as well for providing the statement, his statement in advance. And as I've said on this matter before, this is an important matter. It's important to oilseed producers and farmers across our province and Western Canada, and certainly we support the efforts of that minister, this government on this front. We wish them well in the appeal process that they're engaged with right now. We thank as well the other Western provinces for working together as allies on this important file — Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia. And certainly we're looking forward to a favourable, a fair, an important ruling for Saskatchewan oilseed farmers and producers. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

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. Tochor, seconded by Mr. Lawrence, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Wotherspoon.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, governing and leadership is often thought to be different things, but they shouldn't be. They can't be, especially in times of trouble. Last Thursday as Her Honour read the Throne Speech, I listened and tried to put it in context, given the events in Ottawa earlier that day and the tragedy just days before in Quebec.

We do not live unto ourselves here in this incredible place, in this building, in this Saskatchewan. We are part of a world that is changing, and far too often it is a troubled and violent place. I believe that it will and it must call up out of each one of us a strength of character that we may not know that we possess.

What we all admire about the men and women of the military and our first responders is their willingness to always walk towards the danger, to confront the unknown or the unexpected head on. And we must take a page from their book, because our best defence will be as a result of preparation and planning and focus and taking risks. It's all about leadership.

Too often politics is swayed by cable TV or political correctness. The water is tested or the political pulse is taken before there is action. Too often in politics we wait for a parade to form, and then we rush to the front to lead. But that's not how my government operates. With preparation and focus we will continue to lead this province and, by example, our country forward. We will face challenges, and we'll lead the parade of those who want freedom and democracy and pragmatic responses to very complicated issues. That's how the new Saskatchewan works and that's how our government leads.

What happened in Ottawa and Quebec is despicable. Our hearts are with the families of those who lost their loved ones to senseless violence. But we will respond to terror with resolve. We will preserve our way of life. We will preserve our political freedoms. We will preserve our diversity and our tolerance. And, Mr. Speaker, we will not be changed by these events, nor will we compromise our values or our freedoms. But we will resolve to look the bullies in the eye and say, not here, not now, not in Saskatchewan, not in Canada, not ever.

Mr. Speaker, what we love about our province and our country is that there are so many more Corporal Nathan Cirillos and Warrant Officer Vincents than there are cowards who do not deserve to be named. But we'll respond. All of us as individuals will step up and we'll be vigilant. We must. If we see something, we must say something. We cannot and we will not make excuses for those who seek to undermine us by abusing the very freedoms that gave them the right to do so in the first place, the very freedoms that have been so hard won.

Remembrance Day is just around the corner. And lest we forget those who sacrificed so much so we can have our extraordinary fortune, we will in their honour and respect to their sacrifices not be changed by this.

Our Throne Speech was delivered despite the violence. We gathered here in our institutions because they are strong. Our MPs [Member of Parliament] gathered in parliament and they carried on. We're going to be more vigilant as citizens and as governments. But our values will prevail because they are the core of freedom and democracy and civility. Our security rules and the systems may change but our sense of self will never. As leaders, those of us who are charged with governing through uncertain times, our government will move forward on behalf of the people of this wonderful province.

Mr. Speaker, the message given by Her Honour last Thursday outlining the goals of our government in the next year blends the definition of leadership and governing. It outlines the preparation and focus on the huge responsibility we know we were given at the last election. The Throne Speech was planned and printed before the tragedy, but one could read it believing it was a result of the tragedy.

The message, keeping Saskatchewan strong, is a promise of security for our citizens, security for all our citizens, knowing their government is aware and has plans for issues of government responsibility. Security in knowing things like health care, knowing that the Patient First Review will guide our goal of making the system more responsive, more effective, and more efficient.

Security knowing that the education system will work with all of its partners to develop a system that truly puts students first, whether it's in our K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system or in the post-secondary system. The education providers and the bricks and mortar around them play a vital role in training the leaders of tomorrow.

Security knowing that agriculture is a huge contributing factor to our economy today and into the future. It's always been the backbone of rural communities, but additionally we know that the value-added opportunities in agriculture is a huge part of the

growth plan in the future.

There is security knowing that environmental issues are not at odds with economic objectives.

There is securities for First Nations, knowing they must be and they are an integral part of our province's future.

There's security for those planning to invest in businesses that want to look beyond the borders of Saskatchewan with a new-growth tax incentive to create new corporate offices and head offices here in our province. There's a new-growth tax incentive tied to the creation of new jobs by manufacturers and processors as they expand their sales outside the province. There's security for business and investors, knowing this government understands the need for new markets and free trade and the need for leadership and dispute resolution.

But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, there's security for all of our citizens knowing they are the heart of our province, that enabling them to meet their personal goals and expectations is the key to Saskatchewan being the best place in the world to live, and through immigration, perhaps the world.

Mr. Speaker, the key is being able to meet personal . . . is to meet the personal goals through education and training to contribute to the economy so the economy can contribute to the personal life of each of us. There is security in knowing that you can provide for the people you love.

Business has told our government that the biggest obstacle to growth is the lack of skilled labour. We acknowledge that there are hundreds of people who want to fully engage in our economy but they're not ready. Therefore there is a great need for adult basic education services, and it remains a huge priority for our government. I know that even within the education seats there's even more need for life skill classes.

Mr. Speaker, the child and family committee members know that to address the issues facing very many of our vulnerable individuals, the adult basic education services are vital. That's why there's an 86 per cent increase in the number of seats since 2007.

Additionally our government recognizes that too many of our citizens, through no fault of their own, have involvement with more than one of our human service ministries. Health, Social Services, Corrections, Policing, Education, Justice have clients that need or are involved as high users of all of these ministries. Our Premier recognized this sad reality more than two years ago and created the child and family committee.

For too many years, programs have been reactive and not proactive. All governments wrestle with the outcomes of low education attainment, high crime rates, high incarceration numbers, poor health outcomes, and issues surrounding disability, mental health, and addictions, but always with reactive programming. Born from the stark reality of the needs of vulnerable people, the child and family committee has been part of initiating changes to break this cycle of despair and hopelessness.

The social innovation work is starting to make a difference. The

Hub model of crime prevention will be expanded to include 13 communities. The model is being studied in other jurisdictions in Canada and in the United States. Professional people are working together to address the specific needs of single individuals. Individuals leaving correctional facilities without having boots so they can go to work, without having a house for them to stay, and they're going to end up back in the system if we don't make some changes. Mr. Speaker, the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program and the disability strategy will be addressing those whose needs are beyond their own control.

We also recognize that the child welfare system is not about apprehending children but supporting families. It's making a difference in the lives of so many families in our province. The work of ministries and CBOs [community-based organization] like SIGN [Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours] and 601 Outreach and Prairie Spirit Connections, Kate's Place, and numerous others are making the feeling of family a reality. We have family resource centres in Yorkton and Sandy Bay that are making a huge difference.

We have a housing strategy with a commitment of over \$340 million. We have rental housing starts 34 times higher than they were in 2006, and Habitat for Humanity is giving people a home.

Mr. Speaker, Canada's very first social impact bond, Sweet Dreams, is providing at-risk moms with affordable housing and support while they complete their education. This innovative idea is making a difference. This government believes there is a social conscience in their citizens, and they have the desire to help government make some changes. I want to thank Wally and Colleen Mah at Conexus Credit Union for their support for this very important social impact bond.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe we can be leaders without trying different approaches. Obviously what was done in the past wasn't working. The number of children in care was increasing. The number of people on social services was increasing. The number of people needing adult basic education and job training was increasing. And government continued to do things the same way. The leadership promise in the Throne Speech regarding social impact bond opportunities is, in my opinion, the innovation that's going to make the biggest difference in the operation of government human services.

Within the next few months, the Minister of Health will be releasing the mental health and addiction strategy that will discuss one of the biggest gaps we have in health care in our province. It's an issue facing very, very many vulnerable people. And I want to publicly thank him for this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, there's also been much attention and discussion around a poverty reduction strategy. I congratulate the Minister of Social Services for announcing the development of this strategy. This support is enormous right across the entire political spectrum, and it's got to be evident even to the members opposite. The cross-ministry work already under way already has placed Saskatchewan at the second-lowest poverty level in Canada. We will continue to build on successes and work even harder to show Canada and the world that our very biggest natural resources are people, that citizens matter to all

of us in our government, and the strategy announcement will pull together the work across government to make us leaders.

Mr. Speaker, we already have adult basic education, the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, the SAID program, the disability strategy, a housing strategy, a soon mental health and addictions strategy, the Hub, family centres. Mr. Speaker, we're pulling all of this work together under the ministry, and we're so very proud of the work they're doing.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd also like to thank the Minister of Government Relations for his help in my town of Clair when there was a train derailment. There's a lot of people that work in emergency response that have made a difference and know that the safety feeling is so important to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, from the minute the people of Saskatchewan handed the responsibility of government to our party, we have always acknowledged that any success came not from government but from the people, the more than 1.125 million people who call Saskatchewan home.

Our government recognizes the responsibility that comes with leadership, the areas where government should be involved, and the areas where they just shouldn't. The Throne Speech stated clearly that our government will not spend one more taxpayer dollar on building liquor stores, Mr. Speaker, but we will invest money in highways, on infrastructure, schools, hospitals, long-term care facilities, water and sewer plants — the government responsibility that was handed to us.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to balance the budget. We'll continue to use innovation — be it through lean projects, partnerships with the private sector, community-based organizations, and taxpayers — to grow our province. We are going to continue to lead, to listen to our citizens, to keep Saskatchewan strong, and to build a future.

But if all remember, Her Honour's last words at the end of this speech was about honouring those who served. Mr. Speaker, recognizing the sacrifices made by men and women who choose to serve our country is so very important. As a 30-year associate member of the Legion, I'm going to ask that you repeat with me at the end.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

We will remember them.

Some Hon. Members: — We will remember them.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak, to respond to the Throne Speech. And in doing so, I'd just like to take a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, and touch on my own constituency who . . . The theme of this

Throne Speech is keeping Saskatchewan strong. And I know when I go home and go into any of the communities in my constituency, you can certainly see those strengths that are out there now, and I think it's very important that we keep building on those strengths and helping the people and assisting them in those communities to carry on with the good work that they're doing and creating what's created in this province.

Mr. Speaker, some of the good things that are happening out there in my constituency is, the community of Langenburg, who has been long in need of a brand new school out there, have put out tenders the other day. And guess what? We're getting a brand new school in the community of Langenburg. And I know the people of that community and the kids and the families of that community are certainly looking forward to a new school, and it'll certainly help to build the community of Langenburg going forward.

The community of Churchbridge, Mr. Speaker, has built a brand new pool. A couple of years ago, a number of community members had a building committee and a fundraising committee out there, and through their hard work, they have got together and built, I would say, a state-of-the-art community pool in the community of Churchbridge. And those types of endeavours help to bring people to their community, help young families to attract them to that community and build. And the numbers, I think we see the population jumping in all the small communities around.

Melville's another good example, which was a small city. And actually the numbers were below city status for a while under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, but now those numbers have grown again. Mr. Speaker, we saw the AgStability through Crop Insurance expansion out in the city of Melville, which has created a number of jobs in that community and surrounding area. And for that matter — my colleague from Yorkton will I think back me on this — there's a number of people from the city of Yorkton that actually work over in Crop Insurance through the AgStability program or the crop insurance program.

The city of Melville, again, as community members got together and had fundraising and building committees out there, built a brand new stadium out there. And there's a number of features to the new stadium. It's not just strictly hockey, Mr. Speaker, for the Melville Millionaires junior hockey club but for all the younger kids and all the minor hockey that goes on in that community, but seniors. There's a part of it is for seniors in that community, and there's a convention centre that's been utilized. There have been a number of occasions I had the good fortune to go to functions in the part that's a convention centre. And it holds I believe around 400, 450 people if it's full, Mr. Speaker, and just a good draw to the communities of Melville.

So many good things happening out there, Mr. Speaker. I think, as we all know, there's been mine expansions. I have the luxury of having a number of mines in my constituency, and those mine expansions have drew many young families into our area and again added to the population growth within this province.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I spent a number of years in this legislature under the NDP government, and we were of course in opposition. And I remember in our small communities — and I think everyone from a small community that's a represented

constituency in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, would back me on this — when you went into town or you went to get your mail or you went to coffee row, most of us knew everybody in town. In fact most of them you knew by their first name. And the reason for that, Mr. Speaker, was because there was no new people coming into these communities. In fact one of the biggest events we used to have in our communities was going-away parties because many of the people in our communities were leaving for Alberta or Ontario or greener pastures somewhere, under an NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, I think some of the key things that happened in those communities many of us will never forget. If you had a house to sell, in fact some of these people that were moving out for greener pastures, Mr. Speaker, and they had a house and they were trying to sell it, in some cases you couldn't give it away. And there was nothing wrong with the houses. There was no one moving in or that would move in to rural Saskatchewan to buy it because there was no jobs. There was no optimism under the NDP, and there was really nothing drawing people back into the province.

Mr. Speaker, that has changed. I think every member from a rural constituency riding in this place will say one of the best signs we see at home is that we don't know half of the people in our communities. It's young families, young kids. And it's a growing province, and it's getting better, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to talk on the Throne Speech in a minute when I get to it, but I'm a little busy right now. Tough times to be a member of the NDP. You know, I've been listening out there. Since I've not been in cabinet, I have a bit more time to follow up on some of the things that are happening in here, especially when session's not on. You know, I follow Murray Mandryk of course — I couldn't miss — and some of the other columnists that write.

But I also listen to the members in the opposition, and I think, well, directly of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Rosemont. I find it amazing, as I'm sure some of my colleagues do, that when any of the media or anyone asks them about something they did under their 16 years of government, they're getting to the point where they're almost saying it right out loud that we weren't here then, so you can't blame us for this. Well those of us that have been here for a number of years find that really amazing because for 16 years the NDP, under Roy Romanow and Lorne Calvert, their main excuse was it was Grant Devine's fault. Everything was Grant Devine's fault, whether it was SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] or Navigata, whatever, you know, whatever ball they dropped that day, whether it was closing of 52 hospitals or the school closures.

I know they get up in question period and they'll say, well we need a new long-term care home here or we need a new school here. But I remember under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, the biggest thing they did to schools in rural Saskatchewan was close them. How many times did we have meetings where people from small communities would call us as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and say, can you help us out? They're going to close our school. Well that problem has changed dramatically now, Mr. Speaker. In fact they invite us now to meetings where they are actually planning for a new school and

meeting with the Minister of Education or the Finance minister or people like that, and progress is happening out there.

Mr. Speaker, I find it amazing that the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Rosemont are trying to distance themselves from the NDP. I actually wonder what the other members on the opposite side think of that because it's the NDP party that's got them here. They were elected by diehard members of the NDP, be it that there's only nine of them left, but there's still a few out there that are strong supporters. They must really frown on the Leader of the Opposition especially saying that I can't be blamed for Roy Romanow's record, or I can't be blamed for Lorne Calvert's record or Eldon Lautermilch.

Or I think of Clay Serby, who used to come from Yorkton. Remember Mr. Serby? He was going to do all these wonderful things. The member for Yorkton I know knows exactly what I say. He would go home and say one thing. He's going to do all this. I remember when he was in Agriculture, I couldn't believe what this guy was going to do. He was going to buy all the hog barns in the province and raise pigs. We know how that turned out. That wasn't a great venture. God help me, I was a cattle farmer. I'm glad he left cattle alone. Mr. Speaker, there was so many I can think of.

My brother-in-law, Mr. Upshall, he was Ag minister for a while. It wasn't Highways. I can't blame him for that, but I can sure blame him for the Agriculture portfolio.

But I remember the member for Athabasca was Highways minister. And now that same member, Mr. Speaker, gets up and says, you should be building this road up north, or you should be doing this to the highways. Mr. Speaker, that member was minister of Highways, who did absolutely nothing. And I know well, Mr. Speaker, about that member because I used to sit with him as a Liberal in this legislature. And that's one of the reasons that we're on this side in government and he's still on that side in opposition, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to be too critical of the members opposite. I remember from this side of the House, when we were over there in opposition and there was only eight of us, it's a big job, Mr. Speaker. But the problem is, the members of the opposition seem to have is that they're critical of everything that's happening in the province of Saskatchewan.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the Premier, the Premier will be the first one to say that it's not all the Government of Saskatchewan that's creating all the prosperity in this province. It's the people of Saskatchewan. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? Before that party opposite, before those members on the other side of this House ever get an opportunity to get over here, they have to understand that, that it's the people . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — I'd ask the member from Athabasca to come to order. Currently the member from Saltcoats-Melville has the floor. Other members will have their opportunity to enter into the debate. I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope it's

nothing I said, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's so many good things happening in this province. I guess it's a waste of time to really talk about the members opposite record.

But, Mr. Speaker, in June employment hit a record high of 577,000 people working in our province. Mr. Speaker, that's just a tremendous sign of what's to come, and that's why the Throne Speech talked about keeping Saskatchewan strong.

In July, Mr. Speaker, unemployment hit a record low of 3.2 per cent — the lowest unemployment rate ever recorded. Mr. Speaker, a short seven or eight years ago, this was unheard of, stats like this, where we're either leading the country or right along, right with Alberta, the top in most categories, right across the country of Canada. Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan had the lowest unemployment rate and the fastest rate of job creation anywhere in the country of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, all of these things are happening with a balanced budget, and we want to thank the Minister of Finance and treasury board and all of those members that put in many, many hours to make sure that the budget is balanced, as well as helping to promote the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, since 2008, ministries and Crown corporations have spent \$16 billion on a range of capital projects including hospitals, highways, schools, and power plants, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to touch in a minute, and just before the member from Athabasca got a little riled up on the other side, I was talking about highways and how he was minister and things didn't seem to improve much. But I have to commend our Minister of Highways, Mr. Speaker. And one of the areas specifically is the passing lanes where I go when I go home and back and forth into Regina, is the passing lanes from Balgonie to Fort Qu'Appelle. And, Mr. Speaker, from all the people that I've talked to, and many of them travel for health care or whatever it is where they come into the city, they say this is one of the most positive things out there. Even from a safety aspect when people that would normally, in some cases, be in a bit of a hurry and pull out to pass when it wasn't safe or when it was storming, well, Mr. Speaker, now I've noticed that pretty well all of the traffic, maybe with the odd exception, waits for the passing lanes, takes their opportunity and passes, and that congestion has certainly been relieved to a great extent.

Mr. Speaker, there's a number of projects happening under Highways. On Highway 16 of course, the work is beginning on the twinning project from Saskatoon to Clavet for the expansion and the twinned highway there. On Highway 7, new passing lanes between Delisle and Rosetown are under construction. And I was by there the other day, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure they're going to be appreciated every bit as much as they are from Balgonie to Fort Qu'Appelle. Mr. Speaker, also pre-construction work continues on the twinning of Highway 7 from Vanscoy to Delisle and Highway 6 and 39 from Regina south to Estevan.

All these communities of course know the need of these highways and how urgently it's needed and these things, thanks to the Minister of Highways and the government of the day, these things are beginning to happen. So certainly every time I come by those passing lanes in Balgonie to Fort Qu'Appelle, I

thank our Minister of Highways for those changes and that efficiency that he's helped bring out there.

Mr. Minister, over the last seven years, our government has spent more than 700 million on education infrastructure — a 268 per cent increase. Forty new schools have been built or else are in the planning stage. This year, new schools have opened or will open soon in Swift Current, Lloydminster, White City, Regina, and Saskatoon. And again, Mr. Speaker, I mention the one in Langenburg in my community that's starting to be built very quickly and hopefully by the fall of 2016 is ready for students. Also, Mr. Speaker, I should mention schools in La Ronge and Lumsden have overgone major renovations.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, this province, and I know the municipalities especially because I have had some experience out there and I had it under the NDP — in fact it's one of the reasons I actually got into politics — but are very appreciative about the funding and the revenue sharing coming from this government in the last seven years. The 1 per cent of the PST [provincial sales tax], Mr. Speaker, is a reliable part of the funding that they know every year ahead of time what they're going to get. It was something that we didn't know before. And, Mr. Speaker, we went through the '90s under the NDP government where municipalities of all sizes were cut in funding dramatically out there, at a time when we needed, if we were ever going to grow, we needed that expansion of funding.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the ag sector. I might mention, Mr. Speaker, a large part of the ag sector, Mr. Speaker, has had one of the best crops they've ever had last year in 2014. But also this year, we've had flooding out there again. From last year, Mr. Speaker, to maybe what would be an average crop out there and, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government House Leader has raised a point of order. I would ask him to make his point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Just moments ago the member from Athabasca was heard by many members, I believe on both sides of the House, uttering a phrase of profanity and unparliamentary language. Again, it was heard by various members in the legislature. We would ask at this time that he do the honourable thing, withdraw and apologize for that remark. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I guess we'll take the point of order under advisement from our side. But given the inability of members to comment on the presence or absence of members, I'm a bit constrained in the remarks I'm able to make at this time. But in that case, Mr. Speaker, I think I'll turn the floor over to my colleague, the

member from Athabasca.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Having got caught up in the moment, I find that the comments I made were not appropriate. So therefore I apologize and I withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker: — Thank you. I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I was saying, I think I'd be remiss in replying to this Throne Speech about agriculture, Mr. Speaker, and the large part that agriculture plays in the province of Saskatchewan. As we all know, Mr. Speaker, last year was a record crop in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, yourself included, and many on this side of the House that are involved in the farming community out there yet, I think we had a crop last year that we can only envy probably for many years. And hopefully though we get the opportunity to have more like that.

This year, not quite so good, Mr. Speaker: probably on average, an average crop right across the province. But on my side on the east side of the province, Mr. Speaker, and I know right down to the US [United States] border, very, very wet again this summer. A number of areas flooded out there. So the crops and the production and the grades will not be probably as good as we would like to see them, Mr. Speaker. But on the other hand, I think it's one of those crops, Mr. Speaker, that we've been there before. We've actually had a lot worse than this. And I think the grades have probably been lower in some cases other years, but we'll certainly get through.

But I think why I mention this, Mr. Speaker, is once again we want to thank the farming community for the part that they play in this province, the part that they help to the growth of this province. And, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the pluses, and I think we all many of us that are getting a little grey hair or maybe no hair left at all, remember very well where agriculture was the main engine of this province and when agriculture didn't go, the whole province was in trouble.

Well now with the diversity that's coming in our economy right across, whether it's oil and gas or potash or uranium or so many other things, Mr. Speaker, with the growth that we're seeing in our cities, it's almost a mushrooming effect.

You know I can think of the city of Yorkton, Mr. Speaker, where I do a lot of our business, a lot of people from my community either in Melville or in Yorkton go. And I know my colleague from Yorkton will back me on this: it's so good to see up there, whether it's new immigrants that have moved into our cities and towns out there, but that are filling jobs out there that are very, very much needed in those communities. And I know a lot of businesses out there without these immigrants would have a very, very hard time running their business and having the service provided. And we very much appreciate that.

So, Mr. Speaker, being that I've taken probably more than my fair share of time, I would just like to thank the people of the Melville-Saltcoats constituency, Mr. Speaker, and appreciate

the opportunity to respond to the Throne Speech.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Greystone.

Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am delighted and honoured to be able to stand and speak in support of the 2014 Speech from the Throne which opened this, the fourth session of the twenty-seventh legislature of Saskatchewan. And while the speech will focus and give due attention to the Speech from the Throne, I have some initial comments, perhaps not surprisingly, on themes that warrant some attention at this time.

First, and again not surprisingly given the events of the day, that is the events of October 22nd, the first relates to the indefensible, senseless, cowardly, and indeed craven attack on Corporal Nathan Cirillo, which itself, we saw that attack preceded by a couple of days in the hit-and-run death of Warrant Officer Vincent in Quebec. We know that these attacks — and in fact the subsequent attack, the armed assault in fact on the Parliament of Canada which highlighted key areas of courage and unique capacity of the Sergeant-at-Arms, among many others — when we see attacks like this on prized Canadian institutions, we know that in a combined, collective, and civic sense of clarity, there is much to be thankful for as we live in the democratic state that we do in the Western world.

Within this Legislative Assembly, decisions were made. Appropriate decisions were made. Timely decisions were made: first to move the ceremonies inside, thereby ensuring the safety and security of members of our armed forces, and secondly, and importantly, to carry on among the most basic, fundamental, and foundational aspects of our democracy, especially as we know it within the parliamentary system, our Throne Speech. That speech on that day, under those circumstances, demonstrated that even — or perhaps most especially — on a Canadian day of infamy, that our freedom to assemble and to deliberate and to take decisions on behalf of citizens and constituents would not be deterred nor denied.

There are a number of thanks to those who participated in those decisions: to our Speaker, to our own Sergeant-at-Arms, and to leaders here within the Assembly, but most especially in a number of security forces that ensured the safety of the endeavour of that day.

As I prepared aspects of my remarks, I thought it would be relevant to look at what a Throne Speech was in the past. And so I thought perhaps most fittingly a century in the past, and I went back to 1914, to the opening months of the First World War. And there on page 10 of *Hansard* from September 15th, 1914, there are some phrases that both resonate and indeed offer reassurance even today.

The first from 1914 is a notion of a unity of sentiment, which certainly we see in Saskatchewan and across Canada in the subsequent days after these attacks. The second phrase is the notion of "... a steady determination and calm confidence regarding an honourable outcome." This notion of a unity of sentiment combined with steady determination, they offer clear messages for all of us as we reflect on more recent events about the role of our institutions, our communities, in fact the very

nature of citizenship in both Saskatchewan and Canada.

The second set of preliminary remarks will simply and sincerely offer a thanks to the people of Saskatoon Greystone, my legislative colleagues, and of course friends and family members that have supported, enabled, encouraged, and on occasion endured my presence and service in this Assembly. There are not many more occasions that I will have to stand and speak to this Assembly, and so I will simply offer my sincere thanks with great humility and a sense of honour at the opportunity at having been allowed to serve in the capacities that I have.

And now to the topic of this day, of our deliberations and the Speech from the Throne. There are several themes that stand out. One has been mentioned and highlighted by others, the notion of keeping Saskatchewan strong. And when we think about that strength, we think about the number of people working. That really helps reflect the number of families that are prospering.

So when we think about in June employment hitting a record of more than 577,000 people working in our province; or in July where the unemployment rate hit a record low of 3.2 per cent, the best unemployment rate ever recorded; or in September, where Saskatchewan had the lowest unemployment rate and the fastest rate of job creation anywhere in Canada — all this as Saskatchewan has another balanced budget, all of this while Moody's upgraded Saskatchewan's credit rating to a AAA, the highest possible credit rating — this is significant in an era that has seen credit ratings put in question and jeopardy around the world. For the first time in our history, we see AAA credit ratings.

So if we are seeing a Saskatchewan that is strong, we also see a province that's on the move. Indeed Saskatchewan's population today is more than 1,125,000 people, representing an increase of more than 120,000 people in the last seven years: (a) it sets a very, very clear pattern of growth that's being sustained and continued, (b) it highlights in stark contrast seven years since the 2007 election versus those preceding the 2007 election when population was on the decline.

And if we think of Tony Blair's simple, straightforward measure for a jurisdiction, it goes something like this: "Are people moving in or are people moving out?" And today in Saskatchewan, people are staying in Saskatchewan and moving to Saskatchewan because of the strength and momentum that is under way within this province, in large measure due to people right across this province, people right across this province who believe in investing in Saskatchewan and helping to grow the economy in communities of this province.

So if we think about a strong Saskatchewan, a province on the move, then we can also think about momentum. We can think about for example the first new potash mine to be built in the province in over 40 years, not far from Regina, the K+S Legacy project near Bethune. And we can think of additional employment opportunities that come from that kind of initiative.

We also see, if we look to the North — and we know how important the North is within our province — uranium

production is also on the rise in fact with the opening of Cameco's Cigar Lake mine, the first new uranium mine to be built in Saskatchewan in over a decade. And not so long ago we saw Saskatchewan uranium being unloaded, thanks to new export opportunities in China. We know how important this is, especially for northern communities and especially as it relates to First Nations and Métis employment opportunities.

We also are going to continue to focus on setting goals to help sustain and maintain the momentum that's under way. To meet a goal for example of doubling exports by 2020, we're going to introduce and see a movement on a new-growth tax incentive tied to the creation of new jobs by manufacturers and processors as they expand their sales outside of Saskatchewan.

[15:00]

And indeed we're going to continue to see trade missions undertaken with the assistance of the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership. This is vitally important and in fact we're delighted to help welcome Chad Fleck, the new CEO. He grew up in Saskatchewan, went to the University of Saskatchewan's Edwards School of Business, achieved an M.B.A. [Master of Business Administration], and was able to undertake some additional studies at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]. He has a distinguished foreign service record in both the Americas and in Asia and now he has moved back to Saskatchewan — one of our expats that is helping to ensure that we are better connected with trade opportunities, investment opportunities, and career prospects for Saskatchewan people.

When we think about what that looks like, we can also highlight that spirit of global engagement. In fact that's why we're supporting the comprehensive European trade agreement or CETA [comprehensive economic and trade agreement] which will open many new markets for Saskatchewan exports. We're also supportive of the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement which will give Saskatchewan exporters equal footing with their European and American counterparts in South Korea. That economy alone is a \$1.3 trillion economy and a real opportunity for Saskatchewan exporters to continue to ensure that our record exports continue with momentum.

It's not enough to simply look outside of Canada for opportunities. Our Premier and our government understands that there's a leadership role to play to help ensure that we're strengthening Canada's Agreement on Internal Trade because barriers remain in place between provinces, and we know that we must continue to work on lowering and removing these barriers.

When we think about that sense of a strong Saskatchewan — Saskatchewan on the move and of a Saskatchewan that has momentum, where we're globally engaged and also focused on ways to enhance confederation — we understand the value of our most precious resource, that is, our human resource, our neighbours. That's why our province continues to invest in key areas of post-secondary education and skills training. In fact what we're going to see is, in the upcoming fiscal year we will increase the number of adult basic education seats by 775. We know how important these seats are. And in fact that will help bring the total number of seats to more than 9,300 which is an increase of 60 per cent since 2007. We're also going to see our

government boost the number of apprenticeship seats by 300, bringing the total number of seats to 7,000, an 86 per cent increase since 2007.

This marks and continues the progress that we've been able to demonstrate, that is investing in Saskatchewan young people, especially with an emphasis on First Nations and Métis young people to help ensure that we're bridging and eliminating the education and employment gaps that for too long have offered barriers to too many within our Saskatchewan. We're investing in our young people. We're attracting back our expats, and we're welcoming newcomers from across the country and around the world.

This sense of a strong Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan that is on the move, that is a Saskatchewan that has real momentum, a Saskatchewan that's investing more in our young people to ensure that more families have more opportunities right here in the province is also complemented by our investment in infrastructure, in the needs of communities. In fact since 2008, ministries and Crown corporations have invested close to \$16 billion on a range of capital projects including hospitals, highways, schools, and power plants.

Not that long ago, Mr. Speaker, we had an opportunity to see the value in this kind of investment as people gathered in Saskatoon for the official opening of the construction for our children's hospital. That's not simply about Saskatoon. That's about serving the needs of a growing Saskatchewan, especially the needs of our kids and our young families. We are making and we are overseeing an investment, a record investment that's helping to build the new Saskatchewan.

Speaking directly within Saskatoon Greystone, we can see that kind of progress highlighted by the construction that's under way at St. Matt's, at a school that continues to see increasing enrolments, needed more capacity, and now we see the construction well under way.

Another example of these kind of investments relates to the brand new school that I just had a tour of in La Ronge that, thanks to the vision that was offered by this side of the House, by our government, of providing more opportunities for more students, in this case in and around La Ronge and Air Ronge and to those that come in from the Lac La Ronge First Nation.

When we think about other aspects of the work that's highlighted in the Speech from the Throne, I think it's important that we highlight that our government is set to amend *The Human Tissue Gift Act* to help modernize Saskatchewan's organ donation and transplant process to reduce wait times for people who need organ transplants. Among those who will benefit are 100 people who have waited up to two years for a cornea transplant, a straightforward initiative that's going to enhance the quality of life for people right here in the province by taking this important action and moving forward on it.

When we look at other initiatives that have been highlighted, we see that we continue to support communities. In fact as a result of the province's predictable and sustainable revenue-sharing program, municipalities already know that they will receive record revenue sharing, in fact in the order of about \$265 million in next year's budget — more than double what it

was when our government took office. And we know how important those dollars are regarding the quality of life for people across Saskatchewan.

We can also see continued investments in post-secondary education. Programs like the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings, and the graduate retention program are all helping to ensure that post-secondary education continues to be increasingly affordable and accessible but is also defined by that spirit of excellence. In fact for the graduate retention program, we anticipate that this year there will be between 50 and 60,000 graduates who are participating in and benefiting from this remarkable program, remarkable because it's helping to ensure that Saskatchewan's young people are staying right here and contributing to the growth and success of their province.

We've also seen that through recent legislation and other initiatives that the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology has officially become known as Saskatchewan Polytechnic. This offers that institution an opportunity to modernize as it provides a broader array of programs serving the needs of more Saskatchewan students but also more Saskatchewan employers.

When we think about key areas of innovation, obviously the recent launch of Boundary dam 3 offers the world with a fully integrated post-combustion carbon capture system, the likes of which is unique. This is a leading initiative for the world. It's a defining feature that will help to remove the equivalent of more than 250,000 vehicles off Saskatchewan roads each year. And we know that this kind of initiative is going to help to ensure that we in Saskatchewan can continue to rely upon our coal reserves and at the same time help clean up that coal and help pay greater attention to our environment.

We also see that through the construction of Saskatchewan's cyclotron and radioisotope facility at the University of Saskatchewan, this laboratory, which I have had the opportunity to have a tour of, offers a unique partnership between the federal government and the province and the university with real outcomes. That is providing Saskatchewan researchers with the resources they require to develop radiopharmaceuticals, that is drugs containing radioactive materials that will help in both the diagnosis and treatment for people in this province. And these drugs can be utilized to detect, diagnose, and treat diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and MS [multiple sclerosis].

These are the kind of initiatives and innovations that are helping to enhance the quality of life for people in Saskatchewan, while also helping to ensure that we're adding value to value change that reach all the way back to our natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, another area that I think warrants specific mention relates to an initiative that is public and private in its character. It focuses on providing more opportunities for young mothers and their kids. It makes sense, and it's going to help make a real difference. And that is, our government was pleased to announce earlier this year the opening of Sweet Dreams, the new home in Saskatoon that's going to provide at-risk single mothers with affordable housing and support while they

complete their education and learn life and parenting skills.

This project — and this is important — this project was made possible through a social impact bond funding model, the first of its kind in Canada, with key private partners including Colleen and Wally Mah as they stepped forward and said, let's use social innovation to help families, to help our kids, and to help our communities.

During the Banff Forum, which was held in Saskatoon in September, this very model was drawn upon by a speaker from outside of Canada to highlight the progress that Saskatchewan and Canada continue to make in key areas of social innovation that is helping to address the endemic causes of poverty and disadvantage through new, creative, and courageous ways of moving forward.

In that same spirit, the Speech from the Throne consisted of a living document, as the minister has now come to characterize it, a living document that relates to a poverty reduction strategy. And we want to thank the organization of Poverty Costs for its work on this important issue. And we also want to highlight the work of individuals like Alison Robertson, Dr. Ryan Meili, and Dr. Cory Neudorf who have stepped forward, along with others, to ensure that we focus on reducing poverty and really providing more opportunities for more people to reach their full potential here within Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as the speech drew to a close and indeed as my comments draw to a close, there was an opportunity to honour those who serve, which seems most fitting especially in this time where we reflect on events of last week. We were able to see that within the Speech from the Throne the Saskatchewan Scholarship of Honour was highlighted. This is an initiative that since 2009, when we established it, continues to provide a \$5,000 scholarship available to returning military personnel and to those severely injured or those that have paid the ultimate price in their service. We think this is an important gesture, a sincere gesture of our eternal thanks for service to this great country of Canada.

So as I look back 100 years to the Speech from the Throne from 1914, I found that there was another phrase that captures something that's permanent within Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan's contribution to Canada: that is, a notion of a direct contribution. Then there was a notion of direct contribution to a war effort that was beginning. In this sense, we hope there's a direct contribution and sincere sign of appreciation for those that have served their country so ably.

Mr. Speaker, with these themes in mind, and with great appreciation for the opportunity to be able to speak in this Assembly this afternoon, I'm very pleased to be supporting this Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

[15:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, as we round the corner to Remembrance Day, and before I get into my formal reply to the Throne Speech, I want to add condolences on

behalf of my constituents, my family, and my friends to the families of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo.

There is no greater sacrifice than one's life to stand up for the values that all Canadians believe in. I also want to add my personal thank you to these officers and to all military officers for their continuing vigilance, courageousness, and willingness to stand guard to defend our democracy.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I wish to formally thank all our security personnel, those that protect all who enter into our Legislative Assembly, and the police and the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers that so quickly came last week to help us provide a safe venue for all our guests, our staff, and parliamentarians.

Last week our province hosted heads of mission from Ottawa's foreign diplomatic corps from more than 50 countries around the world. These ambassadors shared with me their admiration for our great country of Canada. They were very interested in the opportunities that Saskatchewan has to offer. Despite the horrific and tragic events of the past week, they saw how our country rallied together, how our province refused to let democracy be thwarted. We went ahead with the Speech from the Throne. This Speech from the Throne highlighted our strong, growing province, the strength and determination of our people, and outlined our government's plan to keep Saskatchewan strong.

Mr. Speaker, I will also take a few moments to thank my dedicated team back home that help to keep my constituents apprised of what is happening in Prince Albert Northcote. They help me to get the answers that the constituents need. That team is Trudy Deranger, Brent Gerlach, Pam Sukut, and Donna Barr. I will also take a few minutes to thank the team of hard-working individuals behind the scenes right here in this building that help MLAs and ministers alike. Mr. Speaker, I won't name them all as that would take up the rest of my time. So thank you from the bottom of my heart to all the behind-the-scenes people for all that you do.

Mr. Speaker, there is one very special person that keeps me grounded and provides me with an unbiased perspective on the work that I do. He is my greatest supporter and strongest critic. Mr. Speaker, that man is my husband, Allan Jurgens, and he just quite possibly might be a saint in the making. You see, Mr. Speaker, Al and I celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary earlier this year.

Mr. Speaker, my extended family is a hard-working family, a family with many, many members. This summer three aunts and uncles on my father's side have died, all in their 90s. Each of these people had nearly a century of wisdom. Through the years I visited with these wise ancestors, with eight and nine decades of wisdom, and I learned how much better life in Saskatchewan is now, in the past seven years, than what it was in the past when the NDP were in power.

Here is one fine example of this. Peter Froess — my paternal uncle; bless his soul — was 92 years old when he died a couple of weeks ago. He comes from a family that were, and still are, a very gentle lot. Uncle Pete lived with my family and holds a

special place in my family's heart. Over 92 years Uncle Pete experienced many hardships, including when he was about 10 years of age when his shoes were put onto the door of the oven of the wood stove to dry. Well lo and behold, someone came along and closed the oven door and those shoes got dried up and burnt, rendered them useless. There was no money for a new pair. Now sometime in the past seven years, Uncle Pete felt fortunate enough to buy a frivolous item, a teddy bear for Peter, because as Uncle Pete said, he never ever had a teddy bear.

Mr. Speaker, it might seem like an insignificant event, but it is not. This man was born in 1922 and experienced first-hand many hardships the dirty thirties provided. There was no money for anything but the basic necessities. It is easy to see how our wise seniors find it very difficult to spend on frivolous items. This story gives us a powerful example of how much better our province is doing now.

Mr. Speaker, on the other side of my family is a long line of strong, hard-working, family-oriented women, women of courage. One of these women was my great grandma Elizabeth Bendig, bless her soul, who lived to be 101 years. She was our nah nah grandma. You see, Mr. Speaker, every time we went to see her she would say, "Nah, nah, nah, look who's come to see me." She was my maternal grandmother to my mother. I never did know my mother's mother. Elizabeth's daughter Matilda died when my mother was a wee child.

Great grandma Bendig was born in 1880 in another country. At the turn of the last century, Elizabeth was one of the many immigrants that left her home and everything she knew to come to this country seeking opportunity. There is not enough time to share the many trials, tribulations, and triumphs this woman had, but I will tell you that the impact and influence on our family was very strong.

Mr. Speaker, there is another strong woman in our family, our daughter-in-law Jarilyn who is married to our son Tyler. Jarilyn is a strong, hard-working, and courageous woman. She too was born in another country and left her home and everything she knew to come to Canada because of opportunity. I am witnessing first-hand the strong impact and influence Jarilyn has. Tyler and Jarilyn's daughter Jasmine Victoria is our newest granddaughter. As we witnessed Jasmine's baptism earlier this month, I wondered what Jasmine's future might be like if she lives to be 100.

Mr. Speaker, that is a peek into three centuries: past, present, and future. It is a privileged perspective. These women give life to Saskatchewan's motto, our motto, "from many peoples, strength."

At the turn of the last century, there was no Internet, no technology that would support the instant transmission of information. Today there is: technology that helps our province connect with each other and with the world, technology that allows and indeed encourages our citizens to provide feedback and suggestions for important initiatives such as the student-first consultation.

Mr. Speaker, more than 1,500 online submissions were received for this consultation alone. Our ability to connect with each other will be made stronger with upgrades to Internet access

and speed at regional colleges throughout the province and with improvements to high-speed Internet and cellphone services in hundreds of Saskatchewan communities.

Mr. Speaker, at the turn of the last century there was enthusiasm and excitement in this province. The population was growing. At the turn of this century, under NDP rule, there was doom and gloom. Our population was declining. People were leaving for opportunities elsewhere. Saskatchewan was a place to be from.

Today under the governance of the Saskatchewan Party government, Saskatchewan's population is at an all-time high. Over 1.125 million people now call Saskatchewan home. Our province remains on track to reach the population target our Saskatchewan Party government set, and that is to have 1.2 million people that call Saskatchewan home by the year 2020.

Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to work hard to keep Saskatchewan strong. A strong economy is the foundation of a strong province with an excellent quality of life for all our people. It is how we are able to spend money on health care, housing, education, and infrastructure, infrastructure that fosters innovation. Infrastructure such as Saskatchewan's cyclotron and radioisotope facility at the University of Saskatchewan that is in its final stages of construction. This \$25.5 million laboratory is a partnership between the federal government, the province, and the university. It is a laboratory that will provide Saskatchewan researchers with the resources they require to develop radiopharmaceutical drugs containing radioactive materials. These drugs can be used to detect, diagnose, and treat diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and multiple sclerosis.

Mr. Speaker, our province is rich with uranium deposits, uranium that is needed to produce the radioactive materials necessary to develop the radiopharmaceuticals needed to detect, diagnose, and treat these many diseases. Uranium production is increasing with the opening of Cameco's Cigar Lake mine, the first new uranium mine to be built in Saskatchewan in over a decade. This mining is an important source of employment for our northern residents. As of December 2013, there were 1,669 out of the 3,570 employees that are residents of Saskatchewan's North that are employed at northern mines. Mr. Speaker, it seems like many of the rest of them live in Prince Albert. Our airport has very large, dedicated parking lots for employees flying into our North to work in the mines. People that have First Nations and Métis heritage make up about 40 per cent of all mine workers employed in northern mines.

Employment at northern mines requires advanced skills and training. Potential employees told our government that they could not get that advanced training because there was this huge wait-list for adult basic education. We listened. We heard. We took action. In the upcoming fiscal year, our Saskatchewan Party government will increase the number of adult basic education training seats by 775, which will bring the total number of seats to 9,355. As well our government will boost the number of apprenticeship seats by 300, bringing the total number of seats to 7,000. That is an 86 per cent increase since 2007.

Saskatchewan's apprenticeship system is one of the strongest in Canada and a powerful tool in addressing the labour force

challenges we are facing. Thanks to the hard work of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission and the many teachers, mentors, and employers involved in the apprenticeship process, our people are gaining the skills and training needed to help keep Saskatchewan's economy strong. It is another way that we are working to ensure that all people in Saskatchewan have opportunities to participate in our strong economy, that all people have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency is rich with diversity — a diversity of people, educational institutions, businesses, and historical buildings, to name just a few. Nearly half of Prince Albert Northcote constituents have relatives living in our North, are from the North, or work in the North. This makes for very strong ties to Saskatchewan's North.

Mr. Speaker, I could not have been more pleased when our Premier asked me to be Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Government Relations, Northern Saskatchewan. Our Minister of Government Relations, the MLA from Rosetown-Elrose, and his ministry have been doing great work in our North.

The 2013 northern benefit summary gives an appreciation of how Saskatchewan and its people benefit from mine and mill operations located throughout the northern half of our province. Over 3,500 people are employed on site and over 40 per cent of the northerners that are employed as mine workers have a First Nations and Métis heritage. Many socio-economic benefits are provided by mining and mill operations such as scholarships and awards to northern students. The \$558 million in goods and services purchased from northern companies and the \$92 million in wages paid to northern employees goes a long way in creating a high quality of life for our northerners and the communities and their families.

[15:30]

As MLA for Prince Albert Northcote, I have listened to and welcomed the many discussions we have had on moving our province forward, of ways to keep Saskatchewan strong. As Legislative Secretary to Government Relations, northern Saskatchewan, I have listened to and welcomed the many discussions I've had with our northerners, from First Nations senators and leaders to mayors and councillors of northern towns, from fire chiefs to educators, from those that work with economic development to those that are working on the Community Mobilization initiative, or we call it the Hub.

Many people from the constituencies of Athabasca and Cumberland have shared with me their thanks to our government for helping our North prosper. They are excited about the new future of Saskatchewan. Their relatives and friends and business partners from the constituencies of Prince Albert Carlton and Prince Albert Northcote have also thanked me and our government for remembering all people in this great province.

That, Mr. Speaker, is so different from the doom and gloom the tired, old NDP keep espousing. Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca says the NDP will make a commitment to the second bridge in P.A. [Prince Albert]. Well, Mr. Speaker, that member's promise rings hollow. The record shows that when

the NDP were in power for 16 years, including the time when the member from Athabasca was Highways minister, the NDP reneged on all promises about our Diefenbaker bridge. The NDP refused to repair the bridge stating it's not their responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, our record is clear. Our promises are followed through on. Our commitment is strong. When our Diefenbaker bridge needed \$4.2 million worth of repairs to bring it back to primary weight standards, we, our Saskatchewan Party government, paid all costs. We stand behind our commitment to Prince Albert, to our North, and to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our government has partnered with the city of Saskatoon and the federal government on a P3 [public-private partnership] project to build the north commuter parkway bridge, and we have offered to enter into a similar partnership for a second bridge in Prince Albert.

We have invested \$2.5 million to raise the grade on three flood-prone sections of Highway 123 to Cumberland House, which is now completed. The new St. Louis bridge, located on Highway 2 over the South Saskatchewan River that we just opened this past weekend, replaces the century-old St. Louis Bridge. The new bridge will better serve the regional economy and create a safer and more efficient transportation corridor for shippers. It completes the final link in a 683-kilometre-long primary weight corridor on Highway 2 from Assiniboia in the South all the way to La Ronge in the North. These are but a few examples of how our government is committed to tackling our province's infrastructure deficit.

Since 2008 nearly \$16 billion has been spent on capital projects that include hospitals, highways, schools, and power plants. This year alone nearly \$3 billion has been committed to renew and expand infrastructure, but there is still more work to do.

To meet those challenges, we are leveraging the forces of innovation and competition through the use of public-private partnerships, or P3s. SaskBuilds has already initiated a number of P3s that will save millions of dollars. Our government is working to ensure opportunities for local businesses are maximized within existing trade agreements. Priority Saskatchewan, a new agency, is leading a cross-government review of current tendering practices. We have also launched a new SaskTenders website which will serve as the primary gateway to public sector procurement opportunities.

Yes, our focus is on the economy. When our economy is strong, our province and its people are strong. A strong economy gives us a broader tax base and more resources to invest in health care, housing, education, infrastructure, and a better quality of life for individuals and for families. In short, Mr. Speaker, we are investing in our people.

There will also be legislative changes to help police officers and the justice system better protect victims of domestic violence. There'll be an expansion of the Hub crime reduction model, a comprehensive review of child welfare legislation that will lead to improvements in laws that protect children, and a development of a poverty reduction strategy that builds on the government's significant effort to reduce poverty. These are among the many ways in which we are looking to keep

Saskatchewan strong.

Our strength comes from our people — their hard work, their determination, their ingenuity, and their generosity. These values will keep Saskatchewan strong and moving forward.

Our Premier is the first to say our province has what the world needs. We welcomed the comprehensive European trade agreement as it opens many new markets for Saskatchewan exports. The Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement will give Saskatchewan exporters equal footing with their European and American counterparts in South Korea's \$1.3 trillion economy.

The Speech from the Throne 2014 highlighted our strong, growing province, the strength and determination of our people, and outlined our plan to keep Saskatchewan strong. Mr. Speaker, our people are excited about the new Saskatchewan, about the opportunities to provide for our families and communities and about providing goods and services to the rest of the world. We are proud to be in Saskatchewan, the place to be. Mr. Speaker, I support the Speech from the Throne.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, Mr. Speaker, I would like to do what many of our colleagues have done, and I certainly want to thank our men and women of the armed services, our police, our security service within this building. These people are to be commended, Mr. Speaker.

The actions last week of terrorists against our democracy — and mark my words, Mr. Speaker, these people are terrorist thugs — will not deter or intimidate our democracy. Canada and the Western world has taken a blow but, Mr. Speaker, this has increased our resolve. And one thing these terrorists haven't grasped, Canadians have always been laid back and polite, but when we get mad, sir, we get even. These forces of evil don't realize the can of worms they have opened up. We have proved that at any war we have ever been in, Canadians will protect democracy and freedom until our last breath, and these terrorists had better watch their back because they just made us mad, Mr. Speaker. God bless Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I guess everybody wants to talk about their constituency, and I want to say a few things. First thing, I would like to thank the constituency of Carrot River Valley for the honour and the privilege of serving them for the last seven years. And it's a great constituency and I've said it many times. I know everybody in here says it. They think that they've got the best constituency in all of Saskatchewan.

A Member: — We do.

Mr. Bradshaw: — But my member from P.A. would probably argue with me on this, but I still think that Carrot River Valley has to be the nicest. Like I mean, we just got everything going for us there. We've got the forest. We've got the land. We've got the people. But it's really great, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm getting to that. One of my colleagues mentioned Carrot River also has the Wildcat football team. Now, Mr. Speaker, I will say that our team has run through this year. They had a bye this week. And the reason they had a bye

was because they finished first in their division, and their first playoff game is going to be this weekend, Mr. Speaker. And I will be there with my siren and my horn cheering them on as I'm almost positive that this year they will be going for another provincial championship. And I fully expect to see them in another provincial championship.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Cindy Warner and Shelley Meyer and Charlene Enns who are the constituency assistants in Carrot River Valley. And as we well know and everybody knows that the constituency assistants do yeomen jobs while we're out here doing our business within the House and whatnot. They're the ones that take care of things going back there and they do great work, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to thank the Premier for an outstanding Throne Speech. It's a building block, a moving forward to our vision for 2020, Mr. Speaker. And yes, I even want to thank the opposition even though I don't agree with them very often. Come to think of it, Mr. Speaker, I just can't recall the last time I ever did agree with them but, you know, that's democracy.

Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the member from Athabasca was saying, Mr. Speaker, I think the people from Carrot River Valley are quite content with how things are transpiring in Saskatchewan. And the reason I am saying that, well there's quite a few reasons, but our office has been very, very quiet. And you know, Mr. Speaker, that's a good sign when your office is quiet because you don't have people coming up and complaining.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to go back to Carrot River Valley and just let you know some of the things that have happened in the Carrot River Valley this year. One, we have a new school being built in Hudson Bay. It'll be coming on board next year. This is in contrast to, under the previous administration when they, 16 years, they closed down, I believe it was 176 schools, Mr. Speaker.

And the other thing is in rural Saskatchewan when I was first elected, our office was inundated with calls about health problems and people on waiting lists. You remember when we used to have the longest waiting lists in Saskatchewan. That wasn't very long ago, Mr. Speaker, and yes, there is work to be done on it but we are working on it contrary to what happened under the NDP. So that's a good thing.

At Cumberland College that this government built, a brand new building in Nipawin just a few years ago, you know that place is just about full. First off, they're doing a university course for nurses there at the present time. They're doing electrical courses. They're doing all sorts of different courses. They're helping out our Aboriginal community. We have Red Earth and Shoal Lake which are two reserves in Carrot River Valley constituency. These people can go and take their training and they can go and get their grade 12. They can go into a trade; they can even take university classes there. It helps them move forward, Mr. Speaker. And these are great things that we can see happening within Carrot River Valley.

I wanted to just go back to the health end just a little bit to show you how much things have improved, and I have a very personal story because it involved my wife, Terry, this year.

Now Terry had been having problems for quite some time that her back was bothering her and she just didn't quite know what was wrong. So consequently she was getting a massage over in Melfort and the person who was doing the massage said, you know, there's some kind of solidness within your abdomen, and she said, I want to send you for an ultrasound.

So Terry went and had an ultrasound and she had that ultrasound on July 15th. On July 17th they called her in and they said, you have a big problem. We don't know for sure what it is but we think it might be ovarian cancer, which was very, very scary for us. But they said, we're going to make an appointment with a gynecologist. On July 21st we had an appointment in Saskatoon with a gynecologist, went in, and he gave us great news. He said, yes, he said, you have a growth. He said, I believe it's a cyst but, he said, I don't believe it's cancerous. So that made us very happy. On the other hand, he said, it's going to be a pretty mean operation. So that was fine. But he said, I want to do a CT [computerized tomography] scan before we can even set up a date for an operation.

[15:45]

So they called back the following Monday. That happened to be on a Friday. On Monday they called back, and that was on the 25th I believe it was. And they said, we have you booked for the 28th for a CT scan. Or no, excuse me. I got my figures mixed up there just a little bit. On the 21st she was in to see the . . . she had the CT scan. On the 25th they called back up and said to have an appointment. That was on the 28th then, she had an appointment, and booked the operation for August the 8th. Mr. Speaker, that's less than a month from the time that they first discovered this, from the time that they did the ultrasound, until she went in and had her operation.

And it was non-cancerous, so the surgeon was right. So you know, this was great news for us and a very scary thing for something like that to happen. But, Mr. Speaker, needless to say it was a very large operation, and she's been off work. Actually she just starts work this coming week again. And she can't lift all that much, but I'm quite sure that, you know, by the time we start getting heavy snowfall that she'll be ready to go out and start shovelling the driveway again. So I'm really happy about that part of it.

Mr. Speaker, I just can't help, when I'm standing up here speaking on, talking about our member from Athabasca across the way because, Mr. Speaker, he always gives me lots of ammunition. And I happened to pick up *Hansard*, and I've got a few things that he's said that I, you know, I'd just like to kind of bring up, and different things that he talked about. He said — and I'm going to quote out of *Hansard* — when he's talking about the Saskatchewan Party government he said, "They've worked hard to get rid of a lot of teachers."

Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. It was that government that shut down 176 schools. It was that government, that previous, that NDP government who were sending all of our kids out to Alberta to go to work. It was that government that had no vision, no vision for an increase in population in Saskatchewan. And he said, and I want to quote again, "They've worked hard to get rid of a lot of teachers." We're the building schools, Mr. Speaker. When you're building schools, you have to have teachers. You know,

it just kind of goes hand in hand. So consequently there's more and more teachers going to work. And I am very happy about that because my daughter finished university in education and she is working, not part-time work, not just here and there, be whatever. She's not working in Alberta. She's not working in British Columbia. She's working right here in Saskatchewan in one of the schools. She is a school teacher.

Mr. Speaker, there's other things that he said in here, and I want to quote again, "And then people in northern Saskatchewan see all this, and they ask questions of, why aren't they addressing the agriculture issues?" Mr. Speaker, you know, if I was somebody from the other side, I would be embarrassed to even bring up anything about agriculture, like, coming from a government that basically tried to shut down rural Saskatchewan, shut down 52 hospitals in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Think of it. Ripped up the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] contract that the farmers signed in good faith, just went and ripped it up. What did they ever do? Sat there and argued every year about how to fund crop insurance, kept the crop insurance people over in Winnipeg. That was really handy. Fortunately our original Ag minister saw light to that right away and said, we're going to fund, we're going to fund crop insurance, and we're not going to sit there and argue about it. And we're going to put increases on it when it needs to be increased. And by the way, we're going to move the agriculture people back over to Saskatchewan where they should be because this is where the agriculture area is.

Mr. Speaker, another thing that the member from Athabasca brought up . . . Well there's just so many things in here that . . . He brought up about highways. Now this member from Athabasca was the Highways minister. And you know, he brought up and kept on talking about these highways. But I just don't know why he didn't fix them when he was Highways minister. You know, because he went on a little later on, and I want to quote again, of what he said, "And again to point out to the Minister of Finance, chirping from his chair again, you were left with billions in the bank. Share the wealth." Well if there was billions in the bank when he was Highways minister, why didn't he go out and fix the highways? Why did he shut down the hospitals? Why did they shut down the schools? They didn't build schools.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the boondoggle ended up, but when he said that there was just these billions of dollars . . . And let's face it. He's not very good at math. He admits that. But I think it's absolutely terrible the way it was going. Mind you he was pretty good at spending \$36 million on SPUDCO. I guess that's agriculture. But you know, Mr. Speaker, I just really question as to where and how he comes up with these things. But that's the member from Athabasca and, you know, that's just the way he is at times, so we can let that one go.

But I want to tell you just a little bit more about Carrot River Valley, Mr. Speaker. And that's one thing about, we have a large agriculture base there, and we have probably some of the most productive and advanced farmers in all of Saskatchewan. Basically we were the ones who invented no-till farming up there. And fortunately this year, the way the weather worked out, we actually had some pretty good crops up there. There

were pockets that was a little too wet, but we had some very decent crops, so the people there are quite happy.

And the other thing that we're seeing, Mr. Speaker, is we're seeing our highways improved at all times up there. One of the reasons we have to keep our highways in pretty good shape up there is because our forest industry has now taken off again. And we have our lumber mills of Weyerhaeuser and Hudson Bay and Edgewood working over in Carrot River and consequently we have log trucks running up and down the road on a regular basis. So not only did we have some pretty decent crops, well we've got a lot of log trucks running up and down the road, so we do need our highways worked on. And the highways, everybody has said how great a shape the highways are now compared to the way that they used to be back when you-know-who was in power. And, Mr. Speaker, this government is going out and we're putting literally billions of dollars into the highways to improve our transportation system which is so necessary in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP would actually have you believe that this province is going downhill. This province is not going to make it. But yet where do you think all these people are . . . How come all these people want to move to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? How come? How come we're up to, what, 1.125 million people right now? And we want to see 1.2 million people by 2020, a far difference from under the NDP when they used to just say, well you know, when you're done school . . . And I think the member from Melville-Saltcoats mentioned it when he said we used to have going-away parties for all these people. When they got out of school, they moved out.

And he's totally right. He was totally right when he started talking about the housing. The housing there, it's been the same thing in Carrot River Valley. A few years ago you couldn't sell a house. Now we have people asking what I consider exorbitant prices for houses. But let's face it. The houses are moving. The people are moving in, and we have great areas all over rural Saskatchewan. And it's not just rural Saskatchewan. Obviously it's in the cities too. But me being from the rural end, I'm just a little on the biased side.

Mr. Speaker, one thing about it, we are continuing to move forward. And as I said before, this Throne Speech is a building block, a building block on moving this province forward because we have a vision of what we want to see happen out here in 2020.

Some of the things that the NDP brought up that they wanted to see in the Throne Speech or demanded to see in this Throne Speech was to work on the health care system. Mr. Speaker, health care is a big issue and we have been working on it. You know, we've gone from the longest waiting times in Saskatchewan now to about middle-of-the-road. But you know, Mr. Speaker, what we want to do is we want to be number one on the waiting list. We want to have the best health system here in Saskatchewan of anywhere in all of Canada. And we are working our way towards that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, another thing that they talked about, or on their wish list, was having new schools. Well you know, we've already announced we're building new schools. I've got one in my constituency. The member from Melville-Saltcoats said he

had one going up over in his constituency, and of course we've got more new schools going up in the cities where they're desperately needed. Forty new schools have been built or are in the planning stage in Saskatchewan. That's a far, far cry from shutting down 176 schools, Mr. Speaker.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the NDP, on their wish list had talked, they wanted to see in the Throne Speech about diversifying the economy. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have diversified the economy in Saskatchewan. I shouldn't say we. The people of Saskatchewan have diversified the economy. But with the help of this government making things a little bit simpler and being a little bit more business friendly, now we are seeing potash mines, first new potash mine in Saskatchewan in, what, 40 years? I don't know. The member from . . . or the member of the Economy, 45 years. First new potash mine in Saskatchewan.

We have the lowest unemployment rate in all of Canada. Our oil business is doing quite well. The forestry business is going. Agriculture is going. Mr. Speaker, our economy is diversified and we're very fortunate for that because, you know, it's not quite the same as Alberta who basically lives and dies on oil. Saskatchewan has a very diversified economy and is being diversified even more with the influx of people we have coming in here. A lot of expats are moving back here. Saskatchewan didn't use to be known anywhere. It is now.

They talked about we weren't doing anything for the environment, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Boundary dam is a game changer. Boundary dam is something. When we had the opening, people from 20 countries came to the Boundary dam, the first post carbon capture plant in the world. Mr. Speaker, that's the same as taking off . . . 225,000 vehicles off of the road every year is the amount of CO₂ that that Boundary dam will capture. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, it also enhances our heavy oil recovery. So it is a win-win situation.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many things that are going on here in Saskatchewan, and this Throne Speech just helps this province move forward. We have new long-term care beds. We've got new hospitals. We've got new schools. Mr. Speaker, we're doing a great job of working on our roads, thanks to the Highways minister, and everything is coming together.

[16:00]

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca also brought up how everybody is quitting the Saskatchewan Party. And I think if I remember right . . . I'd have to go back to *Hansard* here again for a second. I know I'm spending too long on this, Mr. Speaker. But he said, and I quote again:

They know what they're failing to do. One-third of their caucus is done. They've quit. [They're] . . . not going to run anymore; [they're] . . . out of here. They've lost one member from Lloydminster already and maybe another two-thirds, [I don't quite know how he gets that, but anyway] they're ready to go out in the next two or three years. So they're 80, 90 per cent done on the other side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I said his math wasn't that terribly great. I really don't think that's going to happen. Yes, we do have some

of the old guard is moving on, and we appreciate everything that they've done. But, Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee you that the new people coming on are going to be great people. And I know one thing: they are going to keep that operation across the way in opposition for a long, long, long time, Mr. Speaker.

All of that being said, Mr. Speaker, I will happily be supporting the Speech from the Throne, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise today and join in the debate on the Throne Speech. It's an important occasion. We reflect on the vision and the purpose of our government and our House here and how we should conduct the business of our province.

And I always enjoy the member before me from Nipawin. He's not a stranger to hyperbole. I reflect often back when the quote, the best budget in the universe, and added so many different layers to it in terms of mathematics, knowing your facts. So it's always interesting when the member reflects on other people in the House and their mathematical skills and their hyperbole. So to the member, it's always interesting hearing your thoughts.

But I too want to reflect on the tragic events of last week. It was something that struck us all very deeply. And I want to offer my condolences to the families involved and my own thanks to all the people that were involved: our own people here in this building, our own Sergeant-at-Arms, right up to the federal folks. It's such a sacred duty to make sure that our democratic institutions are secure and safe and that the purpose for what they are built for continue on, and that's the full participation of all citizens, of all people, and that people can be heard, and they can be seen to be in action and doing the work that they've been elected to do.

So I think this is an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, for us all to reflect, especially those who are elected, to take a moment, to gather all the information possible and continue to be in that information-gathering process, and reflect on how we can ensure that our democratic institutions continue and in fact flourish. That we flourish: that we do become the country that has been well known in many decades past as a beacon for democracy and a beacon of tolerance and a beacon of hope, that in fact that our purpose is not lost and that we maintain that. Because it is the Canadian way and it's the Saskatchewan way to support that.

And we see that daily, whether it's through how we strengthen our human rights, how we strengthen the participation of citizens. That's hugely, hugely important. So I do want to make sure that we do take this opportunity to reflect on that.

So also the traditional, I do want to give thanks to many people, my own constituency assistant. It was interesting. She's a very busy person. As the member from Nipawin reflected, that maybe he's not so busy or his office is not busy, but I can tell you over on our side, it's very busy. And the people are coming from all over the province. If he wants a list of people who are visiting our offices to get assistance, it's not a quiet time in Saskatchewan, who are looking for help. And my assistant does

a stellar job, and I want to thank her for that.

And I want to thank my constituents. Saskatoon Centre's a wonderful, wonderful place to represent. And I don't know if many people . . . I haven't heard the other side talk about how last Saturday was actually a day to support local business, small business. So I went out to Mayfair Bakery, as I often do. And it's interesting who I meet there. They have the best bread in Saskatchewan. It's a local business, and I think it's important for us to get out and support our local businesses as much as we can. And I will talk a bit about that more. But whether it's 33rd or 22nd or 20th or 2nd or 3rd or Broadway, their streets are amazing in Saskatoon, and I am proud to represent many of them here.

As well I want to give a big thank you to my own family. We've had some exciting news. We've had two new grandchildren. They're not twins, but two daughters have added, so this would be Felix's and Frances's . . . I don't think they're listening right now, but maybe way back or into the future. But it's an exciting time. It's an exciting time for us.

So, I want to reflect on this Throne Speech, and it was an interesting one. In some ways just because whenever you hear a Throne Speech, you do have to sit back and say, so what does that sentence mean? What does that sentence mean? And I've got a couple. I've bookmarked this a couple of times here. Page four, here talking about ". . . my government's goal of doubling exports by 2020 . . . introduce a new growth tax incentive . . ." Now it's interesting this government's approach to tax incentives, I think about the film tax credit. What happened here? How come one is wrong and yet the other one is right?

You know just today we had a visitor, somebody who has moved to Vancouver, moved to Vancouver because work isn't here anymore. Now I know the government here spent a lot of money — I think it was this summer on a film, *Corner Gas* — about product placement, now talking about Saskatchewan, trying to direct all sorts of money to it. But the fact of the matter is, if we had a decent film tax credit, the film would have been made here because they're worried about that film, *Corner Gas*, being made in Manitoba, or Ontario. So here you have that situation.

As well, I read this about the next page, and I quote:

Through the New West Partnership, Saskatchewan is working with Alberta and British Columbia to harmonize labour standards and occupational health and safety regulations.

Well here we go again, just a few short years ago we had the employment Act created when this government overhauled over a dozen pieces of legislation. And then they said, well don't worry, it's not going to change anything. Don't worry, it'll all be good. And yet we did see some major, major changes to labour legislation, and it was done in a hurry-up fashion — no consultations, no public meetings.

We, on our side, we had seven meetings which hundreds of people came out to talk about their worry about what this means. And so I know the minister's going to be going and speaking to the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] this

week, and I bet there will be questions about what does he really mean about harmonizing labour standards and occupational health and safety regulations? Last week we saw the premiums for workers' comp for employers. Many went down. Some didn't. But we still wrestle with the elephant in the room that Saskatchewan has the second-worst record in terms of injuries. And as well even in our own homes, we have not a great record when it comes to safety just generally.

So there is work to be done here, but I'm not sure it's this work. And I think we have to really focus on occupational health and safety, not to line it up with Alberta or BC but really to make sure our workplaces are the safest they can be. They absolutely should be and it makes sense to do that. We know it makes sense.

Now the other one that I wanted to focus on, and this isn't a bad idea, this is one that I'm going to look at with a lot of interest is, "This session, my government will amend *The Health Information Protection Act* to strengthen provisions protecting patient privacy." That's a good idea. That's a great idea. But you know, it's only one of the suite of privacy legislation that we really need to take a look at.

Interestingly here, and this is the ironic part, is if you're talking about harmonizing occupational health and safety and labour standards, are we going to be talking about harmonizing information privacy? If that's the case in the workplace, what's interesting in BC and Alberta is private employers are covered by privacy legislation. They are not here. That would be a good thing if private employers were covered by privacy legislation, but they are not here. So what is the government plan here? Are they going to say, only the things we want to harmonize we will talk about? But other things that have been raised like privacy in the workplace is something that we really, really need to focus on.

I also want to talk about what's been happening in Social Services. And there's some things, a lot of things that are interesting in here. And I think that I just want to take a moment to talk about the child welfare legislation, Mr. Speaker. And I hope that we actually see this, my hope we actually see this in the next month or two so we can have a chance to talk about it over the winter months, have some input. That's our role as opposition, to make sure we take it out and talk to people. We're coming up . . . I mean in theory our election should be next year, and we won't have a chance to take a look at that legislation if we don't look at it pretty quick. Now they've announced it several times that there's going to be a review of *The Child and Family Services Act* and *The Adoption Act*. We have yet to see it. It's been several years in the making, and we really hope that it happens really quickly.

The other one, and this is an interesting one, is the government talks about the social impact bond and makes a big deal about it. It makes a big deal that they say it's the first in Canada. Actually I think it may be the third in Canada. We know the federal government has a social impact bonds, and we also know that in Alberta they were talking about this idea. I think it was Premier Alison Redford whose idea about social impact bonds. And so I'm kind of curious to see and what the facts are going to be in the way of a good story. So I'm interested to hear more about this.

And really what happened with the Sweet Dreams, well clearly a good, good cause, a very important cause. It was kind of done in a hurry-up fashion because we didn't have much lead time. It was done in the last week of session, budget had already happened. In fact the estimates already happened. And this happened after that, so there was a real question about that.

I just want to take a minute, Mr. Speaker, just to talk about the announcement of the poverty reduction strategy. And I think this is one that we had asked for, many people had asked for. It had been called for, for a long time. So we're glad to see that this is moving forward, and we're looking to see how this develops. Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue. I think that we want to make sure that in the spirit . . . And some of the folks have said that, you know, have wondered about whether or not . . . And I appreciate what the former minister said about, you know, cutting across party lines. And I think that's a good thing.

You know when we have worked together on this, I can think about the work that we've done in this session over the past couple of years around asbestos. The Minister of Labour has worked with that, has worked on Jimmy's law together. When it makes sense, we've worked together. And so we're looking forward to seeing what this plays out to be.

Our concern right off the bat though is the fact that it could end up being a pre-election photo op, but I have confidence in the people who are involved that that won't happen, that in fact while this may be a real rigorous work, and it should be rigorous, that really this should not be used to some sort of quick or political advantage that really spoils the good work of some of the folks that are involved. And I think this is important that we take a sincere look at this because it's an important issue for sure, and there's just too many people who are falling by the wayside that I think that we need to take a good look at that.

[16:15]

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to just say though that the reviews are in, and the reviews are very not kind at all. And in fact *The StarPhoenix* last week said the "Throne speech sets flat tone." And in fact I'll read and I'll quote from the article, October 23, 2014:

Given the opportunity to generate excitement with a bold vision as the province heads for an election in 2015, Mr. Wall chose instead to reiterate many measures already taken and provide a smattering of new offerings that mostly cement his government's commitment to get the private sector more involved in services now provided publicly.

So there you go. It's not a very kind editorial, and in fact it's not very exciting, not very engaging. There's a few things in there but, generally speaking, leading up to an election you would think this government would take the opportunity in fact to lay out a bold, engaging vision for everyone but in fact chose to play it in a very low key.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it reminded me of this cartoon. I don't know if you saw this cartoon from *The StarPhoenix* on the 3rd

of September. There is a cartoon of this fellow who I imagine to be the Premier, and then there's this farmer looking at four piles of something. I'm not sure what the piles are, but the farmer is saying, "Hey poster boy, how about cleaning up some of your messes in your province?" Now this is what the piles are labelled: seniors care, smart meters, lean.

And then there's two that are not named, and I can just think of what they could be. They could be the Deveraux housing fiasco we've had. And I'm doing petitions every day, and I can talk a bit more. It could be the film tax credit. It could be the ministers' travel that we talked about last spring. But this is quite a little . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It could be northern roads or the Premier's travel. But here we have . . . And I think the quote is really quite appropriate: "Hey poster boy, how about cleaning up some messes in your own province?" Yes, I think the poster boy should get to work on that.

Now you know, we've raised some of these issues. And I think about, you know, I know the government will say, hey, hey, hey, you know that's a little offside. You can't refer or think about the Premier as the poster boy. But really there are some issues here that we've got to deal with, and they're real issues, serious issues.

You know, we talk about seniors. And I just have to talk about 95-year-old Roy Armstrong has bone, bladder, and prostate cancer, and struggles to walk and feed himself after two heart attacks. But the government says Armstrong's too fit, too fit to take up a place in a seniors' care home. We're hearing stories and stories like this over and over again, real people. This guy has a name. His name is Roy Armstrong. He's 95 years old, and he's got these kind of conditions. And this is a situation. So I think the government needs to get down to work on it.

Last week we heard about and we continue to hear about lean. We continue to hear about lean and this government just refusing to acknowledge that they really messed up on this one. They really messed up on it. In fact this is one, again the cartoon, the poster boy really needs to get down and figure out what's happening with lean. They've cut off six months of the contract, maybe 5 million, but still 35-plus million compared to what they're spending in Manitoba.

How can you justify that, especially when you have people, leadership from the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region who are saying this is just really not, not good? And this is what she had to say. She said there's been a lack of respect, tattling on leaders if they question, expecting rigid conformity in a militaristic style, gossiping and undermining. It consists of activities that are not meaningful and in some cases are insulting, all of which are part of John Black's approach, that are not only not educationally sound but cause skepticism, alienation, and frustration.

So this is really something that we have to take seriously. And this is one of those piles that the Premier, or in this cartoon, the poster boy, has to get done. He has to get it fixed now. We're coming into election. This would have been the Throne Speech. This would have been the time to say, hey, you know what? I've got some stuff to clean up. Let me clean it up. But instead the government, the Premier chose to take a road of ignoring that, just ignoring those piles and saying, hey, we're not going

to deal with it.

And then today, today we heard questions about the smart meters. We have a situation where clearly, clearly this is a government who's not engaged in their files, letting SaskPower take the rap for it, throwing them under the bus. And here we have a situation of a government that's plowing ahead with pet projects that they should know better. It shows a real lack of due diligence and really, at the end of the day, showing a real lack of what this means for Saskatchewan families, real lack of what this means for Saskatchewan families. So this is a really unfortunate circumstance we've found ourselves in here. And I think this really shows a lack of ability for this government to show the leadership that they need to show.

And I have some real, real concerns about it when we know in Alabama and in Philadelphia they were not using these meters. They were saying, hey we've got to back off. This is not the right thing to do. But instead the government now is throwing the SaskPower under the bus, throwing them under the bus. But they like them when they do the climate change, the carbon capture thing, hey? They love that.

But you know the one thing that really got me, and I was thinking about this this fall, was the whole issue around the government's failure to enforce a contract that meant the end of an affordable housing project. And really when this government talks about how it knows how to work with business, how they're the people who know how to make things work . . . But here you had a situation where we had a fixed-price contract, and that meant the developer was going to take the risk and everybody went in with eyes wide open, eyes wide open, a \$10 million contract, but instead this government let the developer off the hook, let the developer off the hook.

This really . . . Actually people across Canada were watching this, what this meant for contract law because if you are saying well that contract really doesn't mean anything . . . And what it means for P3s is huge, is huge because are they really, is this government really going to enforce their laws?

So there were a couple of really odd moments here when we were talking about the Deveraux project. And this is what the minister said when asked to explain the government's decision. The Minister of Social Services said, and I quote, "You're assuming there's these desperate homeless people."

Well, Mr. Speaker, this really shows this disconnect. And I could go through editorial and editorial about how people are concerned about the disconnect this government has from the realities within our communities, a real disconnect. So I hope that she will take the time to really think about that and really get to learn what that means.

I see and I know in our own community where we have a Housing First project that's worked so well to get 16 or 17 people off the street that are harder to house, that are causing a significant impact in their own lives but also in terms of the health care system, how that can work. But this minister, when she says that kind of thing, really shows a strong disconnect.

Well, Mr. Speaker, another local political commentator wrote, and I quote:

It is the latest indication that Premier Brad Wall seems unwilling to do anything to displease business, even when he knows business is dead wrong and even if it means his government is failing on its promises to deliver low-income housing.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are some real concerns out there, some real issues that people are facing in Saskatchewan, whether it is seniors looking for a safe, dignified place to live; an affordability issue; whether it's the smart meter fiasco that we're having right now; the lean fiasco; ministers' travel; the Premier's travel; the film tax credit; the Deveraux housing fiasco, which I think is really a huge problem.

This government has no shortage of people on the other side to pat themselves on the back. But as this cartoon says, "Hey poster boy, how about cleaning up some of your messes in your own province." End of quote, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, I will be supporting the amendment — of course I will be; that's the only reasonable thing to do — and voting against the Throne Speech. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Thank you. I'm honoured today to speak to the 2014 Speech from the Throne and to lend my support to the government motion on the floor.

I'd like to cover four main areas in the speech. I'd like to talk about the Melfort constituency. I'd like to talk about my position as the Legislative Secretary for regional municipal co-operation. I'd like to talk about some of the details of the Speech from the Throne. And I would like to talk about some of the history of the opposition and the all-too-typical amendment posed by the opposition.

I would first like to take this opportunity to offer a few thank yous, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, thank you to my wife, April, whose love and support guides me each and every day. And I almost make it sound like it's her fault. Thanks to my CAs [constituency assistant], Peggy Gordon, and Debbie Perkins, who so carefully and caringly look after the situations that arise at home for the people of the Melfort constituency. When people come to our office looking for help, we have a pretty good batting average in finding that help for them. I would also like to mention the ministers and ministerial staff within this building, Mr. Speaker. They do a great job, and they're a wonderful group to work with.

And my thanks are especially extended to the people of the Melfort constituency — the best of the best. Many would say the Melfort constituency leads the way in growth in a growing province — and I would be among them — with strong and diverse companies like Bourgault Industries, Doepker Industries, Schulte Industries, Michel's Industries, Failure Prevention Services, M & K Welding, and many others who all look to a great future, an expanding future in the days ahead.

Of course agriculture continues to be dominant in the Melfort constituency with some of the best farm land and the best farmers in the province, and they're supported by very, very

strong agro service companies throughout.

And the last speaker mentioned small business. And small business continues to grow and to thrive in the Melfort constituency and in Saskatchewan as it should. These entrepreneurs are the heartbeat of the growing province. And I may be labelled as a cheerleader for the Melfort constituency, but when you have so much to cheer about, it's hard not to be.

The First Nations communities of Kinistin and James Smith continue to improve the economic lot of their people. The chiefs and councils are working hard, and the results are showing with lower unemployment and education continuing to improve.

We are seeing the excitement of growth in population in all our communities, both large and small. And do we have challenges? Of course we do. The government is working hard to devise a plan for the stabilization and lowering of the Quill Lakes, but with a complete understanding that fresh water lakes cannot be harmed by any solutions. Some of the challenges facing the constituency are large, but as an old saying goes, how do you eat an elephant? It's one bite at a time.

And BHP Billiton, the Jansen project, I had that opportunity to visit the Jansen project just last Friday, the world's largest potash mine under construction. There were four busloads of municipal and First Nations leaders on those buses and 500 employees on site. What fascinated me, the camp continues to be constructed for 2,500 people that will be necessary to complete the mine. When in operation, that camp will disappear and they will be left with 800 people working and living in their surrounding communities.

[16:30]

And I thought on Friday, have you ever been to camp Billy? I had a taste of camp life on Friday. Huge kitchens, the food service — dinner was excellent. A 14,000 square foot auditorium and gym area with free weights, indoor track, saunas, treadmill, and pretty much everything that you could think of, all within the confines of this camp. When finished, there will be over 2,580 rooms and there's going to be four wings to it. And if you live in the end of one of the wings and want to go to the end of any of the other three wings, you're going to be walking about a kilometre, but it's all indoors and it's all safety. And while I'm up, I should mention that the theatre for the complex is almost completed. So we're looking forward to that.

Now BHP, and it was shown again on Friday, it's very evident any time you're around that company that they are very safety conscious. And they were safety conscious to the people on the tour but also very much to their own workforce, and I think that's amazing. And the record shows what they can do with the small amount of accidents on the site.

It's also a company that supports the communities and their organizations across the provinces. BHP has been working with First Nations partners, thriving local communities, and many, many other organizations right across the province that they have supported. And I want to make note of the town of LeRoy where BHP have made a donation of \$1 million for a new arena after the old one was destroyed by fire.

Mr. Speaker, this company is certainly a welcome citizen in our province. For the past 18 months I have enjoyed working as Legislative Secretary for Regional Municipal Co-operation — that's 51 letters, one of the biggest names in government. I've worked closely with SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and have attended and spoke at the vast majority of regional meetings of both these organizations. But mostly I listened and I learned about the challenges that face municipalities today, and they're serious challenges and they're growing challenges.

But with these challenges of growth that they face, we shouldn't forget the challenges of 10 or 15 years ago. The challenges of decline. Challenges of keeping your school open. Challenges of keeping your hospital open. Challenges of every day, a declining population. Yes, they had challenges a decade ago, very much so. And if a mayor and council could leave their community at the end of their term exactly the same as they found it, they were successful.

And I'll tell you in 10 years time — and I mentioned this as I went around to the different meetings — in 10 years time I can be sitting on a nice, hot summer day on a sunny patio, drinking a cool one, probably a lemonade. And you know, I can do this with any member of council out there of any community out there, and we would look at each other and we would say, you know, we did okay. Because in each and every case, in each and every community, we will leave our communities bigger, we will leave our community stronger, and we will leave the communities better than when we were elected.

And I want to know that this time that the door of the minister's office is always open to SUMA and to SARM and to First Nations, the RMs [rural municipality], villages, towns, and cities of Saskatchewan. And this government does rely on these organizations for input and programs and legislation.

And I would personally like to thank President Debra Button and her board of directors and the staff of SUMA, as well as President Dave Marit and his board of directors and the staff of SARM. SUMA and SARM both have shown me a great hospitality at their regional meetings and conventions. And I also want to pass on my appreciation to my minister and all the staff at Government Relations.

As there are many speakers to follow that will go into details about the Throne Speech, I just want to mention a few of my personal favourites. As Legislative Secretary it is absolutely outstanding to see the Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative, or SIGI, not only reinstated but expanded to allow First Nations communities to take advantage of this remarkable program.

And during my days as mayor of the city of Melfort, this program was invaluable in setting the stage to community prosperity. And it's wonderful; it is absolutely great to see that we will not be spending another dime on new liquor stores when we need hospitals and schools and senior citizens' facilities and other infrastructure — not another dime.

Something that is a one- or two-liner in the Throne Speech, but I think is very important, is amending the human tissue Act so

more people can be treated with transplant technology, and that we are continuing to make an investment of one-quarter of 1 per cent of the money spent in health care in the lean initiative to improve patient treatment and changing procedures to allow our health care professionals to do their job more efficiently and with less strain.

And there's also many other initiatives about health care in the document. We'll be increasing educational supports, health care, seniors' housing, support for low-income earners, and in one way or another this Speech from the Throne will make life better for every resident in the province.

Now before my time expires, I want to speak briefly about the record of the NDP across the way. And I know, I know they hate it when this comes up. They hate it when we talk about 16 years of miserable decline, 16 years of closing hospitals and eliminating 1,200 long-term care beds for our precious senior citizens, 1,200 of them. Receiving equalization for 16 years that they were in government and having to listen to the words of their party leaders quoted back to them. They hate that, so I won't do that. I'm not going to do that.

Instead let's look at the recent history of the party across the way. The policies introduced that have built this province to the highest population ever — they voted against that. Policies that have more than doubled the municipal revenue sharing in this province, helping every RM, town, city, village, across the province, north, across the province — they voted against that. Building new hospitals across the province, including the new children's hospital in Saskatoon — they voted against that. They voted against new homes for seniors, new homes for low-income people, new schools, new highways, new manufacturing programs, assistance to low-income seniors, new ideas. The NDP have voted against all of those — voted against all of them.

With a handful of possible exceptions, the NDP has voted against everything that we have done — everything that the people of Saskatchewan have done. Simply everything that has happened in this great and wonderful province in the last . . . well since 2007, the NDP has been against.

And what bothers me is that I go back in my memory and I talk about one point in my memory when I was new to the school board and we were having an SSTA meeting, Saskatchewan School Trustees Association meeting, in Saskatoon. And I was new to the school board and I was all excited and, you know, we were going to do something, hopefully something very good in the school. And I went to this meeting and I remember walking into the Centennial Auditorium as it was called then, and there was a bright white light on a speaker from the Ministry of Education. And what he was telling us as members of the SSTA, he was saying okay, eight years ago the student population was here. Five years ago the student population was here. Three years ago it was here. Now it's here. In five years it's going to be here. In 10 years it's going to be there. Figure out how to close your schools.

And I found, for myself I found it deflating. It was just like getting hit in the chest with a brick. It was just . . . And you know, and then I got mad because what it said is that we couldn't do anything about this, that our government couldn't

do anything about this. All it was was Saskatchewan was on the trail of decline and it would be that way today and it would be that way tomorrow. And that's the feeling they gave us.

And you know, I'm still looking. In all these things that has happened since 2007 and all the new records we have and all the benefits of a strong economy that has come down to the people, the people in the Melfort constituency, the people in every constituency across this province, the benefit of economic growth, that I wondered: I'd sit here and I'd listen to the complaint and I'd listen to the negativism across the aisle and I thought to myself on the weekend, I thought, so what's their plan? What are they suggesting? Rather than just standing up here and criticizing and picking apart little points here and there, what is their plan?

So I looked it up and I checked again and I checked the third. What did I find? A good question, because I didn't find anything. There was nothing there.

An Hon. Member: — The manifesto's there.

Mr. Phillips: — No actually the manifesto's gone. They finally hid that away someplace, the socialist document that started the former CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation]. And I don't think anybody in the House can read that document without thinking of that word or something different.

And now, Mr. Speaker, now the opposition puts forth an amendment that condemns the Government of Saskatchewan, condemns this Government of Saskatchewan. It's absolutely ridiculous. Mr. Speaker, I would take it everybody in the House kind of got the point by now that yes, I will be voting in favour of the motion and, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against the amendment proposed by the old, the tired, and the negative nine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Makowsky: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to rise in the House and give my comments about the 2014 Throne Speech on behalf of the great people of Regina Dewdney. This document is titled "Keeping Saskatchewan Strong" and I can't think of anything stronger.

I can't think of anything stronger in our country and our province than our military and our police officers — the Regina Police Service, for example, first responders, Mr. Speaker. Those are the people that look after us. They are dedicated to our democracy. And certainly I don't know if I'm qualified or able, but I certainly would like, on behalf of the people of Regina Dewdney, to send our heartfelt condolences to the folks out east that had trouble this past week, Mr. Speaker. Certainly horrible events on our own soil by cowards acting alone in a cowardly fashion, as I mentioned.

[16:45]

So certainly our thoughts and prayers are with those families, with those communities. And we always remember to remain diligent in upholding our democracy, Mr. Speaker. So those are terrible, terrible times. And again nothing makes me prouder as a Canadian than our military record and our record of

selflessness around the world. So that's a strong . . . That's what makes Saskatchewan and our country strong.

Certainly Regina Dewdney I think remains strong, just as our province does. Specifically in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, there is great growth in the area, as I mentioned before. I think I have mentioned before that there are basically no land left. All the new developments in Regina Dewdney will be infill. There is a few residential lots around Heseltine Road I know, but there is new businesses.

There was open land south of Victoria Square Mall, south of Victoria, along University Park Drive, Mr. Speaker. But there's a new apartment complex — looks like to be quite a large one — which will help with that vacancy rate a great deal. And there will be new businesses, and opening just south, there's a few new gyms opening up, Mr. Speaker. And so that will help make our population a little healthier. And that's good to see new businesses continuing to open right along Victoria Avenue, along Quance, and there, as I mentioned, new apartments, new condos.

And I see all the time, Mr. Speaker, new families moving into the area from right across Canada, from right all throughout the world, Mr. Speaker. And that is just great to see. They're becoming part of our community, becoming a part of the new Saskatchewan. And they're setting up roots here. And there's lots of options and right in Regina Dewdney and of course in our province right now. And people are seeing that opportunity, and they're voting with their feet. They're coming to Saskatchewan. And like I said, lots of great new building happening in our constituency and new buildings going up. And that's great to see that.

There's entrepreneurs that are willing to risk their hard-earned money to try and build a business and employ people. And so we see the backbone happening right in the capital city, of people creating jobs and just contributing to the economy of Saskatchewan.

I mentioned new families. I should probably mention my own at some time. It's a good time to do that. The strongest part of my family is certainly my wife, Tami. And she does a great job. We're both busy at work, and we have three kids to run around to different activities. And so she keeps things scheduled and does a great job. So she's the part that keeps our family strong.

I'd like to mention also Brittany in our constituency office. She does a great job to keep that office strong and keep it flowing properly for the people of our constituency.

I think this is a strong Throne Speech. We have strong leadership on this side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker, whether it's the Premier, the Deputy Premier, all the members of cabinet. Everybody's a leader, and we see that. What a great document they have produced, and certainly we thank them for that.

I think in the first few paragraphs it talks about all the great employment numbers that we see in our strong province: more people working than ever before, lowest unemployment rate in the country for a couple years now, Mr. Speaker. Things are happening right across this province, and it's great to see certainly a more diversified economy.

I think one area that was a pretty big deal, I don't know if it got much press or if people looked at it, but Moody's recently, and it's referenced right in the Throne Speech, that they upgraded our credit rating to AAA, Mr. Speaker. That's certainly great news. That means that not only . . . S & P [Standard & Poor's], Moody's, they're the two main bond rating agencies. They're out of New York. They've been doing it for around a hundred years.

So it's certainly a rarity these days for jurisdictions, national or sub-national, to get their credit rating upgraded. And that's good news because now Saskatchewan is seen as a prime place to park your money if you want to buy debt on the market. That means we get very competitive interest rates. That means of course that those bond rating agencies have a lot of confidence in the economy of this province, the people of this province, the Ministry of Finance to put forward budgets that pay down debt.

We've paid down 44 per cent of the GRF [General Revenue Fund], the operating account debt here in our province, since 2007. And certainly that saves on interest costs. We won't send as much money to bond holders because of that. But also it's a perpetual positive cycle. When you can pay down debt and you have balanced budgets, you're able to get a better credit rating. And certainly that's less money going to banks in foreign countries or whoever may hold our bonds. So we're seen as a prime place, and it's a fairly rare situation in the world, really. There's, you know, a dozen or so jurisdictions in the world that have AAA stable, a few places in Europe, Singapore, places like that, Mr. Speaker. And certainly it's a credit to the people of the province, as I mentioned, and the Minister of Finance who's done a great job.

There's only about a quarter of the US states that have AAA stable. I checked it out. And these are fairly new statistics that I found. Of course they can go up and down frequently, so we have to be diligent that way. And I think there's three provinces — BC, Alberta, and Saskatchewan — and the federal government. It's interesting to note, a few years ago there was big news that the United States had their credit rating downgraded, I believe the second-biggest economy in the world, now behind China. But it's certainly to remain diligent and watch after that.

And hopefully one day, hopefully it's one day soon, we won't have to worry about S & P and Moody's. We'll get rid of the debt completely, hopefully, one day in Saskatchewan. But we're certainly on the right track, and it takes prudent budgeting. It takes some sacrifice. And certainly we've seen a lot of improvement in that over the years since the '90s.

One thing that's not in my constituency, and it's not directly mentioned in the Throne Speech, but they talk quite a bit . . . not they, this government talks quite a bit about the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. And I know a few years ago there was \$750,000 put into Leibel Field here in Regina. So I just want to talk a little bit about Leibel Field. During the supper break, I'll be heading over there as a matter of fact to help coach my son's football team for a little while.

That facility has been in operation since the summer of 2011, Mr. Speaker, but it's not complete. Just recently, earlier this year, earlier this fall, I was able to attend the official grand

opening of the completed Leibel Field, of what the original vision looked like. The folks at Regina Minor Football and the soccer folks that wanted to originally build this had the vision for it, Mr. Speaker. So you know, you think of one of the nicest facilities of its kind anywhere in Canada really. There's thousands of football players and soccer players that use that facility.

On a day like today, Mr. Speaker, in years past, all the games would have been cancelled. All the practices on that field would have been cancelled not only because it's dark at about 6:15, Mr. Speaker, but there's now artificial turf which doesn't get chewed up. On a day like today, it would have been a mud bowl. But they've done just an outstanding job. The local community has stepped up.

And I have to mention one guy who's really been the driving force, had the vision for it, and that's Len Antonini. He's the executive director of Regina Minor Football, and he's been a pit bull getting this thing going. He's been absolutely the driving force. And boy, what a legacy for the city of Regina. And I don't mean to take . . . It's in the member from Douglas Park's constituency certainly, but I spend a lot of time there. People from right around the city spend a lot of time there, Mr. Speaker, whether you're a soccer player, touch football player, tackle football. There's dozens of programs that run out of there. And it's a facility to be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

The first year there was no stands. The next year there they put in new stands, a new score clock, earth berm fence around, a canteen. There are washrooms a bit of ways away, and the next project I hear from Len is going to be bathrooms on that facility. So, Mr. Speaker, it's something to be proud of. And boy, it's just a great community place to gather. All three levels of government contributed and certainly the people, the Regina Minor Football contributed. There was donors large and small, and they just got that thing done.

And that proves what our province is about — strong leaders, strong volunteers, coming together to build a facility that's second to none. I know the kids are very proud to be able to play there. And for years and years there's going to be thousands and thousands of people, users, getting a chance to use the new Leibel Field.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, mentioned in the Throne Speech is Habitat for Humanity. I mentioned this before in previous speeches. I never get tired of doing it. Our government's committed 7.85 million since '09 to the great work they do at Habitat for Humanity, Mr. Speaker.

The ReStore is in my constituency; that's why I always like to mention it. That's the place where people donate used items, and the proceeds from the resale of it go towards Habitat programs. I know they are currently finishing up nine units beside Lewvan Drive and Sherwood Drive, Mr. Speaker. So in the city's northwest, nine new families soon are going to have their own home. Their days of worrying about where they're going to live and what's next for their family, they can become part of a community. They can set roots. They can live in a safe place. And they'll certainly enjoy and they get a chance to continue on, continue on that program. They'll give their 500 hours. They'll pay into, through a mortgage they'll pay into

their future build. So the process just continues along, and so they do great work.

And I'd also be remiss if I didn't mention the TASCAP [Trades & Skills Construction Apprenticeship Program] program, the trades program out of Regina Campus Public in my constituency as well. They run the TASCAP program. And what it is, is they are high school age students that build a house. Through two semesters, they're able to take credits towards their high school degree, but also they learn the trades. They learn, they build a house.

And I always say boy, what a great legacy to have. I mean, when I was in grade 9, in wood shop I built a jewellery box. I built a jewellery box. I still have it, by the way, I still put stuff in there. But I mean, if you're a student in 20 years, you can look . . . I look to my jewellery box, my wooden jewellery box. Somebody, one of the kids from TASCAP, can go by 20 years later. They're working on two houses on Robinson Street, 1300 block Robinson Street. They can say, hey kids, I helped build that house. Whatever they do in life, they can say, I helped a family about 20 years ago build a house. I think that's pretty special, Mr. Speaker. And certainly they do great work.

Of course this gives them a chance to see if they would want to get into the trades. Maybe after a semester of it they say, well no, that's not for me. I'm going to try something else. But many, many of them get a chance to move on in the trades. They get credits towards their high school degree, but also gives them references to move on to companies or to go on to SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology].

I know Regina Trades & Skills they take the results of what happens at TASCAP seriously. The two teachers, I'll mention them as well. Eldon Hall and Devon Heron, they do great work there. They're experts in that field, but they also are able to give good recommendations on students that perform well in the TASCAP program.

And certainly that aligns well with what we see in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. The adult basic education, many more seats in those areas — 775 more training seats. Certainly that's going to be that many more people that are able to maybe move on, get into a trade, move on to post-secondary . . .

The Speaker: — It now being after the hour of 5 o'clock, this House stands recessed to 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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