



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

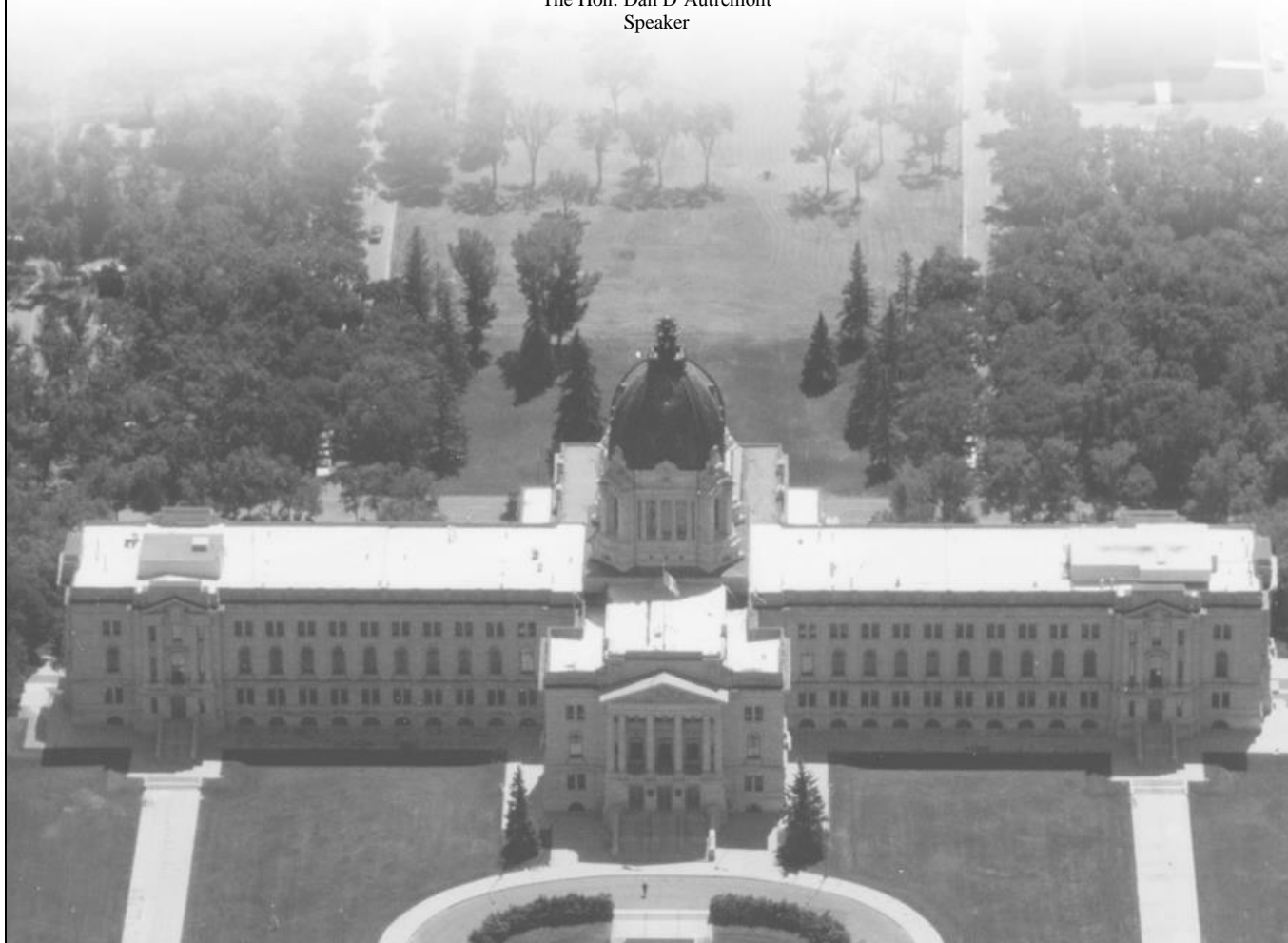
of the

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 resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Speaker: — It now being 7 o'clock, debate will resume. I recognize the Minister for Parks, Culture and Sport.

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.]

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was ragging the puck a little bit earlier there. Sorry about that, but it's an honour to rise today and respond to this, my first Throne Speech as Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Before I begin, as always I like to thank Lisa, my friends and family for their support in embracing the excitement over my new role. I want to thank my constituency assistants, Kristy Shaw, Bonnie Donison, for all their hard work that they do in the busy office, probably one of the busiest offices in the province. And I want to thank the Premier for the opportunity to serve the people of Saskatchewan in this role.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues joke that my portfolio should really be called the ministry of fun. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? They are right. My ministry is responsible for some of the greatest experiences Saskatchewan has to offer. Our breathtaking parks, amateur sport, the performing arts, and Saskatchewan's vibrant cultural communities make my job one of the best around.

This summer I was lucky enough to be able to visit eight of our province's beautiful provincial and regional parks. From Echo Valley to Lac La Ronge, from Nickle Lake to Rowan's Ravine, our parks are truly incredible. The natural scenery, the wildlife, the lakes, all combine to offer some of the best recreational experiences in Canada right at our doorstep.

But you know what really sets Saskatchewan's parks apart from the rest? It's our campers, Mr. Speaker. At each and every stop I made, whether in a large provincial park or in a smaller regional park, the one thing that was always constant was the passion of our campers, who are always there with their friends and family.

The people who use our parks are truly our greatest asset. They utilize our parks, and they're absolutely unprecedented in terms of nationally. Our parks are utilized by people of our province more than any other jurisdiction in the country. We should be proud of that. They are the ones whose feedback help park staff make sure that our parks are enjoyable for campers of all ages. This summer I met young families excited to be starting a new vacation tradition that they will share with their children for decades to come.

I also met a group of retired women who have been camping together for decades, 20 years at least. Each year they spend part of their summer at the same park renewing their lifelong friendship and having just as much fun now as they did when they started out. They were happy to share their camping stories with me.

We are blessed, Mr. Speaker, to have campers in Saskatchewan who are lifelong parks enthusiasts. They make our parks better places to be, and they show the next generation of campers just how lucky we are to have so many beautiful parks, to spend our summers making memories that will last a lifetime. Saskatchewan campers are doing their part, Mr. Speaker, and so is our government.

Our job is to make sure the Saskatchewan park system is here for campers to enjoy not just today but for generations to come. That's why since 2007 we've committed \$71 million to our parks system. Great Blue Heron Provincial Park, the first new park in over 20 years, Mr. Speaker. We've added 1,400 new electrified camping sites to our existing parks. We've upgraded the waste water treatment systems. We've improved both potable and non-potable water systems. We've built new service centres. We've partnered with the private sector to update marinas, docks, and docking systems. These are all pieces of the park infrastructure that allow campers to make the most out of all the parks have to offer.

I'm proud of these investments, Mr. Speaker, but I'm even more proud of the progress they represent. And what do I mean by that? Well let's step back in time. Let's go back a decade, all the way back to 2004. That was a pretty dark year for our park system, Mr. Speaker. You might remember it as the year the NDP [New Democratic Party] tried to cancel summer. They tried to delay the opening of many of the parks that year. Why, Mr. Speaker? Did they hate summer? Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess only the member for Saskatoon Centre can truly say for sure, but whatever the reason, it was a disastrous policy that outraged campers across the province.

And while the NDP finally backtracked after public outcry and pressure in this Assembly, they decided to go ahead with an equally absurd plan to make campers pay for firewood. I'm sure you remember that one, Mr. Speaker, the infamous wiener roast tax. Well, those two strokes of genius sure made campers worry about the state of our parks. In fact, visitor satisfaction with Saskatchewan provincial parks was only 69 per cent that year. Shame, Mr. Speaker.

We can't undo the mistakes the NDP made, but as soon as we took office we sure set about revitalizing our provincial park system. You know what the NDP invested in the last seven years they were in government? A paltry \$20 million. I'm proud to report that our government has invested and committed \$71 million in capital funding for parks in our seven years in office, Mr. Speaker. That's 244 per cent more. And what's the result? A renewed infrastructure, a better camping experience, happier campers. In 2013 visitor satisfaction in our parks is back up where it belongs: 91 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That's a record I'm proud to be a part of.

I look forward to working with campers and park staff to make

sure we continue to make our parks the best places they can be. That's my goal and that's our government's commitment to the people of Saskatchewan. And as the members opposite keep chirping away, they better buckle their seatbelts because there's more coming.

Now I would really like to compare that with the opposition's plan, but I can't, Mr. Speaker, because they just don't seem to have one. There's not a word on the NDP website about parks. We've been saying for a while now that it's time for them to come up with some ideas of their own. But you know if the ideas they came up with back in 2004 are an example of what happens when the NDP pay attention to our parks, maybe we're all better off without it.

And speaking of the devoid record, would you believe that the words arts and culture do not appear once in the NDP's 2011 platform? Even I was a bit surprised at that, Mr. Speaker. Nor have I been able to find an NDP strategy on arts and culture. What about us, you ask. Well personally, Mr. Speaker, I'm a lifelong fan of our province's fantastic arts and cultural community. Well that got them a little bit excited there, but too bad they weren't that interested in mentioning arts and culture in the last election.

Saskatchewan is blessed with an abundance of talent. We have some of the best musicians around. Just this past weekend, I was wowed by the Regina Symphony Orchestra Shumiatcher Pops "I Hear a Symphony: Motown's Greatest Hits." It was a dynamic performance, combining the awesome talent of the members of the symphony with guest vocalists, and it had symphony patrons dancing in the aisles, Mr. Speaker, something I don't think I've ever seen before. And it's just one example of what makes our arts community so unique — a magic combination of crazily talented artists and wildly enthusiastic audience. And that's true of all of our arts, Mr. Speaker, from theatre in the round at the Globe to Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan, from breathtaking collections at galleries like the MacKenzie to local arts guild exhibitions. They're endless showcases for Saskatchewan talent.

Just last week I was thrilled to help honour the best and brightest talents in Saskatchewan at the Lieutenant Governor's Arts Awards in Saskatoon, presented by the Saskatchewan Arts Board. It was quite simply a celebration of greatness. The array of talent, artistry, and creativity in the room was both breathtaking and humbling, Mr. Speaker. The artists honoured with awards have spent their entire lives devoted to their craft, and I was thrilled to be able to bring greetings and share such a special night with them.

I'm happy to be the Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Arts Board. And I'm proud to report to this Assembly that our government has increased funding to the Arts Board by 8 per cent in two years, almost \$7 million per year. I'm just as happy to report that Creative Saskatchewan is now fully operational and has provided \$7.7 million to Saskatchewan's creative industries, including \$3.4 million to the film industry, \$2 million to the music industry, \$1.1 million to the visual arts sector, and \$800,000 to the publishing industry. I want to thank Creative Saskatchewan team for their dedication to supporting the creative industries in our province through funding and support in finding new markets and new audiences.

I'm proud of the work that Creative Saskatchewan is doing and look forward to working with them to support all Saskatchewan's vital creative industries. And I'm not alone in being proud of the work that Creative Saskatchewan is doing in support of our creative industries. "In an area where independent musicians must also be entrepreneurs, Creative Sask's support is vital." That's a quote from Saskatoon's singer and musician, Alexis Normand.

Alexis went on to say, "The Marketing Export and Development Grant I received allowed me to continue building industry and audience relationships which lead to commercial market growth outside Saskatchewan." That's just what one artist had to say about the value of Creative Sask, Mr. Speaker.

Listen to this from ceramic artist and potter, Ken Wilkinson: "Creative Sask is helping me move to a wholesale business. I've gone to trade shows in Toronto and Edmonton, where I've taken orders, then filled, and shipped them. So I'm taking the next step in my career, and the grant money has helped a lot." Ken went on to say, "It's been wonderful, and I think Creative Sask will be a big help for a lot of artists."

And there's this from SaskBooks:

We've been producing and distributing in a catalogue of Saskatchewan books across western Canada for several years. In fact, SaskBooks has been promoting Saskatchewan publishers and their books for 25 years. It's nice to finally have an agency that supports production, marketing, and promotion.

Here's one from the band Dead South:

Thank you so much to Creative Saskatchewan for giving us the financial support to be able to compete on our very first German tour. Without the performing arts tour support grant offered by Creative Saskatchewan, we would not have had the finances required to have our first international tour to be such a success.

And here's one from Overtime Communications:

I'd like to thank Creative Sask for the involvement in our television series entitled *College TV*. We greatly appreciated the investment which allowed us additional marketing dollars in our efforts in promoting the show.

Mr. Speaker, those quotes showcase what Creative Sask is all about: finding ways to support Saskatchewan's artists and bringing their talents to new audiences and new markets. These are exciting times for the arts and creative industries in Saskatchewan, and Creative Sask will continue to play a vital role in supporting Saskatchewan talent.

I'm also proud of our government's commitment to artsVest Sask. artsVest is a sponsorship, training, and matching incentive program designed to help small- and mid-sized art, culture, and heritage organizations build partnerships with local businesses. artsVest is in its fourth year of operation and it has already leveraged \$2.4 million in private sector funding for our province's arts, culture, and heritage community. I want to thank the team at artsVest for continuing to open new doors for

the organizations that make up the backbone of Saskatchewan arts, culture, and heritage community.

Leveraging private sector investment is also key to another program I'm proud to be a part of: Main Street Saskatchewan. Main Street is a community-driven approach to revitalizing historic, commercial, and downtown areas. For every dollar invested by the government, Main Street Saskatchewan has leveraged an astounding \$10 in private sector investment. That's a 10 to 1 investment ratio, and it's a key component of the program's success, Mr. Speaker. First piloted in the communities of Indian Head, Maple Creek, Prince Albert, and Wolesey, Main Street funding of \$1.6 million combined with private sector investment to support the creation of 66 new jobs, 22 new businesses that opened, \$4.9 million in historic building and streetscape improvements, and \$6.5 million in property acquisitions.

This summer I was happy to announce that, based on these successes, Main Street has become an ongoing program to support Saskatchewan communities promote, conserve, and capitalize on the things that make their downtowns and commercial districts unique. In the words of Maple Creek's Main Street program coordinator, Royce Pettyjohn, "Participating in the Main Street Saskatchewan program has helped our community better understand the connection between heritage conservation, first impressions, tourism, and economic development." Not only that, Mr. Pettyjohn says, "Conservation of our community's past is helping us build our community's future."

Mr. Speaker, preserving Saskatchewan heritage is an important part of building a strong future for our province. So is encouraging Saskatchewan families and young people to become and to stay active and engaged in their communities. That's why our government launched and expanded the active families benefit, a fully refundable tax benefit to help families with the costs of their children's participation in cultural recreation and sports activities. Families are eligible for up to \$150 per year per child under 18.

That's also why our province's lottery system supports over 12,000 non-profit sport, culture, and recreational organizations. Fifty-two million dollars last year alone; that's an incredibly significant investment in communities across the province. And to promote funding stability, we've signed a new five-year lottery agreement between Sask Sport, SaskCulture, and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association.

And it's why we're proud to offer the community rinks affordability grant for the third year in a row. This year we're investing \$1.7 million to support Saskatchewan's municipal indoor skating and curling rinks. Mr. Speaker, we all know how important winter ice sports are to the life of any Saskatchewan community and the physical activity, health, and well-being of everyone from athletes to coaches to fans in the stands. I'm proud to say that in the first two years of the program, three point million dollars was invested to support more than 380 Saskatchewan communities. The program is open to communities, schools, non-profits, and First Nations, and provides grants of \$2,500 per indoor ice surface. I want to thank the folks at the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association for partnering with us to administer the program.

[19:15]

So what does that leave me to talk about now, Mr. Speaker? I think I'd like to spend some time talking about leadership and, rather, lack thereof. Leaders should embrace new ideas, but the members opposite are out-and-out scared. And as I've said before, as Lothar of the Hill People from *Saturday Night Live* has said, "Son, that is a good idea. It might even be a great idea. But it's a new idea. And because it's a new idea, we must fear and reject it."

Well welcome to Lothar's new channellers. The members opposite must be Lotharians. In past speeches, I've labelled them, the members opposite, as the Nostradamian nine, the nine prophets of doom, as well as Chicken Little, Henny Penny, Turkey Lurkey, Pinocchio, the boy that cried wolf, Gepetto, and Eeyore. And now we've got a new member, Sparky. Today though I'll leave them as the last of the Lotharians. Oh maybe, just maybe I have it a little off. Maybe they're channelling George Plimpton on *Paper Lion*, or Howard Cosell with his book, *I Never Played the Game*.

To them I say this: criticize all you want. As for me, I've tried to spend my life living. I don't look at things and say, well I can't do that, or that will never work. Or if I try it or if I fail, or criticism should dissuade me, I'm not scared because I'm not afraid of starting over and re-evaluating. No, Mr. Speaker. I figure out ways to get things done, and I'm happy to say so do my friends, family, and all of my colleagues. Andy Warhol was not scared. I'm sure the members opposite have heard of him. "Art is what you can get away with," he said, and he was right.

In the words of Teddy Roosevelt, words those of us on this side of the House like to put into action:

It's not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs . . . because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows [the great achievements and the] great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at last fails while . . . [he's doing] greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

So that's us, Mr. Speaker. We say what we mean. We mean what we say. We have a plan to keep Saskatchewan strong.

But what about the members opposite? Who do they represent? What do they believe? What's their plan? How would anybody ever know? Their entire plan seems to be to disagree with the things our government is doing to make Saskatchewan the strongest it can be. They're not really for, they're not really for anything it seems. If you ask them — and believe me, we have — the only thing they can come up with is criticism about what we do. And that's just a sad state of affairs, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite like to talk about the so-called glory

days of the left of Saskatchewan. And you know what? I really can't blame them, because back in those days, they at least had leaders who led. Sure they led Saskatchewan into decline, but they did lead. You know what else they had back then, Mr. Speaker? They had honest-to-goodness policies. They had ideas. Now sure, many of those ideas were at best misguided. Channel Lake. Heck, Mr. Speaker, who am I kidding? Many of their ideas were also flat-out disastrous — closing rural hospitals, SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], Murdoch Carriere — but at least they were ideas.

So what do these nine offer for ideas? What does the NDP under the so-called leadership of the member opposite offer? Nothing but doom and gloom, Mr. Speaker, and fear. Fear of growth. Fear of new approaches of getting things done. Fear of things like partnerships with private sector to build new schools and transportation infrastructure like the Regina bypass.

And here's where it gets really shameful, Mr. Speaker. They don't have policies or ideas of their own. And they just don't want the people of this great province to realize just how abysmally they are lacking. So they try to sow the seeds of fear with the public. Luckily, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are far, far smarter than the opposition gives them credit for.

The people of Saskatchewan know that fear is not a policy. They know that it's not an idea. They know it for what it really is — a sad, last-ditch attempt to disguise the fact that left to their own devices, the members across the aisle have absolutely zero to offer the people of Saskatchewan. Zero ideas. Zero platform. Zero policies. Zero plans. The P3 [public-private partnership] manifesto, Mr. Speaker, that's just pitiful and that's the exact opposite of what we're offering the people of this province.

We have ideas. We have policies. We have a plan. We have a platform. We have all of those. That plan is laid out in the Throne Speech, a Throne Speech I am thrilled to support. That's why, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to support our government's Throne Speech, and I won't be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise this evening to speak to the Throne Speech and some of the things that our government is doing. But first I, like most of my colleagues, would like to thank a few people who make our jobs possible. To my constituency assistant, Whitney Friesen, who I've talked about many times before in this House, I want to say thank you. I'm not back home very much, and he takes care of things while I'm gone. And I really appreciate all the work that he's done over his 21 years of service to the people of this province.

To the staff of my minister's office, to Cole, Adam, Annie, and David, I've been so very blessed. Regardless of the portfolio I had, I've had amazing staff in my minister's offices. And this one is no exception, and I want to thank them for all the work that they do.

Mr. Speaker, and to my family. My family, through a series of circumstances, has become a little bit larger lately. And so I wanted to thank Jasmine, Sharmaine, Dylan, Ben, Adrienne, Lyle, and Anaisa for all that they've done to help me out, for all of their support, and more importantly than that, Mr. Speaker, for all of their understanding for me being gone so much and that they've spent the last several months taking care of each other as well as taking care of me. So I want to thank them.

And I do want to thank my deputy minister, Nithi, and the staff in the Highways ministry for their patience over the last several months as they've taught another Highways minister the ropes and had patience as I learn my way around.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank a very good friend of mine. He has a vast history and experience with highways in Saskatchewan, both under this government and the previous administration. And he spent a lot of time this weekend . . . I asked him if he had some stories for me and he did. And so he spent a lot of time out on the weekend sending me some information, and I told him I was going to thank him publicly. And he didn't want any kind of public recognition, so I'm just going to call him George. So to George, I want to say thank you for all of your help, helping me put this speech together over the weekend, and I hope I do justice to the information that you've given me. And I'll get to some of that in a few minutes.

I'd also like to thank the people of the Martensville constituency for seven and a half years of support from the constituency. My constituency has changed a lot, even the last seven years. It's growing a lot. Martensville and Warman remain some of the fastest growing communities in our entire province. And it's so exciting; it seems like every weekend when I go home there's something new being built, whether it's new houses or new commercial developments, new rec centres. There's a lot going on. And I'm very thankful for the support of this government in recognizing that growth and the commitment to joint-use schools in both Warman and Martensville. The other communities I represent are growing as well, Mr. Speaker, and it's exciting to see.

Good things are happening. My constituency will be changing again. After the next election, the boundaries change because of the massive population growth. I'll be losing four of my communities and two of my RMs [rural municipality]. I know I still have some time left with these folks, but to the mayors and reeves of the communities that I'm losing, I want to say thank you for all of your support and help over the last seven and a half years.

I had mentioned in one of my last speeches in this House — it was before I was named Highways minister; I think it was to the great surprise of the then Highways minister — that I didn't really have any highways issues in my constituency. Because I really don't. Mr. Speaker, I recall when I was in opposition I wrote to the then Highways minister, the member for Athabasca. My highways were not in great shape in 2007, and so I sent him a letter and I asked him to come out to my constituency to drive some of those roads with me. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? No surprise. He didn't show up.

And, Mr. Speaker, the difference between our government and theirs is we're not talking about highways, we're actually fixing

them. Connecting Warman and Martensville is Highway 305. It's the main road that connects those two communities, and if you count the population in Warman and Martensville and the outlying areas, there's probably getting close to about 20,000 people. And 305 is this windy little goat path that goes from one community to the next. There's no shoulders, and the edges of the highways were all crumbling.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have recently invested \$22 million to move 305 north, \$22 million . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Finance minister is having a bit of a meltdown. Twenty-two million dollars to move 305 farther north and completely rebuild it so that these two booming communities have a safe form of transportation between the two of them. And, Mr. Speaker, 305 is also facilitating access to a very large commercial development on the north end of Warman.

Another road that was in serious disrepair when I was first elected was the access road off of Highway 16 into the community of Dalmeny. I had talked to many people over the years, folks who were interested in moving to Dalmeny who actually, after driving the road into Dalmeny to go look at houses, decided they didn't want to move there because the road was so bad. And, Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of years we've invested \$20 million in completely rebuilding that road so the people there have a safe road in and out of their community, and it will also facilitate growth in the community of Dalmeny. Mr. Speaker, improvements aren't just in my constituency. We see them across the province.

I do want to talk for a minute about the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford who is . . . This spring the Premier appointed him my Legislative Secretary with a focus on TMS [thin membrane surface] roads. And, Mr. Speaker, he has done a phenomenal job. I know that he won't brag about himself, he's not that kind of guy, but I'm happy to do it for him. Mr. Speaker, he spent the summer driving 14 000 kilometres on our highway system to check out for himself the state of our highways in Saskatchewan, and I want to publicly thank him for all the work that he's done on behalf of the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, he connected with RMs, with area transportation committees, with road crews, to get their opinions on what their priorities are. We have contacted all rural MLAs in this Chamber. I sent letters to the members for Athabasca and Cumberland as well to get their input, and I want to thank all of those MLAs for getting back to me with their input and responses. It will certainly help as we set our priorities going forward.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know that there is a lot of work to do in this province. We have invested a record amount of money into highways since coming into office in 2007. And there still is a lot of work to do, Mr. Speaker, partly because of the state of the highways that the NDP left behind.

Between 1991 and 2007, the NDP reverted 910 kilometres of TMS highway back to gravel. And, Mr. Speaker, under our administration we have a pilot project to turn TMS into super grids, which actually serve the people of this province better. The NDP didn't do that; they didn't turn these into super grids. They just shaved the pavement off, threw some gravel on and

said, there's your road — almost 1000 kilometres of TMS highway across this province, Mr. Speaker. And the reversions were necessary because the roads were so bad and they didn't want to invest in those roads. And, Mr. Speaker, their attitude is so evident back then and I'm pretty sure it's probably just as evident today.

In 2007, when they were participating in a reversion back to gravel, Dwain Lingenfelter — and I know folks opposite don't want to talk about Mr. Lingenfelter very much — but he said, and I quote, "I don't see anything wrong with taxpayers fixing their own roads. This is what community building is all about." Community building — taking a bucket of gravel and going out to your road to fill a pothole. That's their definition of community building. I'm glad we've moved on from those dark days, Mr. Speaker, because that's pretty pathetic.

Because, Mr. Speaker, under the NDP, the roads in this province fell apart because of sheer neglect. We see now our roads falling apart — and I will be the first to admit that we have roads that need some help — but, Mr. Speaker, they're falling apart now because of increased traffic on our roads and the fact that we have so many more trucks on our highways, beating those highways because of the increased economic activity in our province. And, Mr. Speaker, while there is still work to do, I guess I am glad that the work that needs to be done is because our province is doing well, not because we are ignoring our highway system.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, improvements are happening across the province. In the constituency of Cumberland alone, they have seen a 75 per cent increase in highway spending in our first seven years as opposed to the NDP's last seven years. So I know that the two northern members like to stand and, either in committee or in the House — when they get a chance to get up on their feet in the House because question period's kind of taken over by two other individuals here — but when they do get a chance, they like to talk about northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And we are investing in northern Saskatchewan.

[19:30]

On Highway 123, when I wrote to the opposition members, the northern opposition members asking for their priority list, the member for Cumberland had mentioned 123. Mr. Speaker, we've invested over \$2 million on 123. And this is a letter from the mayor of Cumberland House, and I'll quote:

We applaud your hard work and dedication that has kept the community safe during travels on these highways. We express our deep appreciation for the work that you are doing to maintain Highway 123 this winter season.

Mr. Speaker, we are investing across our province. Overall highway spending is up 80 per cent in our first seven years compared to the NDP's last seven years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that the member for Athabasca, who is the Highways critic, will say that they had no money for roads. We heard that, I believe, last week in response to a colleague's speech. He'll sit there and complain they didn't have any money for roads, so how could we possibly expect them to have fixed anything? But, Mr. Speaker, in the very next

breath he will tell us that they left us \$2 billion and we're not supposed to mess it up. I'm pretty sure that's what . . . which is what he said. They left us \$2 billion. Actually I believe what he said is billions in the bank is what the NDP left us when we took office. Mr. Speaker, it obviously can't be both.

But if they had all that money, why didn't they do something with it? Instead of building schools, they were closing them. Instead building hospitals, they were closing them. Instead of fixing our highways, they just let them fall into complete disrepair. So, Mr. Speaker, he can't have it both ways. If they had all this money, they should've been doing something.

But, Mr. Speaker, we understand that the NDP have a very hard time accepting blame for anything that they did or did not do in their time in office. They don't like talking about their history very much. But what is even more shocking to me than them not accepting blame, Mr. Speaker, is taking credit for things that they actually never did do.

I have been told that in 2011 when there were repairs going on on Highway 155, the member for Athabasca had stopped by, talked to some road crews. Guess what he said? That 155 in the year 2011 was getting fixed because he was Highways minister in 2007. And he stood there and took credit for the repair of the highway, Mr. Speaker. They didn't do it; we did.

Mr. Speaker, we know why the NDP didn't fix highways. Their history shows that they completely abdicated rural Saskatchewan. And where are our highways, Mr. Speaker? In rural Saskatchewan. There was no political upside for them to fix those highways. They didn't get votes out there and, Mr. Speaker, it was just one more thing to rural Saskatchewan, the NDP government completely ignoring the needs in those communities.

Mr. Speaker, I know that in the last couple years the CAA [Canadian Automobile Association] worst road list has been released and, Mr. Speaker, I have to say it's not actually necessarily a bad thing when those lists come out, for a few reasons. It reinforces what we've said all along that roads do need to be fixed, Mr. Speaker, but as I've said, the difference is that under the NDP those repairs were necessary due to complete neglect. It also keeps us accountable, and there's nothing wrong with a government being held accountable. And, Mr. Speaker, it allows taxpayers' voices to be heard.

And I will point out, Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite — because they ignored a lot of roads along the way when they were in government — the 2012 CAA worst road list, there's a top 10. One of them's an RM road, so I'll take that one out of the mix. So of the top nine, we have fixed seven of them, Mr. Speaker, in two years. The 2013 CAA worst road list, we have fixed a majority of those in just a year, Mr. Speaker, so we are paying attention to the people of this province and fixing the roads that they view as a priority.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have so many examples of roads that the NDP completely ignored. It's interesting. I guess kind of the joy of the Internet, things never really disappear. You can always go find things.

But I have pictures that the fine people who lived around and

had to drive on Highway 368 to St. Brieux had put up over the years. There's a whole lot of different descriptors for what NDP stands for: now destroying the province, new democratic potholes, and a few others that I can't say because there's some unparliamentary language in there, Mr. Speaker. And I'm told that prior to 2007, the good people of Lake Lenore and St. Brieux actually had outhouses put up on either side of the highway, spray-painted NDP toll road on them, Mr. Speaker, because the road was so bad. And I can say that those toll booths are no longer there. We have invested almost \$27 million improving 36 kilometres of highway in that area, Mr. Speaker.

In 2006 there was a website set up having to do with Highway 32, and you can still check it out. It's still online. And I just want to read some of the quotes that I found on that website.

Government's lack of funding to build and maintain this highway is just another example of the rural people being shafted. Where are our tax dollars going? What about all the revenue the province collects from the oil and gas royalties coming from the Southwest? Why are rural people always treated like 'third' class citizens?

And, Mr. Speaker, again that was from 2006. And another quote: "I agree this highway is a nightmare and to be avoided at all costs. What a shame and how embarrassing."

And, Mr. Speaker, the quotes and the things that people were writing on that website ended in 2009, and do you know why? Because we fixed the road. We invested almost \$48 million and improved 128 kilometres of highway on Highway 32. And the end result, Mr. Speaker, were headlines in local newspapers: "Highway 32 back in business;" "From goat trail to a highway;" "Highway 32, from travesty to legacy." Mr. Speaker, I will say this again, there is still a lot of work to do but there was so much catching up to do when we took over in 2007.

Mr. Speaker, I anticipate getting a few questions from the NDP Highways critic, the member for Athabasca in this session, but in the meantime I have a couple of questions for him mainly about what roads does he drive when he goes home. Because there's a few roads that he can take, whether it's 155, where we've invested \$115 million; Highway 155, where we've invested \$14 million; Highway 4, which has been rebuilt, the Glaslyn, Meadow Lake, Buffalo Narrows area. And I just talked to the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Meadow Lake, and he confirms that that's a pretty nice road now compared to what it used to be. Mr. Speaker, there's more work to do. Or does he fly out of Buffalo Narrows airport which, Mr. Speaker, the resurfacing of that airport is in our fall tender plan for this year. So the roads that he drives we are fixing as well, Mr. Speaker.

And we know, Mr. Speaker, that highways were not a priority when the NDP were in government, and it has become painfully obvious that they are not a priority when they're in opposition either, Mr. Speaker. I would point out that the day before the Throne Speech was read, the NDP released out of their communications department, "NDP lays out Throne Speech must-haves," a list of 25 top priorities for the NDP that were must-haves to be seen in the Throne Speech. You know what's not in here, Mr. Speaker? Not one mention of highways, Not a

word. Not a reference. In the top 25, nothing on highways. Not a priority in government, Mr. Speaker, obviously not a priority in opposition.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's not even just the press release that they sent out before the Throne Speech. On March 18th of this year right before the budget, they sent out another must-have list. Apparently in March there was only seven things that they wanted. Now there's 25. And in March, their seven must-haves for the budget, highways wasn't mentioned. Not once. Not once at budget time, Mr. Speaker. The Opposition Leader's leadership platform in 2013, again highways not mentioned. Mr. Speaker, I don't think they have any credibility on this issue, not just because of their history when it comes to highways, Mr. Speaker, but because they're not making it a priority today either.

Mr. Speaker, we are not only just keeping up with repairs and maintenance, but we're building for the future. And I have a long list of major projects that we're undertaking in this province, Mr. Speaker. There's passing lanes on Highways 7 and 10, the new bridge at St. Louis that just opened a couple weeks ago, twinning projects on Highways 16 and 7. There's design work under way for overpasses in Warman and Martensville, for which I'm quite thankful. There's planning work under way for the perimeter highway around Saskatoon. There's a Regina bypass, which is the biggest infrastructure project of our province's history, Mr. Speaker. We provided funding for a new commuter bridge in Saskatoon, and the Premier recently committed to help fund the second bridge in Prince Albert.

And I do have to point out, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty interesting, the member for Athabasca and his different viewpoints when it comes to the P3 project in Saskatoon versus Prince Albert. When we announced one in Saskatoon, the member for Athabasca said, and I quote, "Saskatoon needs a bridge . . . It's good for the economy so we've got to take advantage of it." Fully supportive apparently of that bridge but, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to exactly the same funding proposal for the second bridge in Prince Albert, the member for Athabasca said recently in a radio interview, and I quote, "That's really a cop-out."

So it's perfectly fine. He's supportive when we take this approach in Saskatoon, but he's not at all supportive of the same approach in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure the people of that city will be interested to know that the NDP don't support a new bridge for Prince Albert funded under exactly the same model as the bridge for Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, also outlined in the Throne Speech is an innovative proposal that we received from SARM, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. I thought I'd spell out that acronym for the members opposite because they're not probably familiar with what SARM is. And, Mr. Speaker, it's to use Building Canada Fund money to help build rural RM roads that are servicing the resource industry, Mr. Speaker. And we look forward to continuing to work with SARM to examine that proposal.

Mr. Speaker, we are doing all of these things — all of the maintenance, all the repairs, all of these large projects that I

have outlined — and, Mr. Speaker, we are doing it all within a balanced budget. And we are doing that because we have a plan, the plan for growth that was released by the Premier, and it guides the decisions that we make in government, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, we didn't just have plans in government; we had plans in opposition as well. I know that when the Premier was named leader of our party, he came out with a plan for Saskatchewan and the people of this province judge us on that.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP haven't figured out yet that they need to do more than just simply oppose. That is part of their job. I've been in opposition. I understand that the part of what their job is, Mr. Speaker, is to tell the people of this province what they want to do, how they're going to do it, and what they're planning on spending for it, Mr. Speaker.

And we have seen absolutely none of that from the NDP over the last seven years. Mr. Speaker, not only are they not ready to govern, they haven't figured out to be an opposition party. But luckily for them, they'll have years and years and years to figure out how to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing unprecedented growth in our province, and we are planning accordingly. We are building new schools, new hospitals, unprecedented money for highways, lower taxes, and programs for those who need our help. And, Mr. Speaker, as I said, all of this within balanced budgets.

Mr. Speaker, for all of these reasons I will be supporting our government's Throne Speech, and I will not be supporting the opposition's amendment.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in my place and join the debate this evening on the Throne Speech motion. Again there's a certain approach to these things, Mr. Speaker, and I wouldn't want to steer too far off that path, but as it is often said and is rightly said, to start, we've got a lot of reasons to be thankful as members serving in this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

And certainly the people that make this building work, the people that take care of the security of this place, we've had a very, very pointed reminder of the important work that gets done and how thankful we should be for all the different ways that people contribute to that. So to all the Legislative Assembly staff, to the folks at the Table, and in particular to the Sergeant-at-Arms and all the folks working in security and making sure that the people's Assembly is safe and continuing to have that access from the people themselves, Mr. Speaker, I want to say very publicly, thank you very much for all that you do.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the thanks that is due to friends and family, certainly we don't get here by ourselves and we don't — if you go at this with any kind of sustained effort, Mr. Speaker — you don't do that by yourself. So in terms of my family, in terms of my family and friends that keep me going in this and keep me on the path and straighten

me out when the situation warrants, Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you very much as well.

And as well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of all the staff that we work with, be it on the constituency side or in the caucus office, I've got plenty of reasons to be thankful for there as well, Mr. Speaker. And certainly I want to say thank you very much to the folks in the constituency office, the folks in the executive association for the Regina Elphinstone-Centre NDP. I want to say thank you to the caucus office staff here, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to say again, to start where this all begins, thank you to the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre for placing this task before me in terms of representing in this Assembly the hopes and dreams and aspirations of the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre. And in terms of trying to work and advance the issues that they bring forward and for their support thus far, Mr. Speaker, and for their, again, their continued feedback in terms of how to do this job and do it better, Mr. Speaker, I'm undyingly grateful for that.

One of the things that I always find interesting is when different of us talk about the people that they encounter in their day-to-day life in their work either as a MLA or as a cabinet minister. And certainly there are people that stand out for me on a daily basis that inspire me when maybe I'm getting a little dragged down, Mr. Speaker, or when I'm thinking that, you know, what's a way to do the job better. But I think of people like Winnie Stephenson, who lives on 1300 block Cameron, and who has had lots of ups and downs in life, but she takes care of 13 block Cameron. She's out cleaning the yard at Albert School when it needs it, Mr. Speaker. She's one of those neighbours that is always there for the kids, for the seniors, and all points in between. And I think of somebody like Winnie Stephenson when I think of service.

[19:45]

I think of somebody like the folks that are on the Heritage Community Association, Mr. Speaker, that just this week before, while we were here, they were opening up two new play structures for which they'd raised upwards of \$100,000, Mr. Speaker. And again, in terms of the work that is done by Executive Director Kathleen Wilson and by president and board with the community association, Mr. Speaker, president being Josh Haugerud, I think that they make their community a better place.

I think about the community association over in my home neck of the woods, North Central, Mr. Speaker. I think about President Joely BigEagle-Kequahtoo-way. I think about Executive Director Michael Parker and Kari Herbert and the work that they do to make our community a better place.

I think about all the folks in the Cathedral Village or in the Warehouse District, and I think about all these diverse communities that go to making Regina Elphinstone-Centre the wonderful, diverse, exciting place that it is. And I again am reminded of how fortunate I am to have been born and raised there, Mr. Speaker, and how fortunate I am to do work with these people in terms of the Legislative Assembly. I think about all the different organizations, the businesses, the institutions that are part of that constituency, Mr. Speaker, and again I am

reminded of how fortunate I am.

To the Throne Speech itself, Mr. Speaker, again it's through that lens of how my neighbours and my constituents, how they respond to the issues that are raised by the Throne Speech, how I see some things that are resonant in the Throne Speech and some things that are perhaps absent in terms of the issues that they bring up with me on the street or in and around the community.

And I think about things like again there's some mention made of different education initiatives. I'm glad to see them. I think about things like the Regina revitalization initiative, and I wonder about how this will be advanced by the Throne Speech. I think about the North Central Shared Facility and the revitalization of Scott Collegiate and how this Throne Speech will either advance that or not. I think about the new schools that have been promised and that are needed, Mr. Speaker. I think about the announcement we've heard about Sacred Heart Community School being revitalized, and I think about all the work that was put into calling out loud and clear on the part of community for not just a replacement of the gym, but to see the response in terms of a promised revitalized school.

I think about the work of people like Elder Mike Pinay. I think about Father John Weckend over at St. Cecilia's. I think about the principal there, at Sacred Heart, Mr. Speaker, Starla Grebinski, an award-winning educator. And I think about the community council and all the folks that pitched in and said, you know, our kids deserve the best. They don't need to be second-class citizens. They don't need to have second-class education, Mr. Speaker. They deserve to have something as good as anyone else in this city.

So I'm glad to see a promise on that coming, Mr. Speaker, but you'll forgive me if I'll hold off the hosannas until that day arrives.

I was glad to see, Mr. Speaker, the Seven Stones opening. I was glad to be there with the Minister of Education, along with my colleague the member from Rosemont. Seven Stones, of course, is built on the site of the old Herchmer Community School. Again, Mr. Speaker, it's good to see Seven Stones coming forward, but it bears reminding that Wascana School and Herchmer School have been closed. There's one new school, and Wascana now of course is site to the old Connaught, as that community undergoes this shuffle and square dance that is being undertaken. And, Mr. Speaker, again it's good to see that Seven Stones school, and I hope that the new structure and some of the new approaches to learning inherent in that structure work out well and work out with the students' best interests firmly at the fore.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that, you know, you've got to have two schools merge to get that one new school. And then with Scott Collegiate, Mr. Speaker, this is something that again I'm on record very clearly supporting steps of that government to recognize the importance of that project. This is a project that was put forward by the then Regina Public School Board and the Regina Health District, or the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, Mr. Speaker, as a joint proposal. It was a proposal that was supported by the then government in February of 2007, with \$2 million of planning money. And certainly, the City of

Regina has proved to be a good supporter of that project and has been as good as their word on the different components therein. The health region has been forced to stand back from the initial proposal, which is a shame, Mr. Speaker. Albert Library is still an ongoing component of that project and we're glad to see that, Mr. Speaker, again the city of Regina on this project being as good as their word.

And then there's the Regina Public School Board, which again has to work in concert with the Ministry of Education. And I know that there are plans out right now to be approved, and I hope to see the day sooner rather than later, Mr. Speaker, when the sod is turned on this and we're finally moving forward, and that the kids at Scott Collegiate get a first-class education in a first-class facility like they so richly deserve.

And it's been a long time coming, Mr. Speaker, but I live in hope. I'm a positive person. And I look forward to the day when that happens, just as I was happy to salute the then minister of Education in 2008 when it was number two in the capital list of the province and when it was affirmed by the minister of Education. Just like I was there to say, you know, this is a good step forward before the 2011 election, Mr. Speaker, when another minister of Education made an announcement in the gym at Albert School.

And I'll certainly be there when they roll out the parade, Mr. Speaker, and you know, again, please do it sooner rather than later. Because it's not just the way that the politics work in here, Mr. Speaker, but the games that are getting played with slow-walking a project like that affects the futures and the lives of the kids that are getting education at that school. And there's a wonderful educational team there: tremendous principal, tremendous vice-principal, excellent teachers. And, Mr. Speaker, they should have the tools to do the job just like any other school. So I look forward to seeing that happen.

Mr. Speaker, again there are a lot of things happening in Regina Elphinstone-Centre. There are a lot of things happening around housing. And some of the things that I'm really glad to see is the way that some of the different community-based organizations are able to pursue different initiatives. I'm glad to see the work being brought to bear by Silver Sage, the housing arm of the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council.

I'm glad to see the work of Habitat for Humanity, Mr. Speaker. And again it's referenced in this speech, the \$7.54 million that this government has put into operational funding for that, for that great organization to date. And that's great, Mr. Speaker. And again I'm on record saying, you know, thank God for Habitat for Humanity because for a long time there, Mr. Speaker, on this government's watch, they were the only ones acting on housing.

And so when we hear speeches like the one from the Minister of Social Services today where she talked about the NDP times and so on and so forth, well, Mr. Speaker, when we had surplus we put it into things like affordable housing. You know, February 2007, part of that announcement around Scott Collegiate or Mount Royal west or the funding that got the Regina Trades and Skills Centre started up, big, big segment of that money went to housing, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the first actions of this government when they came to power, that first budget, was to cut \$8 million from Sask Housing Corporation, cut \$8 million from Sask Housing Corporation. So they've just about made up that one-year cut from the Sask Housing Corporation side of the ledger, Mr. Speaker.

So again, lots of great things happening around housing: Namerind doing some good work, Ranch Ehrlo doing some great work, Street Culture Kidz are doing some good work. There are some great things happening in child care, Mr. Speaker.

There are some great things happening around community safety, around the old bylaw standards enforcement team and what used to . . . And we'll see if this ever shows up, but this government talks about the work that's being done around the Hub. Well in the city of Regina we used to have something called the Inner City Community Partnership that did a lot of valuable work around the inner city and around safer communities, around working in partnership with things like the safer communities and neighbourhoods enforcement officers in working with community, in working for better housing for all, Mr. Speaker. So there's some great work that continues there.

And again I'm so thankful for the great efforts of partners like the Regina Police Service, for the community associations. And you know, would the day come soon, Mr. Speaker, when we see the Hub come to Regina, if it takes renaming something to get their credit for it, Mr. Speaker, so that this government might participate, well then so be it, but make it happen.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes in these speeches you think about, you know, what are the good things in the Throne Speech, what are the bad things, and what are the ugly? I grew up watching a lot of Clint Eastwood spaghetti westerns, I guess, Mr. Speaker. But you know, those were some of the good things.

Some of the other good things, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the work that we see in this Throne Speech, again it's not . . . Far be it from all being bad, Mr. Speaker. We're glad to see the increases to the number of adult basic education seats again and to apprentice training seats, Mr. Speaker. Again in Regina Elphinstone-Centre we've seen community-based organizations providing very successful adult basic education programs, Mr. Speaker, that had their funding pulled by this government. But you know, I was glad to see it in the growth plan, and I'm glad to see the progress that's again here today in terms of the work that needs to be done around adult basic ed. And again, Mr. Speaker, this is work that can't come too soon.

I'm glad to see the reintroduction of the Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative to assist municipal infrastructure development and expansion of the program to First Nations — to underline that, Mr. Speaker, the expansion of the program to First Nations. But again, Mr. Speaker, my hope is that this is broadly taken up by First Nations across the province and that it doesn't wind up with different sort of pilots we've seen from this government before, Mr. Speaker, where there's a very select few that wind up accessing the program. And again, Mr. Speaker, if this gets into helping First Nations, let alone the great work that can be done with this through other municipalities, if SIGI [Saskatchewan infrastructure growth

initiative] can help that out, we're glad to see that coming forward.

Other of the health legislation pieces, be it on privacy or reducing wait times for organ transplants or the scope of services around pharmacists, Mr. Speaker, these are fine things and we're glad to see them in the mix. We're glad to see the improvement to high-speed Internet and the cell phone services in hundreds of Saskatchewan communities. Well that is as it should be, Mr. Speaker.

We're glad to see the legislative changes to help police officers and the justice system better protect victims of domestic violence. And again, Mr. Speaker, this is as it should be. We look forward to seeing how this plays out, but this for me highlights the fact that in the province of Saskatchewan we're one of the leaders in Canada when it comes to domestic violence. That's not something to be proud of, Mr. Speaker. We've got chronic overcrowding when it comes to the work that's being done by Transition House and by shelters throughout this province. And again, Mr. Speaker, we're glad to see this step forward here, but this is something that there's a lot of work to be done on in terms of that answering the scourge of domestic violence here in Saskatchewan.

I'm glad to see the development of a poverty reduction strategy that "... builds on the government's significant efforts to reduce poverty." Again, Mr. Speaker, this is sort of, this is one of these head-scratchers that the Sask Party likes to throw up every now and then because this is something that's been called for from many quarters for a long time. And, Mr. Speaker, it's funny. I hear the Minister for Social Services beaking from her chair about why didn't you guys do it. Well there were different steps that we took to fight against poverty, Mr. Speaker.

But one of the interesting things about this government, Mr. Speaker, is that you've now got a Minister of Social Services once again who's back in the saddle at Social Services and who's shot down many different previous requests for an anti-poverty strategy, and so we wonder what's different this time, Mr. Speaker. Has there been some kind of road to Damascus conversion? Is that what's going on? Are the calls that have come to the minister's ears been so overwhelming? Well we hope it's the latter, Mr. Speaker, but it's interesting to see that now it comes forward, and again we hope that this bears fruit. And if this does reduce poverty, Mr. Speaker, then hallelujah — that's great. But you'll forgive us if we're a bit skeptical as we wait to see how that minister works out again.

[20:00]

That minister who, you know, was talking about housing earlier this afternoon and who was part of that government that their first response on housing was to cut \$8 million from the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation's budget — the first Sask Party budget, 2008 ... [inaudible interjection] ... Oh we're getting to that. We're getting to that.

So we carry on through this speech, Mr. Speaker. There are some good things there. I want to see how the mental health and addictions commission reports out. We'll be very interested to see that, Mr. Speaker, because there are a lot of shortcomings in the system as it presents, Mr. Speaker. And I don't think that's

any great secret that I'm letting folks in on. Again with these commissions, we wait to see the implementation and how it plays out on the ground and again, how the SaskParty is or isn't as good as its word.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, we had a lot of ballyhoo around the whole question of hot-spotting and the idea of dealing with people that have multiple barriers and the way that that impacts emergency rooms and the health care system generally, and whether or not they're being properly addressed or appropriately addressed through the system. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, we're still waiting to see the good deeds follow up the good words.

So again, Mr. Speaker, be it on the commission or be it on different things that we hear from this government, we'll see. We'll wait for the proof to be in the pudding before we get into full sort of compliments on how it's all worked out.

In terms of the bad, Mr. Speaker, be it the good, the bad, and the ugly, well in terms of the bad, we continue to see the cost of living going up. We continue to see rate hikes in the Crowns while at the same time Crown debt is going up, Mr. Speaker. Again one of the things that's guarded against the privatization instincts of this government, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they figured out earlier on that they could stack the Crown debt up, you know, higher and higher and higher. So you know, they've got the billboards out there that say debt is down, but the Crown debt is going up and their own books prove, bear that out, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the emergency room situations, again from the Canadian Institute for Health Information, we see that situation getting worse. And in the case of city of Regina, Mr. Speaker, I know for a fact what's happened over at Pasqua. Well the government held up the Meadow Primary Health Care Centre as one of the things that was going to solve this. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a centre that's been having a lot of trouble holding on to the doctors they've got. Now there's a nurse practitioner or two that are working there. And again they're doing a great job, but again when this government is confronted with a crisis, Mr. Speaker, we often as not see the solution not really living up to the fine words that it's introduced with.

I'm glad to see the continued graduate retention program but, Mr. Speaker, I think that earlier on when this government extended it to out-of-province grads, at that time there was a call to extend it to graduate students as well, and they should heed that call. And you know, if they want to ignore the opposition in that regard, Mr. Speaker, fair enough. But listen to the graduate students in this province and how they are calling out for the kind of support that that program offers. And they'll need it, Mr. Speaker, because of course tuition in Saskatchewan, we're now ... And again this is from a Statistics Canada report that comes out annually and that members from that government used in different connections over the years when it suited their purposes, Mr. Speaker. But Statistics Canada rates tuition as second highest in Saskatchewan, out of all the Canadian jurisdictions. And, Mr. Speaker, we're not second, we're actually first in terms of the rate at which that tuition is going up. It's, you know, Saskatchewan is leading the nation when it comes to the speed with which our tuition is going up. And again, Mr. Speaker, this is because the

government has taken a pass when it comes to working with the sector partners to make sure that tuition remains affordable. And we'd seen it earlier on in their administration, Mr. Speaker, but when it comes to what is the approach to tuition, now we get silence or baffle-gab or avoidance or all of it, Mr. Speaker, from this government.

Again there are some good things going on throughout the sector but some of the bad things, Mr. Speaker, to skip around a bit here, there's been some very serious calls coming out of what's happening in our corrections system, Mr. Speaker. And in terms of the overcrowding that's gone on in the system and the way that that's gotten worse year over year, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that's presiding over a situation that is increasingly dangerous for corrections workers and it's increasingly . . . It doesn't do the job in terms of what should be done in terms of the programming that will make the difference between reoffending or not, Mr. Speaker, in terms of giving the life skills tools or the educational tools that inmates need if they are going to equip themselves for something better than just a revolving door back into the system. And that's nowhere in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

So again there's some good, there's some bad, but now we turn to the ugly, Mr. Speaker. And first off, there's lean. And I guess the . . . And I hear the member from Moose Jaw North who just said the good, the bad, and the ugly, and he just asked me if I looked in the mirror. Now I don't know if he's going to start in on anyone in my family wearing combat boots next, Mr. Speaker, but again this is the kind of witty calibre of remark we've come to expect from the member from Moose Jaw North. So you know, just carry on, I guess, is my advice to him.

But he's actually providing sort of proof positive of a very interesting observation from political columnist Murray Mandryk when he was talking about lean. And this is from *Leader-Post*, October 29th, 2014, "Mandryk: Lean criticism can't be dismissed." And again, Mr. Speaker, this comes on the heels of a Throne Speech where this government all but ducked and ran when it came to valuing their lean record, but of course there's nowhere to hide when it comes to question period. But Mandryk closes off his column about the severance of Maura Davies with this sentence: "A clear message in Davies's dismissal is the Saskatchewan Party government seems only interested in cheerleaders."

Cheerleaders, Mr. Speaker. I can think of a few cheerleaders over there, Mr. Speaker. And again it's borne out in some of the things that get tossed across. It's been borne out in a number of the speeches that we've heard here today. I think on Thursday, Mr. Speaker, I heard the member from Arm River-Watrous talking about how the NDP '70s were the same as the dirty thirties in Saskatchewan, and that's what passes for sort of, you know, insightful comment over there, Mr. Speaker.

And now I hear the member from Martensville weighing in. And of course, you know, I've had the pleasure to follow her in this debate and, you know, I've had the pleasure of sharing platforms with that member in 2007 when, then as the Sask Party Environment critic, the member from Martensville took the pledge on the climate change action fund. And so that \$300 million that's set aside for that, you know, good as gold. Again, Mr. Speaker, one of the first things they did in that budget to

follow was to murder the climate change action fund. So again it's interesting to hear what is said on their feet, but it's interesting also to examine their record, Mr. Speaker.

So back to Maura Davies and the lean criticism can't be dismissed. Again this is somebody that they've paid \$400,000 to sever out. This is somebody they've invested upwards of \$135,000 in lean training. And the problem is, Mr. Speaker, apparently she wasn't gung-ho enough about lean, or perhaps she was too good at her job and was pointing out the shortcomings in terms of the health care system.

But again, be it the tens of millions of dollars that are being wasted, or hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, on lean by this government, or be it the way that, you know, everybody's got to get on the bandwagon and the lean contracts are going to continue until morale improves, it's either that, Mr. Speaker, or you get fired up and of course the people of Saskatchewan are going to pick up the \$400,000 severance.

And again, Mr. Speaker, it's because, again to quote Mandryk, "A clear message in Davies's dismissal is the Saskatchewan Party government seems only interested in cheerleaders." And again, Mr. Speaker, that's similar to why, why did they re-up the John Black and Associates contract in the first place? Well, Mr. Speaker, because senior Health officials identified that there's an overwhelming concern about optics on the part of this government. So when it comes to managing their own image, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the cheerleaders, when it comes to the echo chamber, that they just want to hear only good things about what they're doing, and you know, the emperor's wearing a real nice set of new clothes over there, Mr. Speaker, and I guess we should all just stand back and admire, but that's not the job that we were sent here to do, Mr. Speaker, and that's not what people in Saskatchewan expect from their government.

In terms of P3s, Mr. Speaker — back to the ugly — you know, I sometimes think that the P3s are the way that this government is going to do what they did in the 1980s, Mr. Speaker. And you don't hear about the 1980s from this government, of course, because it's the sort of lost decade. It's like whoa, what happened then anyway? But you know, you follow the lineage and there's a whole lot of different connections on the org chart between them and this current government, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the things that happened in the 1980s, of course, Mr. Speaker, was that there were decisions that were taken that were a legacy of destruction and debt that tied hands of future governments to come. So you know, so far they haven't messed up the GRF [General Revenue Fund]. You know, we see them stacking up the Crowns' debt very nicely, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes to P3s, Mr. Speaker, I think this is where they get to go legacy on it, and get to sign in for deals that go 25, 30 years and then, you know, the hands of future governments are tied. And you know, when they're called to provide transparency on these deals, and the member from Regina Rosemont brought forward a very sensible bill in terms of transparency and accountability for the public-private partnerships being proposed by this government, well, no they didn't want that, Mr. Speaker. And this is a government that said they're going to be the most open and accountable in the history of Saskatchewan.

And again it looks pretty good in the black and white. It looks pretty good in the explanations, but saying it don't do it, Mr. Speaker. They've got to prove it. And they ain't proving it, Mr. Speaker. So with P3s we see them going back to their Tory roots, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the film industry, and again it was interesting listening to the remarks from the member from Regina Coronation Park, the newly minted Culture minister. And again he was out in the parks all summer, Mr. Speaker, and I heard him on the radio asking whether or not Saskatchewan people should get a half a day advance crack at the Internet web registration for the sites. This was a big thing that the Premier had sent him out to accomplish and well, you know, all well and good, Mr. Speaker, but I wonder, if he was out in the parks this summer, whether or not he was handing out the refund to all the people who had their bookings screwed up by his predecessor. I wonder if that's what he was up to when he was out and about, Mr. Speaker.

And when it comes to the film industry, Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Nutana asked him a question the other day about what the heck the Premier meant when he said on July 9 — and again, this is from Sun News, Mr. Speaker, so you know it's got to be faithfully reported here by Sun News in terms of the wise words of the Premier — he stated, and I quote:

I would be happy to agree if we could have other premiers in this country saying we ought not to have grants to any particular sectors. I'd agree with that, including the film sector, including any creative industry.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you hang out in politics long enough, you're bound to get a little suspicious or paranoid even, Mr. Speaker. But given the way this government, you know, having campaigned on something very different, came out in the dead of night and killed the film tax credit and put the film industry into no end of turmoil . . . What did they have to say before the election, Mr. Speaker? Well I think they were singing loud the praises of the industry. I think it was in their platform. I think the Premier was quite happy to guest on *Corner Gas*. You know, there was no end to the sort of hugging and kissing that went on back then, Mr. Speaker.

But after the election, of course they killed the film tax credit, and the industry is in a significant amount of disarray since. And when it comes to the new value-added tax credit that's being offered for manufacturing and processing generally, this government can't even figure out whether or not the film industry fits into that.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I bring that to bear by way of the Premier's quote because there are some over there who'd be like, oh we're great supporters of the creative industry. And to that I would say, yes, just like you were for the film industry, just like the way you communicated this to the people during the election and then did something very different after the election, Mr. Speaker.

So the Premier wants to have the hee-haw session about this with Sun News, Mr. Speaker. You know, just one right red meat right winger to another, I'm sure is how that went. I'll be very interested to see what this means in terms of what this

government means for the creative industry. Or perhaps they've blown their plan, so by raising it, Mr. Speaker, there's some kind of insurance involved in that. But again we await the explanation of the Premier in terms of what that really means.

[20:15]

In terms of smart meters, again my colleagues have very capably handled this. But just to read one headline, "Smart meter mess fails smell test," November 1st, 2014. And again you know, I don't think we're done figuring out what's gone on with this government and public safety and the waste of ratepayer dollars, Mr. Speaker. But again the story changes almost on a daily if not minute-by-minute basis from this government, and that is yet to be fully understood.

We see the government going off on different misadventures around MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging]. In 2008 the Premier stated, Mr. Speaker, that offering services such as an MRI for a fee seemed to be ". . . outside the Canada Health Act and an area where the government doesn't want to tread." You know, it almost sort of sounds like the now Minister of Finance on P3s back in 2008.

These things, it's interesting the evolution here, Mr. Speaker. In 2010, while the Premier was defending his government's growing use of private for-profit companies to provide health services, he said this: ". . . yes, we will use private clinics, within a public system — with one payer, no queue jumping, but we will use private clinics." Again, Mr. Speaker, heating it up just another little increment.

And then in 2012 while he was touting Saskatchewan's health care plans to the rest of the country — including, I might add, lean, Mr. Speaker — he said this: "No one's jumping the queue, no one's slapping down a credit card to get ahead of the line." And now, of course, we hear the Minister of Health offering up an adult conversation — at the instruction of his Premier of course — on the whole question of MRIs, on the whole question of, to use the Premier's words, jumping the queue, slapping down a credit card to get ahead of the line. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that it didn't make it into the Throne Speech, but it did make it into the spin gallery. So again we'll see where this government winds up on that.

One last thing that I'd like to touch on, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the ugly, and then I'll take my place, is just the way this government has acted on housing, Mr. Speaker. And again there's a pretty damning editorial in the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*. And again, Mr. Speaker, we hear the hee-haw gallery chiming in over there and yukking it up and hee-haw and laugh, laugh, laugh. But again, Mr. Speaker, I know they don't want to hear these things because, well it's their own record. And it's not cheerleading. It's not cheerleading, Mr. Speaker. I guess if I was cheerleading a little bit more, they'd be like, you know, that McCall's got a few things going. But because it's not cheerleading, Mr. Speaker, because it's referring to their record, of course they don't like that.

We've got the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, September 10th, 2014:

Hey, Saskatchewan Minister of Social Services Donna

Harpauer, there are a couple of questions that have come up about your job title and how in-touch you are with your community.

It is interesting to hear that you don't seem to think there are any "desperate homeless people" in this province. Can you clarify if that is just denial, or you really don't believe there are [any] desperate homeless people?

In case you missed it, people in Prince Albert have died in snowbanks — last winter and the winter before that. Would those people have been considered desperate homeless people?

Mr. Speaker, you get the point. To close the quote from that story, there are other . . . Again this is a minister who, one of the first things they did when they came to power, you know, proclaim housing to be a big priority and then cut the Sask Housing budget, Mr. Speaker. So you'll forgive our wait-and-see attitude when it comes to the action from the poverty reduction strategy or when it comes to real action from this minister on housing, other than offering up half-hearted apologies after the fact when she gets caught out, Mr. Speaker, in terms of just how out of touch she is and this government is when it comes to housing and desperate people seeking housing in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, to recap, there are some good things about this Throne Speech. There are some bad things about this Throne Speech, and there are some ugly things about this Throne Speech. And for that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment, and I will not be voting for the Throne Speech.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to be able to rise today and join with my colleagues in addressing this Throne Speech. But before I do, I would like to also add my voice to condolences for the families of Warrant Officer Vincent and Corporal Cirillo, two of our soldiers who were so tragically and needlessly killed in their line of duty.

I think my colleague from Prince Albert Carlton summed it up the best when he said that it's human nature for all of us when confronted with danger to duck and run, but the trained police officers go to the danger. And I think we saw that in that clip from Ottawa last week where people were running out of the building, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and the service people were going to the danger. And we need to thank them each and every day for providing the protection that they do.

But now to address the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech entitled, "Keeping Saskatchewan Strong." I think this Throne Speech provides a great overview of our existing initiatives and our plan for future initiatives to keep this province growing. And it's a plan that's going to make Saskatchewan the best place for us to live, for us to work, and for us to raise our families.

And I'd like to just mention a few things that are going on in my constituency of The Battlefords, the thing that this government is doing to help make life better for the people of

The Battlefords. Recently, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity on behalf of the Minister Responsible for Sask Housing Corp and Social Services to speak at the opening of our new pocket housing complex there. That's a complex that this government provided \$425,000 towards the funding for this project. That brings the total of 200 affordable housing units that this government has helped fund in our seven years in government, and that's a total of \$9.7 million that we provided for that initiative.

Mr. Speaker, all of us sat riveted to our chairs here and listened to the great orator from the North, the member from Athabasca, here some time ago. He had quoted a bunch of figures and facts and stuff that he was going on about. One of them was, at one point he said, a third of our caucus was leaving. Then he said later on, it was the vast majority of our caucus was leaving. Then it was back down to one-third of our caucus was leaving, but another third were looking for an easy exit. Well I'm not sure exactly what the numbers were, but I'd just like to share with him and the other members of this Assembly some numbers that are important, that are factual.

After the 2007 election, there was 20 members on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker. After the 2011 election, there was 9 members. That's a loss of 11 members. That's 55 per cent of their members that the voters of this province saw fit to send home. They're no longer here. Their chairs have vanished. Well no, they haven't vanished. I know where they are. They're all right here. In fact I think I'm in one of them. Mr. Taylor is no longer here. I have that chair now. And that's what the people of Saskatchewan voted for.

He talked about the mountain of money that he left us. And we've heard some of my colleagues speak about that tonight. It wasn't a mountain of money. It was a mountain of infrastructure deficit. If we were getting a mountain of money at that time, why was this province still receiving equalization payments from the federal government?

In 2005, we received \$89 million in equalization payments from the federal government; 2006, \$13 million; then in their last year of government, 2007, \$226 million we received in equalization payments. Facts don't jibe here somehow, folks. Why is that?

Here's another number: \$81,816,889. That's the increase in building permits in my constituency, The Battlefords, in the first five years of our government compared to the last five years of that NDP government. We listened some time ago to the member from Regina Rosemont making negative and disparaging comments about The Battlefords. He talked about the Vanguard building closing, it's not even called the Vanguard building by the people that live there. It's called the Grit Industries building, a thriving ongoing business, supplying a lot of supplies to the oil industry. He talked about Mifab building closing, occupied by a powder coating company now. Those are the kind of negative comments that I feel do no good for anything in our province. And somebody had asked me, why is it do you think they're so negative? Because they're in opposition, or are they in opposition because they're so negative? It's kind of the chicken and the egg, which is it? I'm not sure.

Another comment that was made some time ago by former Premier Calvert, and it was after the election in 2003. In fact I think it was on December 16th, 2003, on CFRA radio. He was commenting — I could be a little more specific — but commenting about part of their strategy to keep young people in this province was to lower the drinking age. Now, Mr. Speaker, at that time I had two sons that were embarking on new careers. And my kids weren't angels, Mr. Speaker, but when they were choosing their careers it wasn't based on the availability of alcohol. That's not what motivated our kids to leave this province. That's not what motivated the brain drain that we all faced for 16 years of their government.

In contrast to that, Mr. Speaker, our plan — because we have a plan on this side — our plan was the grad retention program, a program that's seen 50,000 students take advantage of \$130 million. That's 50,000 more people that are living in the province, had an opportunity to get part of \$130 million. My colleagues have talked about that, you know, off and on through their speeches. And I'd just like to take a second to think about what that meant to the young people of this province.

My wife, Linda, and I proudly became grandparents last February . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you, and that was a great occasion for us. And it kind of drove home what I was thinking about. And unfortunately our kids graduated before this program come in, but young couples, probably when they just get out of university, they do have some student loans maybe. They're buying a home. They're buying a car. They're raising a family. They're getting married. That's probably when their spending curve is the highest. That's when they need help, and \$130 million I think provided that help. And this was driven home when we were out, Linda and I with Dal and then Janelle and shopping for baby Kaylee. And they were buying a crib and buying a stroller and buying this kind of stuff. And they're looking at strollers, and Janelle said, well there's some for 500 and there's some for 600 and there's some for 800. And I said, whoa, I didn't pay that for my first car — 800 bucks for a stroller. That just makes the point these are the kind of expenses that young people have.

And I'm proud to say that my other children, Carla and Broc are expecting their first in January next year, and Calvin and Jess are expecting their first in December. So the Cox clan is doing their part towards the growth plan, I'm proud to say. And we're very much looking forward to that.

And when I'm talking about family, I'd like to just take the opportunity to thank my wife, Linda, for being my support and for being a sounding board for me and my inspiration in a lot of ways, and certainly providing me a lot of insight that helps me do my job here and keeps the home fires burning. And I thank her for that.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen over the last period of time, and we've heard our Premier talk about the problems of growth being better than the problems of decline. I think back to the years, several years ago, the city of North Battleford, and I commend them for their foresight. They developed the subdivision that we call Fairview Heights in The Battlefords, and they put in the curbs and the pavement and the sewer and the water. And they sat, I believe, for 17 years. Maybe four or five houses built out of, I don't know, 120 lots that were serviced in that area, until

finally in 2007 those lots started getting bought up. People started building houses because people were coming back home.

The problem that we have now is we're short of lots. People are trying to push the excavators out of the road so they can get in to build their house. They're waiting for SaskPower to hook up, SaskEnergy to hook up. But those problems, let me assure you, are a lot better than the problems of decline, taxpayers' money being spent on a subdivision that sits vacant for 17 years. I think those waiting times are a lot better than that.

Mr. Speaker, it's been my privilege, my pleasure to be one of the delegates for the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region on behalf of the province. And I'd just like to talk a little bit about the respect that this province, this government, and certainly our Premier has in other jurisdictions. And that's a group made up of five US [United States] jurisdictions and five Canadian jurisdictions. And it's in sharp contrast to a former premier, Calvert, when he talked about Saskatchewan being a wee little province, and we'd always be in and out of equalization. Well that to me is wee little thinking, and it would've not got us anywhere.

Today we see giant strides being made in this province. We get asked at a lot of these functions when we're gone to from the province about the carbon capture sequestration program, taking the equivalent of 250,000 cars off our highways by reducing our CO₂ emissions. And that's one of the reasons why our leader is so widely respected. Our government is respected. We've seen K+S Potash corporation come back to start digging their potash mine north of Moose Jaw. They left 40 years ago. It took them this long to come back.

[20:30]

We've seen the first uranium mine built in this province in 10 years at Cigar Lake. And of course that's a project that's a little bit dear to my heart because my daughter Carla is the project accountant for that mine. And she's very anxious, as I'm sure everybody is at Cameco, to get that up and running and start getting a return on their investment.

This government and this Premier is also greatly appreciated locally. I think about the city of North Battleford when we talk about the revenue sharing. In 2007 it was \$1.16 million. Today it's \$2.87 million. That's a 148 per cent increase. The town of Battleford, the same sort of numbers: 407,000 back in '07, and this last budget, 883,000.

Our finances are not only respected locally in this province; they're respected elsewhere. And we've seen that by both Moody's and Standard & Poor's giving us a AAA credit rating, allowing us the highest credit rating that is available to any jurisdiction, allowing us to borrow funds at a better rate.

Mr. Speaker, some time ago I had the occasion to speak at our local Boys & Girls Club, and they'd invited some government people there. I think one day they had the mayor there, and then it was my turn in the government's governance day to speak on behalf of the MLA elected representative. And these were little kids, 6, 7, 8 years old, and they asked kind of the normal questions like, you know, what time do you go to work? And

where do you work, and how much money do you make? And all these kind of things. Then one little guy down in the corner put up his hand and asked me, “What do you most enjoy about your job?” And I just forget exactly how I answered that. I just said, you know, I enjoy be able to work with the government.

But since that time, I’ve had a little opportunity to think about it. And there’s several things that I enjoy about this job, and I’d just like to share a few of them with you right now, Mr. Speaker. I’ve enjoyed the friends that I’ve made, first and foremost, the friends, the colleagues in this Assembly, the help that they’ve given me through my time here in this House.

I’m very proud to be a member of this government, a member of the government, that I mentioned earlier, that has expanded drastically the revenue sharing with the municipalities, a government that has increased our adult basic education seats another 775 seats to bring the number to 9,355. They’ve increased the apprenticeship seats by 300 to now 7,000 in the province. Those are things that this government has done to help bring this province to a point where we now have 577,000 people employed in this province. We have the lowest unemployment in the nation at 3.2 per cent.

We have been able to spend \$16 billion on capital projects. Again there’s that mountain that was talked about by our member from Athabasca opposite. That’s the deficit in infrastructure left to us. A government that’s expanded SIGI program, a program that was used by 82 communities, passed on some \$200 million in low-interest loans. Those are the kinds of things that make us very proud to be a member of this government. \$227,000 that we gave to the Atoskewin Success Centre.

I was proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Health minister, with our Highways and Infrastructure minister, with our Minister of Corrections and Policing, and with my colleague from Cut Knife-Turtleford in the announcement of building the new Sask Hospital in North Battleford, a hospital that is greatly appreciated by the constituents there. Long overdue, but it’s going to be a reality. It’s now gone to request for proposal, so we’ve narrowed it down to three proponents and we’re going to be looking at that. And we’re happy to know that next year we’ll be progressing along with that project.

And this is going to be a kind of a . . . We’re going to be leaders in this field. With the integrated corrections facility of 96 rooms on the side of our hospital of 188 beds, this is the leading edge of treatment for people with mental disabilities that are incarcerated. Those are some of the things that have been accomplished.

I was proud to speak on behalf of the Economy minister at the Northland Power opening. I was proud also to attend the opening of our CUplex [Credit Union complex] where we provided some \$7 million in funding from this government.

Some years ago I had the occasion to be the president of a national equine association, and one of the jobs that I had as that position was to go and speak at the provincial association’s annual general meetings. And you know, we’d have the banquet ahead of time, and so you’re sitting at the round table and you’d be with six or seven or eight other people, and quite often in

Calgary, Edmonton — they had two associations in Alberta — you’d be sitting with some oil people. And once they got by the no time change and the flat land and the terrible highway jokes, the question that they always asked me is, when is your government going to change in that province so we can come over there and do some business? Well I’m happy to say that they’re now here. They’re now doing business. Our government did change.

We have reduced the time required for some oil permits from 10 days down to one day. We’ve approved 13,700 more bridge permits than was previously approved. That’s double what was approved before. We’ve either built or started or planned to build 40 new schools in this province. I mentioned before our CO₂ capture equivalent of taking 250,000 cars off the road.

But, Mr. Speaker, to get back to the point here, the thing that I think makes me feel the best is when I’m at a function or I’m downtown or in the mall or whatever and somebody comes up to me and says, thank you very much for helping out my son or my daughter, my nephew or my next door neighbour with the situation that they had, a problem that they had through a lot of times no fault of their own, whether they had a problem paying their power bill and we needed to get some extension for them or they had a problem getting their social assistance cheque. And I said, you know what? I appreciate that. Thank you very much, and I’ll pass that on to the people who really do that work, and that’s my constituent assistants. Gail Heintz and Lillian Robinson are I think second to none in the work that they do.

And I go home every Friday, and we spend a couple of hours in the morning going over what they’ve done for the week and if they’ve got any problems or they need something addressed. And they say mostly no, that they’ve had excellent, excellent response from the ministries involved that they’ve conveyed these messages to. And it’s them that do the work. And I’d like to just right now publicly thank them for all that they do, for the compassion that they show. And I know some days they get upwards to 10 or 12 situations arising, and they take care of them very professionally and very compassionately.

Mr. Speaker, there’s so much other things that I could talk about. We’ve got some great crops up in our area.

I had an occasion this past Sunday with the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford to attend our Territorial Youth Services, and that’s a CBO [community-based organization] and faith-based organization that does great work with young offenders, youth who have maybe just strayed a little bit from what they should be doing. They help with some guidance and some support to get them turned around the right way. And those are the kinds of things that help make our community great.

But before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take the opportunity to thank the constituents of The Battlefords for having shown the faith in me to allow me to come down and be their representative here in Regina. And I think back to my first campaign. When I campaigned, I campaigned on the policy that I was going to be their voice from The Battlefords to Regina, and that’s what I’ve tried to do every day. And I certainly thank them for showing that faith in me and continuing that on.

I would like to at this point say that I absolutely could not support that ridiculous amendment. I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to join in with colleagues in replying to the Throne Speech delivered last week. It's a great honour to do so on behalf of the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy, Mr. Speaker, and I want to first and foremost thank them for allowing me to serve as their representative.

Mr. Speaker, before I go too far into the Throne Speech, I do want to join with all of my colleagues to reflect on the terror that took place last week, on the day that the Throne Speech was going to be read, here in our capital, that took place in the nation's capital in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, it's hard for me to add too much more than what members have already I think rightly expressed about that day. In fact, Mr. Speaker, one only I think has to listen to the words spoken by the member from Kelvington-Wadena and her heartfelt deliberations on the matter to really get a sense of what I think all of us feel.

But, Mr. Speaker, for me I think what remains from that day could be summed up in a few snapshots. The terror of that day, of watching MPs [Member of Parliament] that represent us in Ottawa, who not unlike all of us each day when we're in session meet as a caucus, who gathered for their weekly caucus in the nation's capital and to see the pictures that emerged of members using chairs to act as a barricade in the event that . . . not knowing if or when another attack was going to happen.

The heroism. Seeing pictures of strangers coming together to try to save the life of a young corporal who was standing sentry over those who had fallen before him. The agony. The pictures of a young man who was cut down in the prime of his life while doing nothing more than serving his country and serving it nobly and honourably.

The pictures of a young father and pictures of his young son, of his son wearing his regiment hat on the day of the funeral. Even the pictures of people leaving, perfect strangers leaving flowers at Corporal Cirillo's fence at his home in Hamilton with the picture of the two dogs that were lying with half of their faces underneath the fence obediently awaiting a return that was not to be.

But, Mr. Speaker, the resolve of the democracy that we have in this country, of the democracy that was exhibited in parliament to resume, and the democracy that was shown here that our day would proceed, not without some changes and not without some enhancements to the daily routines but that it would remain.

And even earlier this evening in the nation's capital at the National War Memorial to see Branden Stevenson, the sentry that was serving with Corporal Cirillo on that fateful day, take up his post once again as a sentry at the National War Memorial.

Mr. Speaker, what a country that we are blessed to live in and certainly makes me exceedingly proud to be a Canadian.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the staff in the building that I have the pleasure of working with, as well as the Ministry of Health, as well as my constituency assistant. And I also want to thank my family, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very fortunate to be just exceedingly blessed to be the spouse of Amanda Duncan. She has supported me every step of the way. I've been able to comment on that many times in this Chamber.

And, Mr. Speaker, we certainly believe in this province. We believe in the potential of this province. We believe in the growth that we're seeing in this province. And we certainly believe in the Premier's, the growth plan that was laid out by this government to the point where we literally wanted to be a part of that.

And so on June 28th, we were very blessed to welcome our son Jack into our family. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to put into words what he has meant to the two of us. I can inform the House, based on baby pictures, that he has a good resemblance to his mother at this age. Mr. Speaker, not only does he have a close resemblance to his mother at this age, he has a fair bit of her temperament as well. And so I think, on both accounts, he's doing quite well early in his young life.

We are very fortunate to live on the original farm that when my great-grandparents came to this province . . . In fact though, Mr. Speaker, not the first farm they lived in because when they first came to Saskatchewan, they rented land quite late into life before they were able to move from rented land in the Forget district to Huntoon, where they were able to purchase a section of land. Amanda and I are very proud to call that home and are proud to say that Jack is the fifth generation of our family to reside on that piece of land.

Mr. Speaker, I know that members want to see the vote here shortly on the amendment, and so I'm going to move quite quickly through my remarks. I do want to talk a little bit about my constituency. Mr. Speaker, I have on a number of occasions to speak about what we're experiencing in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency, not just in the city of Weyburn but in the communities that surround the community of Weyburn and also extending west all the way almost to the town of Assiniboia where we meet up with the Wood River constituency. Part of that we're going to be losing after the next writ is dropped, but certainly it's been an honour to represent the people of places like Willow Bunch and Coronach.

[20:45]

Mr. Speaker, I think the best way though for me to sum up what we're seeing in Weyburn and the area and the constituency, I think probably would have been summed up, and I think it was the member from a number of years ago, Saskatoon Greystone, who, in either a budget debate or a Throne Speech, used a pretty simple metric, and that metric was, are more people moving in than are trying to leave? And, Mr. Speaker, certainly with my constituency, it is an area of growth and a place that people want to live and want to raise a family. Mr. Speaker, so we're gaining a lot in our constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I also do want to put on the record that this past

week, we lost a lot. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak briefly about the passing of a constituent, Ken Cugnet. And some members in the House had the opportunity to meet and to know Ken. Ken was a lot of things. He was a husband and he was a father of four boys and he was a grandfather. He was a friend to a lot of people. He was a farmer and he was an oilman. But, Mr. Speaker, Ken was a builder.

Ken was a builder of buildings. Certainly one only has to go through the city of Weyburn to see the Cugnet name, not only in the buildings that they have had a hand in developing, but most recently Amanda and I had the honour to attend a donor appreciation night for our new \$4 million cultural centre that's attached to our high school that the Triple C board of directors had raised over several years. And that building, thanks to a very large donation from the Cugnet family, from Ken and his wife, Joanne, will from now on be known as the Cugnet Centre. So he was a builder of buildings.

He was a builder of businesses, certainly one of the more well-known oil companies in this province and in Western Canada, Crescent Point Energy. Certainly he had a large hand in creating that business, but you can trace the linkage from that one business back to its earlier beginnings with companies like Tappit and others that he was a major part of, being a part of. So he was a builder in that respect.

But I think more importantly, Mr. Speaker, and we will see this on Thursday at his memorial, he was a builder of people. There will be scores of young women and men who got their start in, whether it be the oil industry or in the agricultural industry because of not only Ken's wise, sage advice and his counsel, but in many cases his quiet capital that he helped individuals get their start. And so, Mr. Speaker, if I could, just on the record, and I'll have more opportunity to do so on Thursday to the family, but to the family of Ken Cugnet, I just would offer my deepest sympathies and my greatest respect for all that Ken had achieved and all that he meant for our community.

Mr. Speaker, when I think of building and things that governments should do and, you know, what the obligations are, our obligations are on behalf of the people that we represent, knowing that this is a bit of a transactional relationship . . . We have the opportunity to serve for four years at a time and in exchange for that honour, it's our obligation to ensure that the people's money is being used properly and being used correctly. And so the things that this government has identified in the Throne Speech, the things that we want to be a part of building a better quality of life, better services for those things that government should be offering as well as those infrastructure assets that people need, schools and universities and hospitals and long-term care facilities and highways, I'm very pleased that this Throne Speech also identified the things that we believe on this side of the House that government ought not to be building, and namely, in government-owned liquor stores.

And, Mr. Speaker, it was a bit of irony. It wasn't a couple of weeks before the Throne Speech was delivered when in one of my local newspapers, in the Coronach *Triangle News*, one of the public sector unions that have taken a position that they believe that government should be building Liquor Board stores . . . And we're not quite sure, the members on the opposite side,

where their views are on this but I think we'll find out over the course of the number of months that lie ahead. But certainly in the Coronach newspaper, it was kind of interesting to see a news story that was submitted by one of the unions that was urging the people of Coronach and the people that read that newspaper to phone their MLA and ensure that I know that their views are to keep the liquor stores public and that it should be government employees that are working in the liquor stores and that this is something that should be not in the private sector. This should be in the public sector.

The irony, Mr. Speaker, is that in Coronach, liquor is sold at the local Co-op. In fact, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I don't think anybody mentioned that to the union. In fact in my constituency, of all the locations that you can buy liquor in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency, knowing that we have cities and towns and villages in quite a large constituency, there is one government-owned liquor store that employs government employees, that sells liquor. All of the rest of it is handled by private entities, by entrepreneurs, the co-operative sector. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that certainly this Throne Speech speaks well to the way that this type of business is currently delivered in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to speak in the time that I have remaining on initiatives related to the ministry that I have the great honour to be minister responsible for. Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech speaks to I think the success that we've had in a number of areas, and areas that we need to move further to improve services. But I think it lays out the way that this government, the way we function and the way that we think and the way that we're not necessarily wanting to stay with the status quo when it comes to how we deliver services.

In fact, under the former minister of Health, the member from Indian Head-Milestone, we set a goal that we wanted to see wait times in this province no greater than three months for the offer of surgery, for any surgery, knowing that Saskatchewan had among the highest wait times in all of the country for surgery. So a goal was set. A team was put together to look at how services were currently delivered, also to ensure that all of our health regions and our Cancer Agency were thinking and acting as one. And so they came up with a plan that was implemented over a number of years that was quite innovative.

So the people of this province, when it comes to surgery, should and can be assured of a number of things when it comes to surgery. We want to see surgeries not just done sooner but safer and smarter. For instance, today we're close to 100 per cent — not quite there; we need to get there — but a safety checklist. Mr. Speaker, the people of this province can be assured that when they get on to an airplane that the pilot and the co-pilot are going through a safety checklist before the flight takes off. Why shouldn't it be the same for when you go into surgery? We know that there's lots of examples, not just in the past in this province but in other jurisdictions, where we have issues where there's not a proper accounting of medication. Perhaps the wrong part of the body is operated on. Those things are errors that we need to eliminate in the health care system. So a safety checklist.

We also allowed for pooled referrals just so that the patients had more choice to say, I want to stick with my surgeon or perhaps,

I want to move to a different surgeon if they have a shorter wait time. We also put together a surgical checklist — sorry, a surgical registry — so that people could see which surgeons had a shorter wait time so that they had more choice. They had the ability to move to where they wanted the surgery to be done. We also used third party providers. Not sure the opposition have yet indicated whether or not they support this although it's been in place for a couple of years, but we are buying surgeries at a lower cost through third party delivery than it costs us to provide that in a hospital. And it also means that we have people that are not going, that don't need to stay overnight in the hospital, or not going to the hospital as much as they used to. And there's more that we could be doing on that front.

And we're using things like pathways. So I had the opportunity to go to the reopening of the Hip and Knee Treatment and Research Centre here in Regina, which is seeing surgeons and physiotherapists working together on both pre- and post-operative to determine whether or not the person is a candidate for surgery, but also to streamline the system. So to the point where, after a provider does a referral, somebody can be into that centre within four weeks to see the physiotherapist, to see the surgeon, and then physio can start in a timely fashion in the event that surgery is complete.

We also have to have course correction in the event that we have some problems with the plan rolling out. We have an opportunity to look back to see what can be changed going forward. And the results are quite evident. In 2010 before the initiative started, those people waiting longer than three months for surgery . . . And today we still do have those. We're not quite there yet. We still, as of July, we still have about 2,500 people waiting longer than three months, but four years ago when this initiative started, nearly 16,000 people were waiting longer than three months for surgery in this province. So a remarkable, great deal of work has been done, but I think it serves as a foundation for moving forward in some other areas that we should set some targets and see some results.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased that the Throne Speech has identified that mental health and addictions is a priority for this government, that we have announced that a commissioner is doing work. She is completing her work, and I look forward to seeing her recommendations. My hope is that before this year is out that those recommendations will be complete. It's a 10-year plan that will chart a course for this province to work more collaboratively with other sectors and NGOs [non-governmental organizations], not just the Ministry of Health.

But we're not waiting. So Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford was mentioned by the previous speaker, the member for The Battlefords. This is something that this government is moving forward and frankly, Mr. Speaker, this is something that we need to move forward on. I'm not sure of another hospital in this province that would have waited 100 years to be replaced had it not been for a mental health hospital. And I think that that is something that we all should be mindful of, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the issues related to mental health and addictions in this province. But we are moving forward on that important project.

We're also moving forward on some innovative ideas around

mental health crisis teams, where we team up police services with mental health workers to hopefully defer what normally happens to a lot of these cases, where they end up in the emergency room or, more concerning, they end up in police holding cells. We think that we can provide services better.

And we're also changing the way that we currently do business. So as I've mentioned before, Regina Qu'Appelle mental health and addictions went from a wait-list of 400 to 9. They went from cancelled appointments from 42 per cent down to 4 per cent, using something that I think people have heard about, using lean methodology. And I'll speak a little bit about that a little bit later. And frankly, that's not the only region that's using it. The Minister of Rural and Remote Health and I were in La Ronge about three weeks ago and they're actually using, deploying lean to decrease their wait times when it comes to their own mental health services that they currently offer at that hospital.

We are also making a priority, as I spoke about, the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford on capital replacement, and maintaining what we do already have. So for example, Mr. Speaker, we're moving forward with a 13 long-term care facility renewal. I had the opportunity, as did the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, to be in Kelvington with the member from Kelvington-Wadena to see the ground turning of that new facility. That will be the 12th of the 13 that we've already said, that we did already announce, and so we're pleased that that project is moving forward.

We also have planning dollars in place for renewal of long-term care beds in Regina, work around the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital, as well as La Ronge. And I hope to be able to say more about that, future date.

We are also, Mr. Speaker, as members will know, we're also moving forward on the building construction that's started on the children's hospital. This is not only key for having a dedicated children's hospital in this province, I think something that is very much timely for a growing province, but it also means, once services that are in the existing RUH [Royal University Hospital] will be able to move over to the children's hospital, and that'll allow for some work to be done in RUH.

In fact we're already seeing great work. There is a new pharmacy, hospital-based pharmacy, at RUH. And it is pretty stunning what you can see that can be done in an old structure when you have the room to create some new space.

We're also investing in terms of the maintenance of our buildings. So this year, once again in this budget, did allow for maintenance dollars, and so that shows commitment not only to the new facilities but also maintaining what we do have although there is more work to be done on that.

[21:00]

I do want to speak briefly on issues of older adults and seniors in Saskatchewan. So members will know, the public will know that this government has conducted, I would say, the first in-depth review of the conditions within long-term care, knowing that that's for about 7 or 8 per cent of seniors at any given time. So there's this large group of older adults that aren't

in long-term care, but we did put a focus on that. Ten million dollars went towards a significant capital equipment upgrade into long-term care, I think one of the largest dedicated to long-term care, certainly in a generation, where 700 pieces of equipment are being delivered, training is being developed for staff, and additional staff are being hired.

That was the approach that we took on this side of the House whereas members opposite obviously have been raising this as a concern, pretty critical of the government's response to this. But what we haven't heard from the members opposite is how we really came to be in the position that we are in today. And I would refer members and the public to an August . . . sorry, October 31st, 2013, so about a year ago, op-ed that was co-written by the Saskatchewan council of aging and Age-Friendly Saskatoon initiative where it says, and I quote:

The reason for the LTC bed capacity problem isn't complex. Saskatchewan stopped investing in new subsidized LTCs starting in the mid-1990s. Thus the number of beds and the dollars for staff began to fall just about the time that the population for older adults . . . began increasing.

So that was the approach at that time. It was to cut the number of facilities by, I believe, 19. It was to cut the number of beds by nearly 1,500 in this province at the time that the population was aging in this province. And at the same time, don't forget, Mr. Speaker, at the same time when the services were being decreased, the number of beds and facilities were being decreased, part of the other solution from the members opposite when they were in government was to propose to substantially increase the rates that residents were paying to the point where some had a choice between paying what they currently were going to be paying and looking at welfare as an option.

So that was the response that we had back from the members opposite when they were in government. And now what we have from the, particularly the Leader of the Opposition in criticizing the \$10 million which again is a significant cash injection mid-year in this last year, and I would quote from *The StarPhoenix* editorial March 6th, 2014, and I quote:

For Mr. Broten to say that the government should have forked over \$18.5 million in order to meet every request made by the regions suggests that he's simply trying to pander to public sentiment in a sensitive area. Either that, or he demonstrates a reckless approach to spending public money that raises questions about how the NDP would run the province if they were given the reins, [Mr. Speaker].

So we have taken a different approach. Mr. Speaker, we have invested directly into the front lines and directly into where residents will see those improvements, Mr. Speaker. And certainly there will be more work to do in improving conditions not only for seniors in long-term care, but the 93 per cent of older adults, of seniors in this province that don't live in long-term care, may never live in long-term care, Mr. Speaker. And so that remains a priority.

Mr. Speaker, just in closing, I want to thank the member from Elphinstone who did mention the legislation that is in the Throne Speech, the health legislation. Certainly, and I apologize

for the members if I didn't hear their speeches that did talk about the legislation. But I think in terms of scope, this is an area that we need to move on, where pharmacists have the ability, they'll have the training, they'll ensure . . . The college will ensure that there are bylaws in place to ensure that this is done in a safe and appropriate manner. But we believe that pharmacists should have the ability to carry out with immunizations and things like the flu shot and ordering tests for the sake of their patients.

And I also am looking forward to introducing changes to *The Health Information Protection Act*, the HIPA legislation. Patients in this province should and can, Mr. Speaker, but they should feel that their privacy is important, that it is a priority, and that it is something that will be safeguarded by trustees or people employed by trustees, and that in the event that it isn't safeguarded, that the appropriate actions will be taken so that repercussions will be put in place. So I am looking forward to tightening that Act up. I think it is something that hopefully all members will be able to support.

And in closing, Mr. Speaker, I do want to just say, in . . . The *U.S. News* is a magazine that annually publishes various lists: top colleges, top universities, top American hospitals, and so forth. And just recently, they came out with their top 10 hospitals. This is according to *U.S. News*, *U.S. News* magazine, and so those top hospitals, I'll read them into the record: the Mayo Clinic, Massachusetts General, Johns Hopkins, Cleveland Clinic, UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] Medical Center, New York - Presbyterian, University of Pennsylvania, University of California, San Francisco; Brigham and Women's Hospital; and Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Mr. Speaker, why do I bring all of these hospitals into the public debate? Mr. Speaker, all 10 of these hospitals to some degree, to some fashion, deploy lean within their health care system. Mr. Speaker, some have used John Black; others have not used John Black.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think that when at a time over the last seven years, when the health budget has increased by 52 per cent, where health regions are seeing over \$1 billion in additional funding compared to what they would have seen seven years ago, Mr. Speaker, we have a choice. We can try to continue to operate the way that we used to operate in terms of the health care system. And this is not I think a . . . I don't think it's down party lines. Certainly these are the conversations that I have with Health ministers, whether they be from NDP Manitoba, whether they be from Liberal in BC [British Columbia] or Progressive Conservative in Alberta or Liberals in Prince Edward Island. These are things that we're all struggling with.

But the fact remains that as an example, and this is just a one-year example, but 10 years ago when the health budget of this province increased by 6.3 per cent — so well two to three times the rate that inflation was growing and that GDP [gross domestic product] would've been growing — at 6.3 per cent, the government of the day still had to make difficult decisions about closing facilities, about laying off staff.

We've had a budget increase last year of 3.5 per cent. This year it's 3 per cent. Mr. Speaker, it has meant that we need to do business differently, but it also has allowed us an opportunity to put a better focus on the patient, on quality improvement, and

ensuring that we put the patient first. Mr. Speaker, we will certainly look to make improvements, continuous improvements all along the way, not only in the way it is rolled out but the way that it is operated going forward into the future.

But for these reasons, for the reasons I've outlined, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment, and I will be supporting the motion on the Throne Speech.

The Speaker: — The motion before the House is the amendment to the humble address moved by the member for Regina Rosemont, seconded by the member for Athabasca:

That the motion be amended by adding the following:

And that this Assembly condemns this government for primarily working to benefit a select few while dismissing the most important things Saskatchewan families want and need, especially in the areas of health care, education, and rising cost of living.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — All those in favour say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — All those opposed say nay.

Some Hon. Members: — Nay.

The Speaker: — The nays have it. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 21:09 until 21:10.]

The Speaker: — All those in favour please rise.

[Yeas — 9]

Broten	Forbes	Wotherspoon
Vermette	Belanger	Chartier
McCall	Nilson	Sproule

The Speaker: — All those opposed please rise.

[Nays — 34]

Morgan	Duncan	Krawetz
Eagles	McMorris	Harpauer
Doherty	Moe	Docherty
Campeau	Heppner	Cheveldayoff
Harrison	Tell	Ottenbreit
Norris	Hart	Kirsch
Bjornerud	Brkich	Makowsky
Weekes	Cox	Wilson
Marchuk	Bradshaw	Michelson
Hutchinson	Steinley	Hickie
Tochor	Parent	Phillips
Doke		

Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 9; those

opposed, 34.

The Speaker: — The nays have it. The motion fails. The debate will continue on the main address, the humble address to Her Honour. I recognize the Government House Leader.

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.]

[Applause]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure this evening to address the Speech from the Throne. I know the hour is late, so I will keep my remarks brief. That's probably the biggest applause that I'll get this evening.

Mr. Speaker, like so many who have addressed this speech before me, Mr. Speaker, I do so with mixed emotions. Although I'm saddened by the havoc wreaked on our military and upon our parliament on October 22nd, I am buoyed by the resiliency and the refusal of members of this House to be deterred from their duty.

Despite a shaken nation, whose tremors were felt across our province, the Throne Speech was delivered that same day. People that I have spoken to, Saskatchewanians across our province wanted it that way. And indeed that's what happened. For this I salute all members of the legislature and all those involved in making the Speech from the Throne happen, from the Sergeant-at-Arms to all legislative staff. Mr. Speaker, indeed they should be congratulated.

Democracy is not a whim, not a wish to be trifled with, but a sacred concept and a bedrock of all free nations. Mr. Speaker, we live in challenging times. Violence surrounds us in the world, a world that is fraught not only with the threat of escalating terrorism but also with a multitude of natural disasters and epidemics such as Ebola.

It was not long ago that our neighbours to the west were besieged with floods. To the east, Quebec was ravaged by a railway disaster that extinguished many lives. We ourselves in Saskatchewan had our mettle tested by a series of floods that rocked the security and safety of our citizens.

[21:15]

Today no one is completely immune from challenge or disaster. And, Mr. Speaker, that is why we welcome a Speech from the Throne titled "Keeping Saskatchewan Strong." Each one of us in this Chamber has a duty to join our hands, our heads, and our hearts to make our province as strong as it can be. Mr. Speaker, I'm so privileged to sit in this Chamber with all of you, knowing that our collective negotiations and our will will serve to benefit every man, woman, and child in this great province.

I'm so privileged, Mr. Speaker, to have the support of my family and friends that enable me to do this job. So I want to take a moment to thank them for the support that I have been given over the last 11 years. And I learned something earlier today from the member from Batoche that indeed it is an anniversary today. Eleven years ago today, the member from Batoche, the member from Saskatoon Southeast, and myself had the pleasure and honour of being elected to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. And for that I'm very, very thankful.

So much has happened in the 11 years. In my family, our children, and they were three and five years old, in the Legislative Assembly here for the swearing-in and enjoying it as young children. Now they're 16 and 14 years old, Mr. Speaker. Paige, our daughter, is in grade nine; Carter, our son, in grade 12. Both are at St. Joseph High School. Both are very involved in their school and in their community. For Carter it's football and track and field. For Paige it's the Goldfins swimming. And certainly they're learning to . . . As they grow up, I appreciate that they are learning more about what their dad does. They're learning more about the Legislative Assembly. They both have had the opportunity to come here with their school groups and to see what we do first-hand.

But I very much appreciate the questions that they are asking me about my job and what we do. A little while ago I just had a conversation with them about the graduate retention program, as Carter is in grade 12. I explained to him about the many options available to him. And that's what we want to be able to do, is to lay out the options for our children, but also tell them the advantages of staying here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't thank my spouse. My wife, Trish, has embarked on a new career as an entrepreneur. While it can be very challenging, it can be very rewarding as well. She is certainly finding that out as she is growing her business in Saskatchewan and taking advantage of the growing economy that we have here in Saskatchewan. So I thank her for her support as I undertake my duties here in the legislature.

Thanks must be given to our staff and the dozens of volunteers that help us do our job every day. I am blessed to be surrounded by volunteers who give so freely of their time and ask so little in return. However I do feel that I owe them something. We owe our family, our staff, our volunteers our commitment to make a difference while we are here. Together we can make a difference. Together we must make a difference. And to me, making a difference, the barometer for that is what we are doing in this legislature for our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that I believe that the constituents of Saskatoon Silver Springs can be assured that we are making a difference. When you talk about that community, that part of the city of Saskatoon, I know we are making a difference when it comes to the new South Circle Drive bridge that was opened last year. And it's just made accessibility to our city something very substantial.

We also have the opportunity to welcome 12 more police officers in our city because of funding that has come from the provincial government, an additional \$2.7 million. Twelve more police officers, a total of 42 provincially-funded police officers

now serving the people of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, we are making a difference with the north commuter parkway bridge that was announced earlier this year. This is a commitment of \$50 million from the provincial government, but it's more than that. It's a partnership with the federal government. It's a partnership with the municipality, with the city of Saskatoon, and indeed it is talking about the very vibrant and positive future of the city of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity not too long ago to announce Headstart on a Home and the project that is in the constituency of Saskatoon Silver Springs. This was an investment of \$12 million in a program for 66 entry-level condominiums for lower income families in Saskatoon. It was a positive day and again, it was a partnership that came together. The private sector was involved.

I've heard members in this House say that the private sector shouldn't be involved, but I am very proud of people like Wally and Colleen Mah in Saskatoon who've given of their private funds to ensure that this project get under way. They've partnered with companies like Westcap Management and others who are very successful in the private sector. They're leveraging that, using public funds as well, to create homes for individuals. Mr. Speaker, some 3,603 new housing units have been funded by this government since 2007 in the city of Saskatoon. I would submit to you that indeed we are making a difference, Mr. Speaker.

One other area, a very important area where we're making a difference, is the new children's hospital in Saskatoon, the new Saskatchewan children's hospital, one that is long overdue, I would submit. And when I think back in my 11 years in this Assembly, some of the very first speeches that I gave, and the very first speeches that I've heard from members certainly on this side of the House, was calling for a children's hospital. We were ashamed that Saskatchewan and PEI [Prince Edward Island] were the only provinces in the country that didn't have a dedicated children's hospital. Well, Mr. Speaker, we are making a difference and that is going to change: \$235 million from this government towards a 176-bed, new children's hospital in Saskatchewan, now under construction and soon to be opened, Mr. Speaker. Again we are making a difference.

Mr. Speaker, I have learned a great deal during my time here. I have certainly learned that our province and our legislature need not take a back seat to any legislature in existence. Our Throne Speech is an example of this thrust. Where we once watched other regions in awe, that is no longer the case. Now other regions marvel at our economy, our job creation, our education, and our will to test the waters of creativity and innovation. These, Mr. Speaker, are now the envy of much of the world.

Our Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, is a plan, a plan to achieve the unlikely or maybe even, some deem, the impossible. It wouldn't be the first time though. Not so many years ago people said our population couldn't grow. They said it was statistically impossible for Saskatchewan to grow with the national average. But grow it did, and now we are some 123,000 more residents today than were here when we took government as a Sask Party government.

Now some of those same naysayers say things like the economy and the environment cannot flourish together. Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech shows that they can. Our economy and environment can flourish side by side rather than in contradictory silos. Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech shows that we can devise a plan whereby diverse ethnic and ideological interests of our citizenry can mesh and meld together and become new residents from around the world. This is what democracy demands of us, Mr. Speaker. That is what our Throne Speech delivers, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to share an interesting Chinese proverb that I came across, and it goes like this. If your vision is for one year, plant wheat. If your vision is for 10 years, plant trees. If your vision is for a lifetime, plant people.

In Saskatchewan we have planted and improved wheat to the extent that we became the breadbasket to the world. That was the vision of our parents and our grandparents, not a bad vision at all, Mr. Speaker. It is also true that we had a 10-year vision and planted trees, shelterbelts throughout the length and breadth of this province, protected against soil erosion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to create out of this Throne Speech and from our deliberations of this legislature our future, our vision for indeed a lifetime. It is true as a Chinese proverb decrees that we must plant people. Yet what, Mr. Speaker, can this exactly mean?

When I was a young man, my father and grandfather and uncles would come from the farm in Blaine Lake so covered in dirt and dust that you could almost have planted them. But that is not what the Chinese sages had in mind. They thought quite differently about planting people. It was based upon three principles: cultivate people, care for people, and create opportunities for people. Those are three axioms that — cultivate, care for, and create opportunities for people — could well become the cornerstone of our lifetime vision.

This Throne Speech gives us the scope and pathway to do all three. With these initiatives we can expand the way we reach out to people across our nation and around the world. Yet we can do more. We can keep our children here in productive enterprises, and we can provide our citizens of every stripe with equal opportunity to thrive, not simply survive.

Secondly, we have an aging population in our province. Even some of us in this House, Mr. Speaker, are aging, and our level of care for our seniors and all age groups must continue. Despite our efforts so far, that care must now rise to an unprecedented level. We must do this in concert together. Thirdly, we must create equal opportunities for all people regardless of gender, age, culture, or creed. That too is a cornerstone of a fair democracy.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech is the beginning of great things in Saskatchewan. As we all know, lifelong visions require more than a will. To stay vibrant, as Saskatchewan presently is, requires the strength to make vital changes in time-honoured thinking and to visualize what our future should be. This Throne Speech maps out in great detail how this government will keep Saskatchewan strong — strong in poverty reduction, strong in justice and security, strong in the reduction

of interprovincial trade barriers and the expansion in our international markets, strong in updating our telecommunications, in upgrading our health care, strong in the protection of personal privacy, and expanding First Nations opportunities, in curbing violence and crime, in protecting our children, in recruiting and nurturing new citizenry, and augmenting our educational opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is an untapped potent force for good in each of us. Sometimes it is not exposed unless we face a so-called defining moment in our lives. Dr. Morris Massey described that defining force as a significant emotional event which transforms our lives and transports us to a higher dimension.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that on October 22nd, in this year 2014, this will be a defining moment for our Canadian citizenry. It was indeed a significant emotional event, and I believe it will be a defining force for our democracy in our province.

Mr. Speaker, if we want this House to provide a lifetime vision, we must, as the Chinese sage says, plant people. May I suggest that destiny has placed us all here for the purpose of transforming the future of the people of our great province. William Jennings Bryan once affirmed that destiny is not a matter of chance; it's a matter of choice. Whether our destiny here in Saskatchewan is to flirt with utopia or to become mired in myopia is our collective choice.

Albert Einstein tells us we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them. He also told us that every move we make affects our future. The people we associate with, the jobs we take, the area in which we live, the causes we support — all these affect our future. This was equally true for institutions such as this Legislative Chamber. This Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, is full of choices, and each choice we make will affect the future of this province and its people for years to come.

Buddha indicated that a generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things that will renew humanity. Let those words be part of the credo of this legislature. Joe Darion and Mitch Leigh wrote that wondrous song, "The Impossible Dream." There is one touching portion that I would like to share with you, Mr. Speaker, and it goes:

This is my quest, to follow that star
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far
To be willing to give when there's no more to give
To be willing to die so that honour and justice may live

Friends, a few October days ago, two of our countrymen died so that honour and justice may live. Mr. Speaker, honour and justice do live here in the Saskatchewan Legislative Chamber. May these be the watchwords for our future. May we make this Throne Speech come alive in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to adjourn the House.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that the House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 21:31.]

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Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

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

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