



SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)

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The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 29th Legislature

Lieutenant Governor — His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, S.O.M., M.S.M.

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes
Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)	Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)	McLeod, Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)
Bradshaw, Hon. Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)	McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)	Meili, Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
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Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)	Meyers, Derek — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
Cockrill, Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP)	Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)	Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
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Domotor, Ryan — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
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Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)	Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)	Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP)
Hargrave, Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	Stewart, Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)	Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)	Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)	Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
Kaeding, Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	
Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)	Vacant — Athabasca

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 47; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Independent (Ind.) — 1; Vacant — 1

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the rest of this Assembly, seated in your gallery are four awesome gentlemen. I'd like to introduce them. Just give us a wave when I introduce you. And I'll talk more about this, but first Vice-Chief David Pratt of the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]. Max FineDay, André Bear, and Lucas Whitehead all work out of Vice-Chief Pratt's office.

I wanted to give congratulations, number one Vice-Chief. You've won the last election last Thursday, to become first vice-chief. You were second vice-chief for a number of years. Before that, you were a teacher, graduated the University of Saskatchewan. And couldn't be more proud of you, and I thank you for your friendship over the years, being an honorary Pratt after all. But thank you for that.

And I know a few ministers are going to want to have a chat coming up. Maybe not today but certainly coming up. Again I'd like all members of this Assembly to join with me in welcoming these four gentlemen to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join the member opposite in welcoming these guests to our legislature, to their legislature today. Great to see first Vice-Chief David Pratt. Congratulations on your re-election. I was so excited and was recalling when my colleague from Rosemont and Warren McCall and I went out and joined in the installation at Muscowpetung the first time you were elected, and I was really happy to see you running again. Extend those congratulations, please, to the rest of the executive, to Chief Bobby Cameron and vice-chiefs Lerat, and the two Bears now with Heather and Aly.

And also to recognize . . . first time meeting Lucas. Welcome to your legislature. Great to see André again, an incredible speaker and a powerful young leader in our province. And the fellow next to him. I should probably say nice things about Max FineDay, so I guess I will. One of my close friends and confidants, whether he'll admit it or not. It's really great to see Max in his legislature.

What a set of First Nations leader rock stars in our presence today. And I'm just thrilled to be able to welcome you to the legislature. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them warmly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with my colleagues of the Assembly here and

welcome first Vice-Chief David Pratt and his officials, I guess staff, here to the Legislative Assembly. I had the opportunity to spend some time with the vice-chief this summer and he was telling me and showing me the amount of miles that he was putting on in the run-up to the election.

We are blessed when we get to run in the constituency, which Muscowpetung, his home reserve, is in, Indian Head-Milestone. We get to run around in our constituency. But when you're running around the province, it's certainly a different election process. And congratulations. Well deserved. And thank you for the great work that you do for this province and for your First Nation. Thank you for being here.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Saulteaux.]

I'm very happy to see you here. I'm not the only First Nation in this House today. miigwech. Congratulations first Vice-Chief Pratt. Welcome, Max, André, and Lucas. It's wonderful to see you here. I hope I see more of you, so it helps me feel more comfortable sitting in this House. And watch the ministers that want to talk to you. Keep an eye out on them. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of this legislature, I would like to introduce a woman seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Annie Ewenin is here today. She's the mother of four, the grandmother of two. She hails from Kawacatoose First Nation. She's very passionate about supporting Indigenous people. She's very passionate about interpersonal violence issues. She's very passionate about ensuring that social services is accessible to all. Mr. Speaker, she has a lengthy background working for non-profits, schools. She's a leader in her community. She has her Bachelor of Education, her Master of Education, and her Bachelor of Arts.

But most importantly today she's here because she's the executive director of SOFIA House. She started that role in September. SOFIA House, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is a second-stage shelter for survivors of interpersonal violence in Regina. They have two locations in this city now. Her and her staff do incredibly, incredibly important work supporting women fleeing horrible, horrible situations, Mr. Speaker. We thank them, Annie and her staff, so much for their tireless work. And I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming Annie to her Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to protect contract

workers from harassment, abuse, and exploitation. Mr. Speaker, those who've signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: contract workers are not protected by Saskatchewan's occupational health and safety standards; contract workers, and particularly women working in arts and culture, face disproportionate amount of abuse and are at higher risk of exploitation, assault, and trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, language in occupational health and safety standards need to be updated to address mental illness, and that would help contract workers targeted by harassment and abuse in the workplace. Mr. Speaker, other provinces' occupational health and safety standards specifically address sexual harassment in the workplace. Ours does not.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to modernize occupational health and safety protections to include contract and gig workers and include comprehensive provisions on mental illness and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, those signing this petition today come from Regina. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise for the first time to present our petition on improved access to midwifery services. Residents who have signed this petition would like to bring to our attention the following points.

Midwifery provides a model of care that is individualized, community centred, and cost-effective. Wait-lists for midwifery care in Saskatchewan are extensive and many people who wish to access midwifery services are unable to do so.

Midwife-facilitated births amounted to only 2.9 per cent of babies born in 2019, with demand far exceeding the limited supply of midwives in our province. According to the Canadian Association of Midwives, 53 per cent of people seeking midwifery care in Saskatoon are turned away due to lengthy wait-lists. Expanding midwifery services makes sense for pregnant people and their families, and it makes sense for our province's fiscal well-being.

I'll now read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to introduce a post-secondary midwifery training program in the province.

Mr. Speaker, the petition today has been signed by folks from Martensville and Saskatoon. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to be on my

feet again presenting a petition on the new Saskatchewan income support program, SIS. Unlike its predecessors, SIS does not directly pay for housing and utilities. As you can imagine this is a deep, deep cut during a fourth wave pandemic.

Since introduced SIS have led to dramatic increases in rental arrears, evictions, and homelessness, and of course the rise in homelessness has led to people living in tents as we see in downtown Regina today.

I was pleased to see that the FSIN joined those who have raised alarm bells about SIS, and I see that this petition is signed by Reverend Sarah Dymund who is a faith leader here in Regina at Trinity Lutheran Church. And she's one of many faith leaders that have spoken out against SIS, and I want to commend their work. The other signatories of this petition reside in Regina.

And I'll read the prayer as follows:

We call on the Government of Saskatchewan to restore direct payment of rent and utilities for income support clients.

I do so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly today calling for the government to protect Saskatchewan's water supply. Mr. Speaker, people across Saskatchewan are pleading for their government to protect source water because they understand that water is life. Increasingly they've had to witness disturbing trends that threaten that most precious of resources.

Over the summer period we saw toxic algae bloom far larger and earlier than ever seen before. I myself had the opportunity to witness on the landscape large tracts of wetlands burned and bulldozed across the landscape in defiance of a moratorium on drainage established by our own government. And this is causing threats to downstream water bodies and destroying wildlife habitat in the Quill Lake watershed.

The undersigned residents wish to bring to your attention the following: that water is essential for human health, recreation, health of our ecosystems, and our economy; that research from the University of Regina shows the water quality of Saskatchewan's lakes is getting worse; that the Provincial Auditor has pointed out that Saskatchewan's lack of a wetland policy negatively impacts water quality and that significant work remains to better regulate drainage; that Saskatchewan sat idle as our water supply was threatened by the government of Alberta's decision to rescind their coal development policy; and the government needs to take an active role in opposing policies that have downstream impacts on Saskatchewan rivers and deltas.

I'll read the prayer as follows:

The people of Saskatchewan respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan actively protect Saskatchewan waters from current and future threats to our valuable water supply.

I do here so present by residents of Regina and Fort Qu'Appelle.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Saskatoon Resident Celebrates 107th Birthday

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate Sophie Foster, a special constituent of mine. Sophie celebrated her 107th birthday last Friday. She is the oldest person at Preston Park II retirement residence, and one of the oldest people in the province.

A special tea party was held to celebrate this wonderful occasion. Sophie has lived through two pandemics, both world wars, recessions, and more. She was raised near Tadmore, Saskatchewan, and is a teacher, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother.

What is particularly noteworthy, Mr. Speaker, was her determination to complete her Bachelor of Education degree. It took 22 years of attending summer school, evening classes, and correspondence, but Sophie graduated from the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] College of Education in 1971.

[13:45]

She credits her longevity to her determination, active lifestyle, and good genes. Sophie and her husband Wilfred were married for 60 years and had two children, Ron and Evelyn. Sophie spent years volunteering as a private English tutor with international students, and was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal to recognize her volunteer service.

Mr. Speaker, Sophie is an avid bridge player and loves to follow Canadian curling. I would like to share her life motto: live simply, speak kindly, think deeply, love fully, be generous, and leave the rest to God.

I now ask all members of this Assembly to join me in wishing Sophie Foster a blessed 107th birthday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Surgical Wait Times

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government had a dubious record on surgical wait times long before the pandemic. Unfortunately, due to their failed response and inaction, surgical wait times are now completely out of control.

A recent *Leader-Post* article told the story of Keeley Buckley and her young son Elijah. Elijah has already spent a year on a wait-list for cleft lip surgery that would greatly improve his quality of life. Unfortunately his surgery has been postponed indefinitely, thanks to this government's refusal to get the pandemic under control.

Elijah's story is not unique. My office has been contacted by many people from across Saskatchewan with similar stories.

Some are even considering travelling and paying tens of thousands of dollars to access the care they need.

Dr. Mendez, the provincial head of surgery at the U of S told the *Leader-Post* in October that the backlog has grown by 34 to 35,000 since the beginning of the pandemic, with 800 to 1,000 being added each and every week. These cancelled surgeries aren't simply bad news for the Sask Party government. They represent heartbreak and uncertainty for thousands of families.

Mr. Speaker, this government's failure to properly address the COVID-19 crisis has left us with the highest COVID death rate in Canada and tens of thousands of delayed surgeries. The people of Saskatchewan deserve better.

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

Sikh Motorcycle Riders Fundraise for Children's Charity

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To share with others is one of the three primary principles within the tenets of Sikhism. A good example of this was shown when Legendary Sikh Riders rode through our province to their cross-Canada ride to raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, the Sikh Riders rode from Victoria, BC [British Columbia], to Nova Scotia, visiting all the Sikh temples on their journey. They rode for 22 days and raised close to 35,000 in donations. As many of the riders have kids and grandkids, they said that children's charities have a special place in their heart, and that is why they chose to dedicate their ride to the Make-A-Wish Foundation as it helps so many young people across Canada. Mr. Speaker, our government honoured the Sikh Riders with a letter of appreciation on their ride back when they passed through Regina.

The Sikh Riders' love of the open road is something they wish to pass on to the next generation. They feel that these charitable rides raise both awareness and passion. Mr. Speaker, I would invite my colleagues to join with me in recognizing and thanking the Sikh Riders on their ongoing dedication, for putting a smile on the face of the children, and for their commitment to treating everyone equally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Transitional Housing and Income Support

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, today in Regina a woman who fled an abusive partner is at risk of losing her second-stage shelter housing. While in shelter, she contacted COVID-19 and fell into a coma, having to be hospitalized for months. While in hospital, her abusive partner managed to get access to her bank account, draining her SIS payments, leaving her with nothing to pay her rent arrears at SOFIA House once she was released.

SOFIA House has provided safe and comprehensive services for families that have experienced domestic violence, despite receiving no operational funding from the provincial government for over 30 years.

Since opening its second location on July 1st, 2020, 22 women have moved in, of which 13 were on SIS. Of the 13 women on SIS, seven have been asked to leave because they haven't been able to pay their rent on a regular basis. Two more women will shortly be asked to leave, including the woman I just mentioned. That means, Mr. Speaker, 69 per cent of the women on SIS at SOFIA House have lost or are about to lose access to safe transitional housing due to their inability to pay rent.

Mr. Speaker, women fleeing domestic violence are suffering trauma and abuse, often including financial abuse. SOFIA House works with each woman to help them get back on their feet, but the recent changes to SIS have made a difficult situation so much worse. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the importance of SOFIA House and call for an immediate review of the SIS program.

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

Collaboration with Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute

Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week our government signed a memorandum of understanding with the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute. Our province has a long-standing and trusted relationship with India, Mr. Speaker. We look forward to continuing to advance communication, co-operation, and collaboration between the Government of Saskatchewan, our post-secondary sector, and India.

Mr. Speaker, this MOU [memorandum of understanding] is important to continue building and strengthening intellectual and cultural linkages through research, dialogue, and the exchange of students. International students help stimulate innovation and research and bring global perspectives into our classrooms, further enriching our communities.

The universities of Regina and Saskatchewan have collaborated with the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute on a number of projects as well as in the areas of arts and science, engineering, agriculture and bio-resources, medicine, and veterinary medicine. Our partnership with the institute plays an important role to promote the province and our post-secondary institutions.

To strengthen this relationship further, the Government of Saskatchewan proudly opened an international office in New Delhi earlier this year, and we look forward to continued collaboration with our partners from India. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Battlefords Rotary Club Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we had an exciting evening in The Battlefords a couple of Fridays ago as the Rotary Club of the Battlefords celebrated their 100th anniversary. The keynote speaker for the event was Colonel Chris Hadfield, a decorated Canadian astronaut and author. We were honoured to have him in our community. And we were also joined by the Lieutenant Governor Russ Mirasty and Her Honour Donna Mirasty.

Colonel Hadfield provided an inspiring talk in the evening and was also able to speak to hundreds of high school students at the North Battleford Comprehensive High School earlier that day.

Now as a province, Mr. Speaker, we are so grateful to service clubs like the Rotary Club of the Battlefords for the contributions that they have made and continue to make to our community and our province.

Our local rotary club supports many CBOs [community-based organization] in The Battlefords, provides scholarships for local students, and stepped up during the pandemic. And by stepped up, I mean they were there in the beginning weeks of the pandemic to provide \$50,000 of emergency funding to the Boys & Girls Club of The Battlefords and our local food bank.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members in this House to join me in congratulating the Rotary Club of the Battlefords on 100 years of exemplifying service above self in The Battlefords. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Wanuskewin Receives Lieutenant Governor's Heritage Award

Mr. Jensen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night, Wanuskewin Heritage Park received the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan's Heritage Award for Physical Heritage Conservation. Mr. Speaker, Wanuskewin has worked hard to conserve and preserve its physical and cultural heritage. The most recent work can be traced to the visitor experience master plan that was undertaken by the park in 2013. This plan was guided by a mission of advancing understanding and appreciation of the evolving cultures of the northern plains Indigenous peoples, as well as the vision to be a living reminder of the people's sacred relationship with the land.

Mr. Speaker, Wanuskewin would eventually begin an expansion and renovation to refresh the buildings and the lands. This resulted in new state-of-the-art exhibits, meeting spaces, and cultural areas. It's doubled the footprint of the building, blending old with new into a world-class facility. Mr. Speaker, Wanuskewin also welcomed a herd of plains bison, just across from the interpretive centre, after a 150-year absence from the province. This transformative action spanned multiple concurrent projects and it was completed in December of 2020.

Mr. Speaker, to be recognized by the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan is appreciated and inspiring. I ask all members to join me in congratulating Wanuskewin Heritage Park on its efforts and successes in honouring the past, thriving in the present, and realizing its future. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Premier and the Health minister described cutting surgeries and clawing

back children's care as difficult choices, as though these had been forced upon them, as though they had been unable to avoid us getting into this situation in the first place. What utter nonsense.

Does the Premier recognize that his choices have resulted in fewer kids getting care, in fewer people getting surgery, in organ transplants, and cancer care being cancelled? Does he understand that we're in this situation because he put politics ahead of people's lives?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Across Canada and most certainly throughout the fourth wave of the COVID pandemic, there's a number of services in Saskatchewan that have been reduced for the last number of weeks, Mr. Speaker. Some of those are surgical services. Some of those are services that are being provided to people in our community. And yes, some of them unfortunately have been services that have been provided to kids.

Thankfully with the measures that are in place, the increased vaccination rates, we're seeing our numbers, our COVID case counts decrease here in the province, down about 64 per cent since our peak. Our hospitalizations are down over 100, Mr. Speaker, and they just continue to drop. And that is very much a positive and is going to allow now the Saskatchewan Health Authority to look at how they're going to quickly resume a number of these services, focusing on the services that are being providing to children, Mr. Speaker.

And the Saskatchewan Health Authority is working towards providing a 50 per cent resumption of those services and programs by next week. That will climb to 75 per cent of those services being available in the week following. And 90 per cent of our services that we had to delay for a period of time due to our response to the fourth wave of COVID-19 will be resumed by the end of the month, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier tries to play this off as something that's happening all across the country, but we have the worst COVID death rate in the country. We have thousands of people unable to access care. Canadian Medical Association president Dr. Katharine Smart, originally from Swift Current, said: "The impact on the people of Saskatchewan is beyond distressing — it didn't need to be this bad."

Simple question: does the Premier recognize that thousands of people aren't receiving care because of his choices?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — As I said, Mr. Speaker, throughout the fourth wave of this COVID pandemic, it's not the first time throughout this COVID pandemic that we've had to reduce services here in Saskatchewan. We did a couple of times earlier this year and then last year most particularly as well, Mr. Speaker, in particular on the surgical side, Mr. Speaker. As was discussed yesterday, we're up to 35,000 surgeries that are waiting to be performed here in the province. We're most certainly focusing on getting our non-surgical services back being provided to residents in

Saskatchewan with a high focus on those services and programs that are made available for children, Mr. Speaker, understanding the need for that and the opportunity for our children to access those services.

And the Ministry of Health is very actively now working on . . . Understanding that our numbers are continuing to drop — both our case counts as well as our hospitalizations — they're very actively looking on what a surgical resumption will actually look like in this province in the weeks and months ahead, Mr. Speaker, so that we can ensure that then we can put in a plan to catch up on some of the surgeries that have admittedly climbed throughout this fourth wave and throughout the last 20 months here in the province.

You know, the record of this government is one of investment in health care, Mr. Speaker. The record of this government is investment in particular in reducing our surgical wait times in this province over the 14 years that we have had the honour to serve the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. We've done it before and we're going to do it again.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, we see an incredible failure of Saskatchewan children and a failure to take any responsibility whatsoever. Today in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, we're joined by Graham Dickson and Laura Weins and their beautiful baby girl, Helen, who turns one next week.

[14:00]

Doctors suspect that Helen has cerebral palsy, but this diagnosis can't be confirmed because her MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] has been cancelled as part of this Premier's fourth wave health care lockdown. Mr. Speaker, the Premier likes to talk about fairness. Does the Premier think it's fair that this family can't access the care that Helen needs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all I would like to take the opportunity to welcome Graham, Laura, and Helen to their Legislative Assembly here. And I think this is very indicative of the efforts that this government is making to ensure that these services — that, yes, have been slowed down for a number of weeks now — are resumed and resumed as quickly as possible. Helen is a shining example of why we need to make every effort that we can across our health care system to ensure that we get those services back to operational, Mr. Speaker, and so that they're offered to not only Helen but many other children that also require those services across this province, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, we've been hit hard with the fourth wave in this province, Mr. Speaker, and we have taken action in this province. We've put into place public health measures. We've put in place proof-of-vaccination policies here in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Our vaccination rate has climbed, Mr. Speaker. Our COVID numbers have declined. Our hospitalizations are declining. And we're thankful that today we're able to look at resuming these services and programs for people and babies just like Helen in

this province and many, many more. They'll be back to 50 per cent by next week, by 75 per cent the week following, and by the end of the month, Mr. Speaker, we'll have 90 per cent of those services back in place. And we're actively looking at how we can get our surgery capacity back up to where it needs to be as well.

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

Mr. Meili: — Make every effort, the Premier says, but he refused measures that would have reduced the situation that Helen is in, refused the measures that would have protected us from this fourth wave. And what was his explanation? He said it would be unfair to make those very reasonable public health measures, to put those in place. He said it would be unfair.

I think no one has answered that better than Helen's dad. Helen's dad said:

To insinuate that we can't have more restrictions in place because that would be a punishment to those that are vaccinated is a complete fallacy. The people who are suffering and being punished right now are the most vulnerable, like my daughter.

Does the Premier recognize how unfair his mishandling of this fourth wave has been to kids like Helen?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, this is precisely why we did take action in the middle of September. This is precisely why we had reinstituted the mandatory-masking-inside policy across the province as a public health order. This is why we brought in the proof-of-vaccination policy across the public service, Mr. Speaker, encouraging businesses, school divisions, other employees across this province to put in place a similar policy, proof-of-vaccination/proof-of-negative test, to encourage people in this province to go out and get vaccinated.

And that is, thankfully, pushing up our vaccination rate. We've had about almost 170,000 people that have went out and gotten vaccinated since that policy has been put in place. We now have in this province over 800,000 people that are vaccinated, Mr. Speaker.

And those policies are working. As I've said, we're down 64 per cent in our COVID 7-day rolling average, 64 per cent with our active cases. Our hospitalizations are down over 100 from their peak, Mr. Speaker. This is a trajectory that we want to be on so that we can very quickly, very quickly provide these services and programs to people like baby Helen, Mr. Speaker, to people in this province that ultimately need those services.

And we're going to be doing that. Those services are actually . . . Some of the resumption of some of those services is happening as we speak. We'll be up to 50 per cent resumption of those services by next week, 75 per cent the week following, Mr. Speaker, and by the end of the month we're going to be back to about 90 per cent of those services being provided to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. Finally, Mr. Speaker, we're getting to a place in this province where we are going to be able to not only resume those services, but look at how we can get our surgical capacity back up running, Mr. Speaker, and get those

people back in the queue as well.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, families like Helen's are suffering because this Premier spent weeks and weeks pandering to extremists in his own party instead of acting quickly to protect our health system. Helen's not just waiting for diagnosis. Laura and Graham were told by her physiotherapist that her care has been suspended indefinitely because the people providing that care have been redeployed to do contract tracing. Does the Premier think it's fair that kids like Helen are suffering the results of his inaction, that their therapies are not being able to be accessed at such a key time in her development?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — I would say that those services are going to be provided again in very short order, Mr. Speaker, over the course . . . If they aren't already this week, by next week or possibly the week after. As I said there's a very active and ambitious resumption of services here in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the last 14 years, as I've said, that we've had the honour to form government, to serve as government to the people of this province, the record of this government has been one of investment in health care. Mr. Speaker, we've invested, yes, in capital projects across this province. You think of the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, multiple hospitals, long-term care centres in the province. But we've also invested in the people, the people that provide services ultimately in those facilities. A thousand more physicians, for example, are working in this province since we formed government; 4,000 more nurses, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, COVID-19 has been challenging, not just for Saskatchewan. Most recently for Saskatchewan, but not just for Saskatchewan — challenging across Canada, Mr. Speaker. I'm thankful that we have the investment not only in the facilities but in the people that has arrived over the course of the last decade and a half, Mr. Speaker, to put us in a strong position to face what we have never faced in Saskatchewan, across Canada, around this world before, Mr. Speaker. I'm thankful for that investment.

We have made investments before in reducing our surgical wait times, Mr. Speaker. We have achieved those targets in years before, Mr. Speaker. Now this government needs to set out, we need to do it again, and we will do it again.

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

Mr. Meili: — Therapists like those that should be helping Helen are instead calling through contact tracing. They're doing security or sweeping floors at vaccination clinics. To the Premier: why has he refused to staff up in testing and tracing? Why does he refuse to get help from the federal government for testing and tracing instead of making sure that those therapists are ready and able to help Helen and kids like her?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

And first, welcome to your Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, as I've mentioned before, we had to make some challenging choices because we had an influx of people that weren't vaccinated into our hospital system, Mr. Speaker. Those decisions were not made lightly, Mr. Speaker. They were made understanding that these are going to impact people's lives, not just people in the opposition's constituency but across our whole province, Mr. Speaker.

I can understand exactly what this family is going through. I have gone through it myself, Mr. Speaker, in 2004 with my daughter when things were delayed. I understand that. I'd be more than happy to sit down with this family and be able to talk about some of their experiences that they're here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along with waiting for a diagnosis, along with having her physiotherapy treatments indefinitely suspended, Helen is also among the 35,000 people in Saskatchewan waiting for a surgery. The eye surgery she needs may shape Helen's ability to see for her entire life.

And her mother, Laura, is also a surgeon and expresses great frustration at going to work and being unable to help her patients the way she knows she can and should, and then going home and seeing her daughter unable to get the help she needs and deserves. What assurances can the Premier give Helen's family that she will get that life-altering surgery that she needs and that she'll get it in time?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thanks again, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier has outlined, we're starting our resumption of services and programs across the province. We started that earlier this week, Mr. Speaker, focusing specifically on children and youth, getting some of those therapies back because we understand that pausing that for a time does have a delay in that impact of that young child.

Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has outlined, we are getting 50 per cent of the people that have been temporarily moved out of their positions back into their original positions, Mr. Speaker. We're getting that done within a week, Mr. Speaker. We're also getting up to 75 per cent of them done in two weeks, Mr. Speaker. And by the end of the month we're going to have 90 per cent of those returned so the services can be done, so the surgeries can be done, so those therapies, those very important therapies can continue, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly why we've laid out a plan for the next month to be able to get these programs and services resumed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Waiting for a diagnosis. Waiting for therapy. Waiting for surgery. All because this Premier waited to act, refused to act on time. Did not listen to the experts. Did not take the steps to save lives. Right now, Laura and Graham and Helen are here in this House. Will the Premier rise and apologize to them and all the families damaged by his deliberate decisions to put politics ahead of people's lives?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. And I've offered to meet with the family right after question period to be able to discuss some of the challenges that they are going . . . initially like they identified, Mr. Speaker.

I had all of these challenges, myself and my family, going through this years ago in 2003 when there wasn't a pandemic, when our health care system was not challenged, when it was under the opposition's government, Mr. Speaker. We were still delayed by a diagnosis. We were still delayed by MRIs. We were still delayed by CAT [computerized axial tomography] scans back then, Mr. Speaker.

We've had an extremely challenging year. I want to thank all of the front-line health care workers that are out there, Mr. Speaker, not just on the COVID side, but on the non-COVID side. We want to make sure that we're maintaining that balance, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to do that, and we'll get those services resumed as soon as possible. Thanks again, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Extremely disappointing to see the Premier ignore a Saskatchewan family in that way. Extremely disappointing. Thirty-five thousand people on the backlog for surgeries in this province. That's more than the population of Moose Jaw waiting for a surgery right now. Uncertain whether or when they'll get out of pain or whether they'll get that surgery they need.

Yesterday the Minister of Health said, well as far as I know there is a plan. But the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] CEO [chief executive officer] said on the same day that he wouldn't even speculate about when they could have a plan. Why would the minister say he's got a plan when clearly no such plan exists?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Well thanks again, Mr. Speaker. As I outlined in the House yesterday that we were able to complete 88 per cent, in a very challenging year, of the surgeries that were planned, Mr. Speaker. When we implemented our plan this past summer, part of our Re-Open Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, from May 2nd until September 18th when we had to start pulling our services back, we were able to perform 95 per cent of those surgeries, Mr. Speaker, 95 per cent of those surgeries in those few short months. That's the plan that was there.

We had to put that plan on pause because of the influx of COVID-19 patients into our health care system. Mr. Speaker. We will re-enact that plan as soon as we can get this fourth wave in behind. We're starting that already with the resumption of services, the 50 per cent by next week, the 75 per cent the week after that. And by month-end, Mr. Speaker, 90 per cent. This is the plan of this government and we will enact that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No money in last spring's budget, no progress made on the backlog this summer, no effort to protect and preserve the health system from the fourth

wave, no mention in the Throne Speech of any plan of cleaning this mess going forward, and a history of wait times climbing and climbing and climbing under this Premier.

Why on earth would Saskatchewan people, why on earth would families like Helen's believe that these assurances from the minister are anything but more smoke and political games from a party that always puts politics ahead of their lives?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As far as our budget, maybe I can refresh the member's memory here. We had a 4.5 per cent increase of \$261 million into our health care budget this year, Mr. Speaker. We also had \$20 million that was unused from surgeries last year — because we had to pause because of COVID-19 — that is carried forward to this year. So when he says that there's no money in there, Mr. Speaker, he's completely inaccurate.

Obviously he didn't read the budget that was tabled back in the spring, Mr. Speaker. He obviously doesn't understand what's going on within the health care system. This is the largest budget that our health care system has ever seen, the largest budget that the SHA . . . And with those dollars, Mr. Speaker, we're going to make sure that those dollars get into the programs, surgeries, and a process to be able to make sure that the people out in Saskatchewan can get the health care that they deserve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Saskatchewan Income Support Program

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it is disappointing to see the Health minister double down in that respect.

Front-line agencies, advocates, now SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], the FSIN, the Saskatchewan Landlord Association, and most importantly those receiving benefits have made it clear that the government's SIS program has increased homelessness across this province.

[14:15]

Will the minister concede this program has been a complete failure, an absolute screw-up, and reverse the changes made to income assistance?

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I do thank the member opposite for the question.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is fully aware that the new SIS program has just recently come into full implementation. The program has actually been in place for over 18 months, and the last people just rolled over at the beginning of September, Mr. Speaker.

In the new SIS program we're focusing on helping people

overcome the challenges that they have, to help them move towards employment and/or participation in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that as the last batch of people come over, we're going to have to work a lot more closely with them. There will be situations where some people may not be able to pay those bills on their own. We will work with them on a one-on-one basis as they present to us, Mr. Speaker, and we will ensure that we help them get back on their feet, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, people will not be rolling over. They will keep fighting to scrap this program because Saskatchewan people, and not only in Regina, are sleeping in tents, bus shelters, ravines, back alleys — all in winter temperatures, some of them children, Mr. Speaker.

How many housing units are sitting vacant while hundreds of people are sleeping outside? Why hasn't the minister moved quickly to ensure people's basic needs during a crippling fourth wave? What will it take for the minister to act to ensure a roof overhead for struggling Saskatchewan people?

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And once again, I do thank the member opposite for the question.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the challenge of homelessness is not new. It's not new to the province of Saskatchewan. It's not new right across Canada, Mr. Speaker. And there are a variety of reasons why people become homeless. They can vary right from disabilities, mental health, addictions, interpersonal or even intergenerational trauma, Mr. Speaker. Our goal is to always ensure that everyone who needs services and supports gets them from the Ministry of Social Services and whatever department may need to reach out to them. It could be the Ministry of Health through our addictions centres.

Mr. Speaker, we do have housing units that are available through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, and we take applications all the time to put people in there. And we're here to ensure that someone has a roof over their head. During winter months we have shelters available to these people. Mr. Speaker, if for some reason a shelter is full, we do have the opportunity to put them up in a hotel room for the evening. And then we have our outreach services which will go to them and try to connect them with services following that stay, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Homelessness is not new, but that camp in the middle of Regina sure is. And SIS has worsened the situation. There's no question.

Experts warned two years ago to the now Health minister, the brains behind SIS, that this Sask Party government's planned changes would have disastrous outcomes. The minister ignored experts, and now well over 150 people at camp Merriman . . .

sorry, Camp Marjorie slept outside last night in freezing temperatures because of this minister's decisions. Meanwhile vacant buildings and more than 600 social housing units sit empty in Regina today.

Can the minister point to a single organization, a single stakeholder that's been impacted by SIS who will endorse this government's changes to income assistance? Just one.

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite references community-based organizations within our communities, you know, whether it be the community of Regina, or Prince Albert, or Saskatoon, or wherever that might be.

Within the city of Saskatoon, they have a group called sawêiyhtotân. It's a partnership that the Ministry of Social Services, the Ministry of Health, and the city of Saskatoon have all partnered on. And the purpose of that organization is an Indigenous-led organization to help Indigenous people that may be struggling with homelessness. They go out on the streets. They meet with people. They have conversations. And then what they do is they actually bring them in to us and see where we can find places for them. What kind of supports do they need? Is it housing that they actually need? Do they need help with regards to mental health and addictions? Whatever those needs may be, Mr. Speaker, we're there to help. And that's just one example of how we help. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. During question period, the member for Regina Elphinstone, who is quickly establishing a reputation for a lack of respect for this institution, referred to and made a breach of the standing orders in referring to members by their proper name. I would ask her to stand in her place, withdraw, and apologize.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the House Leader is referring to my camp Merriman statement. I had the Health minister's name on my mind, so I did misspeak, Mr. Speaker. The camp is actually called Camp Marjorie, named after a woman who died just days before getting access to a home . . .

The Speaker: — Member, would you state that you're withdrawing that error?

Ms. Conway: — Yes. With that context, Mr. Speaker, I'm absolutely happy to withdraw the comment . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I mean again, just a complete lack of respect for the institution and the Chair that you occupy. She needs to stand in her place, withdraw that comment, and apologize — not about context, not about what's on her

mind. She needs to unequivocally apologize to you and this House, and withdraw the comments.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, I think the Government House Leader was quick on his feet, but didn't have open ears. She did withdraw and apologize, and so I ask you to accept that.

The Speaker: — Yes, I'll rule on that right now. She did withdraw the comment, and we'll leave it at that for now. But I'll . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I'd like all members to watch what you say and how you say it because if it starts to ramp up, it's going to take away from question period from the opposition. So please respect that.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. A. Ross, seconded by Mr. Skoropad, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Love.]

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

Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I hate to interrupt the heckling and the talk across, but I will try to finish my speech before we adjourn today. It shouldn't take longer than a couple of hours.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to recap what I was talking about last night, and then I'll finish off the few minutes that I did have, Mr. Speaker. The only one thanks that I'll, sort of, cover off again is my wife, Fran. She's just a rock for me and my best friend. And as I said last night, we spent a lot of time together here through COVID. She's still with me, and I think she still kind of likes me, and I kind of like her, so that's been a good thing. Yeah, so we'll keep moving on. Where am I? Where was I here? Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to cover off some of the highlights that are happening in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. Right now in the city, we are starting to see some economic growth. The new aquatic centre which this government helped fund and the arenas project, that's moving ahead very nicely. The Rose Garden Hospice, Mr. Speaker, that's under construction, should be completed within the next year. That's sort of something that's near and dear to my heart.

Paper Excellence, I was to a meeting the other night on that, with their chance to reopen the mill coming and optimistic that that'll be done by the end of 2023. Mr. Speaker, there's Pivot

Manufacturing, this company in Prince Albert where, you know, they're going to manufacture furniture. A tree goes in one end and maybe a couch or something comes out the other end. That's pretty incredible stuff, Mr. Speaker. So there is the OSB [oriented strand board] plant, Mr. Speaker, another OSB plant that's out there that'll employ 700 people.

So, Mr. Speaker, as you can see, there's going to be a lot of construction jobs. There's going to be a lot of jobs, high-paying jobs, well-paying jobs in the city of Prince Albert. The Victoria Hospital construction, that's going to start very quickly so that's good.

You know, some good news from this past summer: we got the passing lanes in the north of Prince Albert on Highway 2, west of Prince Albert on Highway 3. They're both very, very busy highways and we're sure happy to see that. And we'll be even happier once the twinning is done for about 8 kilometres west of Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, a couple of the other good things, the good stuff from the past as I mentioned last night. Impaired driving, Mr. Speaker, down 60 per cent over the 10-year average. So that's incredible work done by SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance]. Distracted driving, Mr. Speaker, fines went up and number of tickets went down. More and more people are paying attention. There's still those that aren't, but they're seeming to find those.

Mandatory truck driver training, Mr. Speaker. We probably have the best mandatory truck driver training in Canada and in all of North America. Great work again by SGI. Tow truck drivers, they now have amber and blue lights which went into effect, first jurisdiction in North America to have that. Mr. Speaker, a couple of other things they did: the highway traffic safety, where small communities can apply for money and it's money that comes directly out of the photo radar tickets, Mr. Speaker. So people are starting to get their money back there, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing I wanted to mention. SGI, two of the last three years, has received the Citizen of Distinction Award from MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving] Canada for its work on impaired driving. And there was another individual — I know some people in here may know her; Wilson-Raybould or something like that, her name is — that got the award in between us. So it's a pretty exclusive club and I'm sure happy and proud of SGI for that, Mr. Speaker.

There, that's sort of the wrap-up, Mr. Speaker. I'll move on to some other stuff now that it's starting to settle down.

With the ceremonies this morning, Mr. Speaker, out in the rotunda, and with Remembrance Day just around the corner, I'd like to relay a couple of stories, or a story I guess, about a couple of incredible men that I have the privilege of knowing, or had the privilege of knowing for one of them.

Pre-COVID, there was an elderly gentleman phoned my office, wanted to come and see me, and made an appointment. He didn't have anything specific. He just wanted to see me and meet me and have a coffee with me. And so that was kind of nice, you know, so we had a coffee together. He pulled up and you'd never know he was in his 90s, Mr. Speaker, because he popped out of

the car, walked in there like he was maybe 70 years old.

So we had a coffee together and we talked for some time, Mr. Speaker. You know, he was a veteran of World War II and a lifetime resident of Prince Albert, a man who lived a pretty humble life in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. He started out when he came back from the war as a janitor. He became a mechanic, then a service manager at a Ford dealership in Prince Albert. Really a pretty regular guy you'd think.

You know, I'd seen him at a Remembrance Day ceremony before that, and so when we're talking I asked him about his service to our country and where he was during the war. He said he was a signalman and he got some training in Manitoba. Then he was shipped over to Scotland where he completed his training. And I mentioned to him, I says, well that's a coincidence because my father was a signalman in World War II, and he got some training in Manitoba, was shipped over to Scotland for further training.

[14:30]

And then Ed said — his name is Ed Laird — he said, well then he was shipped down to Sicily, and then moved over to Italy, and moved up the heel side of Italy into some incredible battles. And I said, well my father was on the ship down to Sicily, and he went through Sicily, and he went through the toe of Italy and up through the heel and up to some of these same areas.

So he talked about the big battle, the Battle of Ortona, Ortona, Italy. And that battle was one of the heaviest battles in all of Italy. In fact it was the heaviest battle in all of Italy. It went from December 20th to December 28th, 1943. And it involved house-to-house fighting where they would throw a grenade in the house and then go in after. It was pretty bitter battling throughout those eight days. And just on the Allied side, there was 2,300 casualties in this battle. And it was quite the thing.

But Ed said to me, he said one of the most memorable things that happened during the battle was on Christmas Day, 1943. They had agreed on a five-hour truce. And so he said he made his way to a big church in Ortona, and the church that there was a number of other Canadians at. And I stopped him and I said, you know, that's funny you say that, I said, because this is the same story my father tells. He told a story of how he and my father were at the same place at the same time and same church. He said, but I never met your father, he said, but we had to have rubbed shoulders there because it was a group of Canadians. We were both signalmen so we must have rubbed shoulders there. And that was pretty incredible.

But like I say, he didn't recognize my father's name. But he had tons of respect. My father passed away in 2012. And sitting there with Ed, you know, just reminded me so much, so much of my father and it brought back so many memories. It was like he was sitting there in the room with me. And my father very rarely, you know, talked about the horrors of war, only maybe only two stories, and this was one of them. You know, and the other one was, you know, where a couple of his good friends were killed in an overnight raid. So it was very, very rare. But to hear Ed sit there and tell the same story was pretty incredible.

But what else is incredible about Ed is on his 22nd birthday . . . He was only 22 years old and this was in May and armistice was

signed or the truce was signed. And so it was his 22nd birthday. At 4 in the morning, he was woke up and he was given the duty of passing the news of the ceasefire to all of the regiments. So that was incredible.

He come home after the war. He was wounded three times. You know, he was shot in the foot, he was shot in the arm, and he was shot just in the head, just above the eyebrow. He's still got a scar right through his eyebrow. And just missed him. Could have killed him, just a half an inch would have killed him.

I stay in contact with Ed because he's an incredible man. We had a Premier's dinner up there and I invited Ed as my guest. Ed and his daughter and his son-in-law came, and it was incredible. The Premier was courteous enough and he introduced Ed, told a little bit about his story. And while it wasn't asked for, it was an automatic standing ovation for Ed. He was pretty thrilled. I was pretty thrilled to recognize a man that had given so much for his country.

I encourage everyone here to google his name, Ed Laird. You'll read a couple of interviews that he's done in the last couple of years for the local paper. It'll tell you even more, some of the stories of how he was shaking, how a chaplain come up and said, "Trust in God. You'll be okay." He says, "And I stopped shaking." And just incredible stories.

You know, this is from a guy that people would go see, and you know, go and get their oil change and they'd talk to Ed. And here he is. He's such a man. He was in this battle. He was wounded three times. You know he was playing a role in the cease fire at the end of the World War. And he's in there, just a regular guy, and you know, it just makes me look around and think, it's all possible of us all to be that kind of a person. Ed, you know, you talk to him. He expected no glory, expects nothing. He's just a regular person. He came home and he went to work just like you and I do, but yet he did so much.

We owe them so much and during these difficult times of COVID, I can't help but think of the sacrifices that they made for the people of this province and this country. Some people have said to me, they fought to give me the right basically to do whatever I want, which isn't true. But I say they sacrificed everything they had — meaning including their lives — but not for themselves, but for you and I and everyone else in this country.

Now we've been asked to do a few things, some might even say sacrifices, to help defeat this pandemic, sacrifices which are pretty minimal. And I don't think it's too much for anyone to go out and get your vaccine shot, to wear a mask, to use your hand sanitizer, to show your proof of vaccination, when you consider what Ed did for his sacrifice. Putting a mask on? Come on. And these are a few sacrifices we've been asked to do, not just . . . don't seem that daunting. They just don't seem that daunting when compared to the sacrifices they made.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just encourage everyone again and again and again go get your shot, follow the public health orders. This is how we get rid of this pandemic. It's not by bickering and fighting in amongst ourselves. It's about everybody pitching in and sacrificing that little, little bit. And we will get through this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll wrap up. I know there's many other people just anxious to get on their feet and give their two cents about the Throne Speech.

But I'd love to say much more. I do have more stories like that. But they're always difficult stories. But with the service this morning, Mr. Speaker, and with Remembrance Day coming on in the next short while, it's stories like that that really hit home. And it's too bad that we only remember these people one day a year. They deserve to be remembered every day for what they've done.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saying, you know, that I will be supporting the motion put forward by my colleague and my good friend the member from Prince Albert Northcote, and I will not be supporting the amendment put forward by the member from Saskatoon Eastview. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Willowgrove.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure to enter into the debate on the Speech from the Throne. It's an opportunity that I've been given over the last number of years and, Mr. Speaker, I want to say how honoured I am to once again be able to stand in this Legislative Assembly.

And I've had the honour, along with the member from Saskatoon Southeast and the member from Batoche, for entering this Legislative Assembly some . . . in a few days it'll be 18 years ago, in 2003. And that's a long time, but indeed the pleasure and the responsibility grows each and every year.

So for that I want to thank the people from Saskatoon Willowgrove for allowing me to take my seat in the Legislative Assembly. I want to thank my colleagues on this side of the House, and both sides of the House, to be able to make whatever little contribution that I can do to the betterment of this province.

Mr. Speaker, people begin by talking about their family, and I certainly wanted to do that in this speech. I want to talk about my wife, Trish, and she's enjoying her career right now at St. Paul's Hospital Foundation. She's a major-gifts officer and really enjoying talking to people in their senior years and talking about giving and talking about foundations and what they add to our province. I'll talk about foundations in general a little bit later, Mr. Speaker.

My kids, my children, two of them. When I was first here in the legislature they were three and five years old. I think they did the wave one year during the Speech from the Throne. It may have woken a few people up at the time, who knows. But they were here at that age and they enjoyed it, and now they're young adults.

And Carter is a financial planner with Brian Mallard and Associates, a very important career as we talk about financial planning and, you know, government wanting residents to be able to take care of their own finances. He has an opportunity to do that through Brian Mallard and Associates, a very, very high-regarded financial firm in Saskatoon.

Daughter Paige is in Hamilton. She's at McMaster University.

She's in her fourth year of kinesiology. She's a member of the McMaster swim team and she gets a wonderful opportunity to swim against Olympians and people like that. And she's just enjoying her time there, Mr. Speaker. But she is very, very driven towards a career in health care. She wrote the MCAT [Medical College Admission Test], the medical entrance exam, this summer and is hoping that she can further her studies in a medical way in a university across the country. So I'll talk a little bit about Paige and her volunteerism a little bit later.

People have also talked about their constituency offices and their CAs [constituency assistant], and I tell you, it takes a team to keep track of me. And I want to thank Brianne and Carmen and Jacquie and Amanda and the roles that they play and the roles that they help me in doing my job.

The Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency is an exciting constituency, and every year I talk about the growth that takes place there and the communities. We've got Evergreen and University Heights and Willowgrove, Aspen Ridge, Brighton, East College Park, Briarwood, Arbor Creek, and it just continues to grow and grow. And one of the newest neighbourhoods is Brighton and, Mr. Speaker, in that one neighbourhood they are projected to have 15,000 people. And it is indeed a pleasure to go door knocking there.

And you just, going door to door, you never know the story of the person in the next house, whether they came from Germany, whether they came from South Africa, whether they came from the United States to make Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada their home. There's always a story. It's usually a job or a family matter or something like that. But they've chosen to make Saskatchewan home, and they're part of our record growth of the province that we've had over the last decade here in Saskatchewan.

Along with the growth comes the need for infrastructure, the need, you know, to continue to build. We have a new overpass in our constituency, enhanced highways, cell towers, for example, and of course new schools and the need for new schools. And that's something that hasn't changed since I was elected in 2003: the need to service a growing area. But I'm happy to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Ministry of Education and the school boards have announced that the next high school in Saskatchewan will be going into the neighbourhood of Brighton, and the next elementary schools — the public school and the separate school as well — will be going into the community of Brighton in the constituency of Saskatoon Willowgrove. So once again, as is the case now in Evergreen and Willowgrove, residents will have first-rate schools in the constituency. We have first-rate teachers and we're just very, very fortunate to have that.

While we're mentioning schools, I have to mention my alma mater, Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan. A new school has been announced. Last fall I had the opportunity to be there for the announcement. It's a small but mighty school, the home of the Comets, and to have a brand new school there in rural Saskatchewan . . . It's not the only community there. I think there were 16 that are having it. But it's just a wonderful opportunity to say to rural Saskatchewan, keep doing what you're doing. And I was so proud to have an opportunity there.

In the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency we have people from

the Philippines, people from India, and they bring with them from around the world their skills. But what really impresses me is their entrepreneurship. So many of them are in business. And I'm just grateful for their dedication and their want to make their new home, their new community, their new country, their new province and city better than it was. And they do that in so many ways. So I want to thank all those new Canadians for settling in Saskatoon Willowgrove and across Saskatchewan. It makes us so proud as members.

I want to, you know, also thank in my constituency . . . The proximity to Royal University Hospital, it's very close. We have many doctors. We have many nurses. We have many health care professionals. We have people in health care planning and people in health care administration. And they are doing everything they can on the front lines to help us face this challenge.

It's the fourth wave of the pandemic right now, but they've been there through and through. They've been there before COVID, but I know many of them and the work that they're doing. So on behalf of every member in this legislature, I'm sure both sides of the House will want to thank them, those that live in my constituency and those that live in other areas as well, for the work that they do.

[14:45]

As was mentioned in question period today, you know, the government has spent \$530 million directly on COVID, and there's more to do absolutely. And I know that the budget keeps going up and up, but there certainly is a lot of challenges that we have in place.

Mr. Speaker, just before question period today, I contacted the Minister of Health in the Minister of Health's office to get the very, very latest information as far as our vaccinations go. Mr. Speaker, today in Saskatchewan we have more than 86 per cent of our population, our eligible population have one dose. More than 78 per cent have their second dose. Mr. Speaker, that's a total of 1,673,076 vaccines. And for that I say thank you. Thank you to the residents of Saskatchewan. Thank you to the ministers of Health and thank you to every member here in their Legislative Assembly for encouraging their constituents to get it done.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's also a very, very new statistic that just happened today — 800,000 residents of Saskatchewan are now fully vaccinated. So how about a hand for that? Absolutely. Active cases in Saskatchewan — and I think the Premier mentioned it in question period today — 1,765 down 64 per cent from the peak on September 26th. So certainly in the right direction. Not low enough, but we're going to make sure that they get lower and lower and do all we can to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to continue to thank constituents in these challenging times, the fourth wave of the global pandemic. I want to thank residents for reaching out and calling their MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. Some days it was a bit much to handle, but I made the commitment to try to get back to everybody, certainly within 24 hours. And every conversation, and they weren't — I'm not going to fool anybody here, and everyone knows — they weren't easy conversations. People have passionate feelings on both sides of the issue, but certainly what

I did say to every one of them at the end is thank you for calling. Thank you for reaching out, because it helps me do my job as a member of the legislature, when I can point to specific examples, when I can talk in caucus, or in the legislature about specific examples of constituents and how they want us to do better.

We're not perfect. Nobody wrote the book on how to do this. But we're trying our very, very best, led by our Premier and our cabinet and our Health ministers. And I think people, they do realize that. I try to get answers when asked specific questions. But I also listen, listen that families that are being torn apart, families that are on both sides of the issue — how difficult that is. We highlight our families in this legislature and nothing's more important to people when they call than their families, but there are families that are on both sides of the issue. So I think, you know, we have to be cognizant of that.

And certainly a heartfelt sympathy to those who have lost loved ones, because of COVID, because of the pandemic. And you know, we know there's an excess of 800 here in Saskatchewan, and our deepest sympathies as MLAs go out to each and every family. One is too many, but again we try to do our very, very best to make sure that we get through this.

We're grateful to our health care workers and to our educators. I know that they have unique difficulties as well, but the Minister of Education, the Ministry of Education and others are doing all they can.

Lives are impacted, Mr. Speaker, livelihoods are impacted. You know, when we get a paycheque every so often here in the legislature and people that work for government and all, they're very thankful for that. But there are those that have it all out there, are risking it all in the economy through their business, and they have a special challenge in getting through COVID, and their voice needs to be heard as well. And I think that's one area that I believe that our government is doing as well or better than most governments in Canada. We're leading the way in many areas. And certainly we can do better in that regard. There's many areas that we can do better, but we are certainly, certainly up to the challenge.

And we're not, you know, we're humble enough to say we're not perfect. But in light of everything that is going on here we are certainly trying our best. And the vast majority of people, even if they disagree with me, they thank us for doing that. And not only as government members, but I know that the opposition members are doing their very best as well.

The topic that comes up very often in those conversations is mental health, mental health of the children usually. People talking about . . . Many don't want to talk about the mental health struggles of, you know, themselves or their spouses. They're trying their best for their family, but that's something that has to be recognized.

Also the sacrifices of not visiting loved ones, especially in care homes and what people have gone through for the last 20 months, that has to be recognized. You know, we feel we've lost a year or lost two years of our lives, but those in very senior situations it is certainly, certainly something that we have to be cognizant of and aware of and try to do our very best. So again, thank you to all members in the legislature for doing their very best in what

they can do.

Mr. Speaker, I want to shift gears a little bit. I had an opportunity to do a member's statement about the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, Jason Aebig and his team of Treena and Roz, Terry, Margot, Henry, and Pamela. They've been very, very positive, and they've been helping businesses throughout Saskatoon and northern Saskatchewan, you know, whether it's handing out the COVID kits or just keeping a positive momentum in Saskatchewan. So I want to thank them as well, along with the North Saskatoon Business Association.

There's many to thank and I'll choose some to thank, and others will choose other organizations. But Keith Moen and the North Saskatoon Business Association, I know how hard they've worked. I know how positive they've been in trying to help each and every business, because each and every business means a way to contact each and every employee. Each and every employee represents a family. And this is the way that we're going to get through it.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know people have mentioned the sort of hidden story or the successful story that maybe doesn't get as much attention that it needs to, but my goodness. You know, I was in the United States representing Saskatchewan at a conference when we heard about the new potash mine being guaranteed to go ahead. And it was so, so positive to be able to talk about being from Saskatchewan and having a \$7.5 billion potash mine going forward.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about Cargill and Viterra and the canola crushing plants that they provided — again many, many jobs. Such a positive thing to happen at a time like this for our province.

And also the work of Parrish & Heimbecker and companies that are working in our agriculture industry. I can go on and on. I'll leave it to rural members to highlight more about that.

And we heard a little bit about helium in our province, and we hear more and more about it. Royal Helium, North American Helium. Many of the employees of these companies reside in the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency. And I'm so proud to hear about the future that they're bringing to Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is home to the largest helium purification plant in Canada, and \$32 million in North American Helium facility is expected to produce more than 50 million cubic feet of helium per year.

And again, Mr. Speaker, it's so invigorating to see companies like that come to Saskatchewan. The goal, and it's important . . . And you know, we never shy away from setting goals on this side of the House, and it's . . . glad to see that our private sector does that as well. The goal to ensure Saskatchewan produces 10 per cent of the world's helium by 2030 — a very ambitious goal but something that I think that can be achieved.

And in other areas, anyone who has read *The Globe and Mail* lately will be familiar with a company named DEEP [Deep Earth Energy Production Corp.] headed by female entrepreneur, Kirsten Marcia. This company is providing geothermal in Saskatchewan. Wade MacBain is a senior partner there, assisted by Rob Norris and others. I think many on both sides of the

House had the opportunity to visit DEEP near Estevan. I know certainly in excess of 20 members from this side of the House have done that. And it's a way to meet our climate challenges, and it's something that we're leading the way here in Canada. And certainly Kirsten is doing that in her skills as a CEO and also as a female CEO and her ability to do that. So we're very, very proud of the work that she is doing in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity last week to talk to U of S president, Peter Stoicheff, and it's always an interesting conversation. He's always full of information, and he's a very positive, positive person. He reminded me that the second-fastest IT [information technology] sector growth in the country is not in Montreal. It's not in Toronto. It's not in Winnipeg. It's not in Calgary. It's not in Vancouver. It's in Saskatchewan. It's in Saskatoon — the second-fastest growing IT sector.

And it's because of countries like Vendasta, 7shifts, Coconut Software, and many, many others. And it's been mentioned before that those companies are hitting the list of the fastest growing companies in Canada, and well deserved. And again they bring people to Saskatchewan. They bring knowledge to Saskatchewan. And they contribute back by producing for our economy.

Companies who are located here for a long, long time are doing their very best. And you know, hats off to Federated Co-op and the CEO, Scott Banda, and his partnership with Whitecap Resources and Grant Fagerheim, and you know, carbon capture and utilization. Here's multi-billion-dollar companies that are joining together and leveraging their assets to do better for Saskatchewan. This is how we reach those climate goals, not by trotting off to conferences and talking down on what's happening in Saskatchewan, in Alberta, in Canada, but talking about it and talking about the innovation that is happening. So hats off to Federated Co-op, to Whitecap Resources.

You know, Cameco and Tim Gitzel have been doing a wonderful job working their way through COVID and making sure people are employed and then looking forward to the role that nuclear energy will play. And I see some members opposite nodding their heads, and I'm hoping that that's the case going forward when we look at small nuclear reactors and what they provide here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, if I'm talking about, you know, pre-eminent companies in Saskatchewan, I've got to talk about the Brandt Group of Companies. A thousand more people hiring here in Saskatchewan, and their footprint in Saskatoon is increasing. They've been in Regina for quite some time, but the Semple family, led by Shaun Semple and of course his mom and dad, Gavin and Annette, they've done a wonderful job. And so many people here not only growing their company from inside but buying up other companies and locating those head offices here in Saskatchewan. So a thank you to the Semple family.

And in the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency, of course, we have entrepreneurs like Grant Kook in Golden Opportunities. And combining all the assets that he has between Golden Opportunities and private equity funds, we're talking over \$1 billion of private equity here in Saskatchewan. And we're very, very pleased to have that here and to have the leadership. The Paul J. Hill group of companies and their investment in real

estate here Saskatchewan, certainly something to be very, very proud of.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to participate in the Raj Manek Foundation 25th anniversary of Raj Manek, who was an employee of the Government of Saskatchewan. And I'm going to be talking in a member's statement more about that, and I look forward to that. Also I want to talk a little bit about a guest speaker and an event that took place from Estevan, Saskatchewan and he just happens to be the VP [vice-president] of Microsoft. So I'm going to be talking about that in a members' statement as well.

I referenced talking to Peter Stoicheff a few days ago, and that was to welcome a company to Saskatchewan from Israel — NRGene. Now a number of years ago a couple of members of this Assembly, the Minister of Justice, the member for Saskatoon Northwest, and the minister of the Economy, the member from Meadow Lake went to Israel along with the president of the university and invited this company to set up in Saskatchewan.

Well long story short, Mr. Speaker, that's indeed what happened. And they were very, very proud to have double-digit employees. They started telling me they had eight, and then when they did a final count that day they had 12 employees and telling me that those people are making their homes in Saskatoon from Israel. We're just very, very proud to have them here. And I'll be talking more about them in this legislative session as well, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier about health and our health budget and it came up again in question period today. Our health budget was up by 4.56 per cent last year, but it's never enough, you know. We know that it's never enough. There's always more goals, more things to do. And one way that residents and people address that is not solely relying on government but through foundations.

And in Saskatoon I know the concentration of foundations that we have is amongst the leading edge in Canada. You know, when I talk about them, I talk about the Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation, the Royal University Hospital Foundation, the St. Paul's Hospital Foundation, the hospice that they have at Glengarda. And the member from Prince Albert Carlton talked about the need for hospices, and that's something that we certainly need in Saskatchewan, more of that coming.

Mr. Speaker, I think one thing that I've talked about every year in the 18 years that I've been in this Legislative Assembly is the need for a children's hospital, and now the thankfulness that we do have one and the need to keep it on a leading edge. So thank you to the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation and the work that they do.

Saskatoon Community Foundation I talked about last session, about Curtis Kimpton and his team over at the Saskatoon Community Foundation and all that they do. Very recently we have some new foundations that have come up in Saskatoon, in Saskatchewan: the Public Schools Foundation and Saskatoon separate Catholic school foundation as well.

And you know, foundations are groups that get together and

fundraise from Saskatchewan residents and people actually across Canada and from away or people that lived here before. And they target specific needs that we have here in Saskatchewan, and they fulfill those needs. And you know, one thing about this group, when they set a target, they do everything. They move heaven and earth to make sure that those targets are reached.

So we're very, very fortunate to have foundations that are doing the additional work, looking for that one machine that's vitally needed. Even though governments are funding and increasing funding by 4.5 or 6 per cent, there's always a way to fund things that are very needed. And I thank them to do that.

One individual that does a lot of work in this area is Don Gorsalitz and his company, DCG. They've raised millions and millions of dollars helping those foundations reach out to corporate Saskatchewan, individual Saskatchewan. And when I look at the wonderful, wonderful things they've done at Gordie Howe park in Saskatoon and many other areas, it's something that has to be congratulated.

A resident that lives in Saskatoon Willowgrove is Angela Bergerman. She's spent a lot of time working with Mr. Gorsalitz and others in raising those funds and making their province a better place. The top of the list now for Don and his group is the Humboldt Broncos memorial. I know members have heard about it and are going to be hearing more about it. And again the private sector leading the way to ensure that we have an appropriate memorial for what was, of course, a horrific tragedy in our province. But they'll do it well and they'll do it right.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know my time is getting along here so I just want to, you know, continue and talk about a few more topics. I talked about mental health and the conversations that I've had with constituents. And invariably I would say, over half the time that we talk about it, they mention sports. And they mention the need for their children to play sports, and many adults that I talk to about the sporting that they're involved in in adult community as well. It helps people, you know, relieve the pressure and relieve the tension. And I think many members in this House will feel that way because that's certainly the way that I feel as well.

And I have to highlight a few new people on the scene, people that have been here for quite some time but doing very well. And I want to highlight Al Simpson and Living Sky Sports and the work that he's doing in Regina with the Red Sox and also with the soccer community in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan. This is an entrepreneur, a very successful entrepreneur. I first met him when I was minister of Crowns back some time ago, and he's done very, very well for himself. And he wants to give back to his community and his province, not only Regina but Saskatoon as well. And he's committed a fair amount of his own money to be doing that, so here's hoping for him.

And you know, people like John Graham, who's from Ontario but comes out here and does everything sports-wise and tries to bring professional hockey, professional sports on a basis to our province. And again, you know, when I talk to people they say, thank goodness for sports in times like this.

And you know, we look at Huskies football and all the Huskies sports in Saskatoon, and I know Regina members would say the

same thing about Regina. And the Hilltops and the Rattlers and the Rush, and the five WHL [Western Hockey League] teams we have in Saskatchewan and the 13 SJHL [Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League] teams. And it is just so, so important to see.

And you know, when I went to a Huskies hockey game the other day, Mike Babcock, of course, you know, former NHL [National Hockey League] coach and a real hero for Saskatchewan, was there. And I saw him just talking to every player and so enthusiastic, you know, at the university level as he was in the NHL as well. So to Mike, thank you for what you're doing for very, very little remuneration but, you know, doing well.

You know, at that time we have to thank people who run places like SaskTel Centre and Evraz Place in Regina: Scott Ford and Cheri Hamilton in Saskatoon and Tim Reid here in Regina. Thank you for all the struggles and all the effort that you do to have a place that we can go and safely enjoy entertainment. And that's what they're providing us and I think, you know, they don't get thanked enough.

Mr. Speaker, I had a unique opportunity last weekend. I travelled to Winnipeg and I was there to witness a good friend of mine become the Premier of Manitoba. It was great to see Heather Stefanson win the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba. Her challenger, Shelly Glover, put up a good fight. It was a closer race that I think than most wanted. And I wanted to thank them both for putting their name forward and to say as a member of the government here in Saskatchewan, we look forward to working very closely with them.

And Mr. Kelvin Goertzen as well served as premier, and it was a very, very tough time and did very, very well. You know the only problem that I had with him and his speech was that he highlighted the fact that through his term as premier, which was two months, the Blue Bombers hadn't lost a game. So I chided with him later that, you know, if he stayed on a few more weeks we'd take care of that stat as well.

So to Heather Stefanson and my good friend Jason and their children Tommy and his daughter, I want to congratulate them. And becoming a premier is certainly an achievement. And again, we look close . . . In 2007 when we first became government, we had joint cabinet meetings with Manitoba and Alberta. I think with the stress that we have from the federal government, it's time to do more of that, to become closer with Alberta and closer with Manitoba and ensure that we can stand together with a voice, a voice that is needed to stand up to what's happening in Ottawa these days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to congratulate also — I don't think it's been done enough — the 14 MPs [Member of Parliament] that have been elected here in Saskatchewan. They have a tough, tough job as well with everything that's happening in Ottawa to articulate the voice of Saskatchewan, to work with the Government of Saskatchewan. I congratulate each of the 14 MPs that has been elected. Two of course were members of our House.

I also want to talk about Robert Freberg, Saskatchewan's Chief Firearms Officer. He is a resident of Saskatoon Willowgrove, a member of the Saskatoon Wildlife Federation, and an outstanding resident of Erindale. Mr. Speaker, I got to know him not through his formal areas with the wildlife federation, but I

knew him as a guy that got up early on Saturday mornings and cleared the snow off the lake in our area so the kids could go and skate. And his children were grown up, and that's something that he's done. It tells you a little bit about the person. I think we made the right choice in that area as well.

I want to talk about Trikafta, the drug that certainly people with cystic fibrosis have been looking forward to and been wanting to make sure that it was on the formulary. And it's taken a number of years but, Mr. Speaker, it is indeed something that we're very, very proud of. We know these drugs are expensive. You know, we've got more funding for the cancer agencies to support a new oncology program. We are backing a new ovarian cancer drug as well. So, Mr. Speaker, it's something that we're very, very proud of.

Our government is supporting eight projects intended to improve patient flow and emergency wait times in Saskatoon and Regina. Engineering work is under way for the new urgent care centres in Saskatoon and Regina with construction to begin in the new year. And that's very, very positive, Mr. Speaker. The centres will help reduce wait times in emergency rooms in providing alternative care for illness and injuries not considered to be life-threatening, Mr. Speaker.

And I know I'm going on a little bit longer. Some members have went a little bit shorter and said I could have a little bit of their time, but I'm going to wrap it up here pretty close. Some are chuckling.

I want to talk about truth and reconciliation very quickly. And members on this side and members on the opposite side have talked about it as well. On September 30th at the invitation of Chief Mark Arcand, I had the chance to go with my family to SaskTel Centre and listen to Canadian country performing artists Charlie Major, George Canyon, and Gord Bamford. And it wasn't just a concert, Mr. Speaker; it was the ability to hear from these performers about truth and reconciliation and also to hear leaders in our province.

And Mark Arcand has a different way of dealing with things. And members on this side and across the legislature will know he's not confrontational. He knows that not one party has a monopoly on truth and reconciliation, and they're striving towards it. He feels we can all do better and he makes sure that every person is comfortable doing that. So, Mr. Speaker, the future looks bright when it comes to truth and reconciliation.

In the Throne Speech, of course, we talk about the \$75 million economic fund. I talked to the minister of the Economy about it yesterday. He's very, very, very excited.

Mr. Speaker, also earlier this week I had the chance to attend the MADD, the Mothers Against Drunk Driving ceremony in Saskatoon, the Red Ribbon campaign led by Bonny and Craig Stevenson and Lou and Linda Van De Vorst and Al and Melanie Kerpan. Mr. Speaker, this is a group of extraordinary volunteers that are making their impact not only in Saskatchewan but now across the country because people like Bonny have been asked to speak.

And one of the things she speaks about is relationships with government. And people want to know how they have such a

good relationship with members, I'm sure, on both sides of the House. And you know, she said you just have to ask because they're people that want to do better in this area. And you know, we had an opportunity . . . My daughter was able to help Bonny and Craig and others in a volunteer capacity putting up signs this summer as well.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know I've talked about specific areas and specific things and I want to talk about leadership for a moment and the leadership that is provided here in our province, you know. And I think to be honest, every member would sit here and say, what would they do if they were in that chair. You know, sometimes there's no right answer, and I know challenging myself in saying, what would I do if I was in that chair. Every decision is a very, very difficult decision.

And we are so well served by our Premier to make those decisions each and every day. Is every day a perfect decision? Is every day the right decision? Not always, but it is the best decision that he knows in his heart and he is assisted by our two Health ministers every step of the way and our cabinet and each and every member of this caucus. And I know he's open to ideas from the members of the opposition as well. So for that leadership, along with Dr. Shahab, thank you. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I just want to talk about Remembrance Day coming up. And growing up in Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan it was indeed a wonderful opportunity to hear about the positive stories first-hand of World War I vets and World War II vets. It's something that our parents made sure we did each and every year. You go into the hall; you walked till Main Street — didn't matter minus 40-something, didn't matter — people like George Stocks who were in Blaine Lake and did that. It's something that's instilled in me and I insist with our family that we go each and every year.

So in Saskatoon we have the largest indoor service in Canada each and every year. This year, like last year, it's going to be virtual. I know the member from Saskatoon Riversdale did a wonderful job of representing the Government of Saskatchewan and it will be shown on Shaw cable, so I hope all viewers are able to do that.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne, it's a tool of empowerment. It's there because it provides hope for us in troubled times. It's a plan, a positive plan in face of despair in many areas. But, Mr. Speaker, it is not the first time that we've faced challenges like that. We know our ancestors faced drought. We know that, you know, the Spanish flu was here and others did that and again there was no plan, no book written in that regard. But you know, we don't have to look any farther than the sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, and the challenges that she's faced this year, losing her spouse, 95 years old, and she continues to do her duty.

Mr. Speaker, Martin Luther King said that he had a dream, and he fulfilled that dream. In Saskatchewan, this Speech from the Throne has a dream as well. It's not perfect, but it's a dream that we owe to the forefathers that came before us and the work that they have done. We stand on the shoulders of those who were

here before us, so we want to thank you. And this Speech from the Throne is indeed our best attempt.

So of course, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion. I will be voting against the amendment and I want to say thank you for this wonderful opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lumsden-Morse.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour for me to have the privilege of responding to the Speech from the Throne. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a privilege to serve the people of Saskatchewan and particularly the great people of my constituency, Lumsden-Morse.

These are difficult times to serve, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of the pandemic that has gripped the entire world, including our country and certainly our province. Mr. Speaker, it's human nature to second-guess government decisions at any time. And the temptation to do so in difficult times seems magnified. It's easy to second-guess, and certainly to look at decisions in hindsight, and suggest that a few things should have been done differently.

But leaders don't have the advantage of hindsight when they make decisions in times of crisis and under great pressure. That's what leaders do. Leaders don't waver or complain. Leaders weigh the circumstances and they do what they believe is right because that's what leaders do. Leaders don't beg for help or pity. They stand up straight and keep making necessary decisions and ask no quarter from their enemies, because that's what leaders do, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am so thankful that we in this great province have the leadership of our Premier during this time of crisis, when every decision is criticized in retrospect by those who didn't have the courage to stand up and suggest otherwise at the time when the decision had to be made. I thank God for our Premier and his ministers. Our province could not have been in better hands.

Mr. Speaker, I have many people to thank for the opportunity to be speaking in reply to the Speech from the Throne in this beautiful, historic room. I want to thank the constituents of Lumsden-Morse who are farmers and ranchers and business people and employees who keep the wheels turning. But the thing that they have in common is a love for this province, and everything they do supports this great province. Whatever their walk of life, they are the salt of the earth, and every one of them is well worth listening to. I would certainly not have this opportunity if it weren't for them.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my constituency assistant, Terry Lynn Carefoot. Terry Lynn is the first contact for members of the public that have a problem that they think we might be able to help with. She's competent, knowledgeable, helpful, polite, personable, and patient. And her patience isn't often necessary for dealing with our constituents, but it sure comes in handy in dealing with me sometimes. Thank you, Terry Lynn, for all that you do.

I want to thank my constituency executive for being full of

energy and good counsel and great ideas and for informing me of the feelings of more of my constituents than I could ever possibly speak with myself on a myriad of issues.

Finally I must thank my family for their support and encouragement and love for the 22 years plus that I have received the honour of being sent to this great place to go to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very proud of the Speech from the Throne. Often over the years, particularly the years that I was in opposition, the Throne Speech was a vague document that didn't seem to have a strong link with the reality of the times. Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne is impressive in the improvements that it promises for all Saskatchewan people, including commitments to health, education, mental health and addictions, agriculture, policing, infrastructure, reconciliation, and support for our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard some people, mostly those on the opposite side of this room and their supporters, infer that strong economies and measures taken to strengthen economies are just favours to the business community. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be farther from the truth. The private sector is the biggest generator of jobs in this or any other province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, jobs and tax revenue and spinoff business and economic growth — growth which employs our people; feeds our families; educates our children; puts them into hockey, baseball, soccer, band, dance; and post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, the revenue supplied by businesses and the employees of businesses builds our schools and hospitals and streets and roads and our houses and rinks and athletic fields and buys our automobiles and cottages at the lake, and attracts more and more employees to the province and more business to the province. And they pay taxes and through that they pay for all of the things that makes life better for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, that's what economic development does for our society. It's no wonder that when the NDP [New Democratic Party] were in power our infrastructure crumbled and 100,000 people fled from Saskatchewan to make a better life where there was economic development. They will never understand this on the other side of this floor, Mr. Speaker, but the people of Saskatchewan sure do understand it.

Mr. Speaker, this speech outlines many billions of dollars' worth of business investment committed to our province over the next one to four years. This represents, in combination with things that have already been announced, like the Lake Diefenbaker irrigation project and Saskatchewan Minerals' expansion at Chaplin that were both announced last year, will represent the biggest economic boom that this province has ever seen, times that will provide more good jobs, good high-paying jobs to the people of Saskatchewan than we have ever seen. And this boom will raise the standard of living for Saskatchewan people, pay for the kinds of infrastructure and services that we've always dreamed of.

Mr. Speaker, our growth plan includes creating 100,000 new jobs in the province by 2030. And these announcements will take us a long way to reaching that goal, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The announcements include a new potash mine, three new canola crushing plants and a substantial expansion of an existing plant,

Canada's first wheat straw pulp plant, a new urea fertilizer plant, a new oriented strand board plant, a revitalized Prince Albert pulp mill, expanded and upgraded saw mills, and a new cedar manufacturing facility in Saskatoon.

I will review these investments in slightly more detail, Mr. Speaker. BHP for example recently announced that it will spend another \$7.5 billion to bring the Jansen potash mine into production, making their total investment in the project \$12 billion, which is the largest private sector investment ever made in this province, creating 3,500 jobs during the construction phase and 600 full-time jobs on top of the 6,000 jobs in the industry already.

Mr. Speaker, the explosion in the canola crushing industry will continue in Saskatchewan with new investment this year of over \$1 billion with two new plants being built in Regina by Cargill and Viterra. Mr. Speaker, at the same time, Richardson International will double the capacity of its crushing facility at Yorkton. Also, Mr. Speaker, Ceres Global Ag will build a new crushing plant at Northgate with a price tag of \$350 million.

Mr. Speaker, Red Leaf Pulp will build a wheat straw pulp plant costing \$350 million at Regina that will employ 110 people on a full-time basis. The Brandt Group of Companies will hire over 1,000 new employees by the end of this year, bringing their total labour force to 4,400, Mr. Speaker. More than half the new employees will be based in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Northern Nutrients will be building a \$25 million nitrogen facility in Saskatoon. And, Mr. Speaker, Clean Seed Capital Group will begin building its new Smart Seeder Max-5 in Saskatoon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our North nearly a billion dollars has been committed to several projects, will create new jobs for about 3,000 people, including Paper Excellence's investment of \$550 million to upgrade the Prince Albert pulp mill closed since 2006. This investment will create 1,650 new jobs. Dunkley Lumber in Carrot River and Carrier Forest Products in Big River are upgrading saw mills in those communities. One Sky Forest Products will build a \$250 million oriented strand board mill in Prince Albert, creating more than 700 new jobs in that city.

Mr. Speaker, our province has been able to attract this record amount of new investment because of a number of incentives to attract investment, encourage value-added processing, and spur innovation. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's also because we have a government that appreciates new investment and jobs and a government that has a track record of working with our businesses to help them succeed. Mr. Speaker, we will create the Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation which will provide financing to Indigenous communities and organizations interested in making equity investments in resource development projects to strengthen the burgeoning Indigenous business sector.

Here in Saskatchewan we are exporters. We are a province of 1.1 million people, and we export about \$65 billion worth of our products each year. Saskatchewan people are extremely productive, and we have to find international markets for most of what we produce. The trade offices operated by the federal government, although they've done a serviceable job in most

cases over the years, don't always do a great job of representing us in international markets and often aren't fully aware of what we have to sell here in Saskatchewan. We must be sure that we have a strong presence in at least our major markets. Currently we have trade offices in Japan, India, Singapore, and China, but early in 2022 we will be opening Saskatchewan trade offices in London, Dubai, Mexico City, and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam.

Here in Saskatchewan our main exports are ag products, manufactured goods, potash, uranium, and oil. But, Mr. Speaker, we have many other opportunities including but not limited to gold, coal, salt, clays, and sodium and potassium sulphate that are all produced in the province now.

[15:30]

New companies are exploring now for copper, lithium, zinc, nickel, cobalt, and rare earth elements. By the end of Q2 [second quarter] in 2021, Saskatchewan had attracted \$171 million of new investment, which is the highest annual investment in the history of the province and achieved this year in just six months. We are on a roll, Mr. Speaker, and this will truly be Saskatchewan's decade. Mr. Speaker, this kind of business and trade that I have talked about are the things that support the social programs and health and education that we all want more of.

Those members opposite, Mr. Speaker, seem to believe that all you have to do to get more of these things is to demand them, sometimes with great passion albeit. But all the passion and feigned indignation in the world doesn't make anything happen. Nothing happens without business first generating the revenue to pay for it. I'm not sure if the members opposite don't understand that or if they just pretend they don't understand it. In any event, I hope that they will never change, Mr. Speaker, because that way, in the words of Buckley Belanger, they will never have an opportunity to mess it all up.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell a little story about a veteran who lived down the road from me. Jack Harlton was his name. He was a bomber pilot in World War II and he was a very meticulous fellow. He was very young too, he was 19 at the time when this story was told. But he, on whatever base he was flying out of, he would fly all the planes on his off time because in the war years, the planes were built in different factories by different companies. And they'd get the same name stamped on them, but they had little differences. And those little differences killed a lot of crews because if you go to switch your fuel tanks and the switch is not there where it's supposed to be, there's a problem. Things of that nature.

Anyway Jack checked all of this out and everybody wanted to fly with Jack. And like I said, he was only 19 years old. He was stationed in North Africa and went out on a mission. I think it was in a Mitchell bomber. I'm not sure of that, but I know he did fly Mitchells at one point, and they were known to be a little bit flimsy. And I'm not sure it was a Mitchell this day or not.

But anyway they were shot down. Jack successfully landed a shot-up aircraft in the desert. And they hit a rock on landing and the co-pilot was cut right out of the airplane and killed. But he had six crew members left, and Jack and his six crew members took off on foot. Jack made sure that they got rid of their pistols because airmen in those days carried pistols, and if the Germans

caught them with pistols, they'd shoot them and claim that they resisted.

So they all threw away their pistols and they were eventually picked up by Rommel's Afrika Korps. And then from Rommel's Afrika Korps, taken to an Italian prisoner of war camp, spent a year or a year and a half in there. And Jack organized an escape with just him and his six crew members. And they escaped, moved at night, hid out during the daytime until they got to friendly territory where the Brits, I think, were fighting in Italy, and were safe. Jack saved his crew. Jack was an awesome neighbour and friend, and we all miss him.

Jack was the kind of guy that didn't stop. He was one of the farmers who pioneered lentil production. He was growing lentils in the 1970s when nobody else had even heard . . . I didn't know what a lentil looked like when Jack was growing them down the road 5 miles west of me until I walked out in one of his crops and cracked out a few one time. Jack was one of the pioneers that figured out how we could grow lentils in this country. Nobody had ever done it before.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, this is the best and most specific Speech from the Throne that I have ever heard. Mr. Speaker, of all the speeches from the throne that I have ever sat through, this one is the best. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I will support the government motion and not the ill-conceived amendment of the opposition.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Sask Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today in the second session of the twenty-ninth Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in the month of November 2021 — November 3rd, to be exact — to reply to the Speech from the Throne. It is with deep sadness I speak about the discrimination, coercion, and bullying tactics occurring in this province today and for many months past. Our core values have been eroded. It is with deep sadness I speak about our current status and loss of freedoms.

The Speech from the Throne speaks of a better life, a better quality of life. Well my grandparents came to this country to seek freedoms, speak without fear of censure, the promises of democracies and a better life for their families and for generations to come. I am the product of people who came to this country for the realization of a dream, opportunities, determined to claim a stake for their family with a good work ethic. All families living in Saskatchewan today are pursuing happiness and quality of life.

As a fourth-term member of Saskatchewan Rivers, it is an honour to serve the good people from the riding, across from Big River to Nipawin and in between, the communities of Debden, Emma Lake, Candle Lake, Meath Park, Choiceland, Love, and White Fox. We all dream of a great future for our children and a life of security so that their future is bright. It is a diverse riding, some families going back a few generations while others are newcomers, but the one common denominator for all is their hopes, their hopes and their dreams.

And it is my hope that all people have the opportunities to shape their vision. It is my hope that all people have a secure future in

the great province of Saskatchewan and unify with one another. It's my hope that we can change this current situation in the province, leave our egos at the door, and salvage our province.

Let us not be judged by our medical status. I do not walk alone, as many people have talked with me. We're all created equal. We all sit at the table of humanity. I am working towards a quest for freedoms for all Saskatchewan people and the security of justice. It is obvious today Saskatchewan has defaulted on our basic rights. The rally, the demonstration of freedom held last week on the steps of this historic building will go down in history as the Throne Speech of discontent. It is also obvious today, Mr. Speaker, that the winter of discontent is upon us, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I stand before you today as the voice of the people who are muzzled, desperate to be heard, discriminated upon, unable to move freely in the province of Saskatchewan. We need a commitment to protect our Saskatchewan values, our core values and principles. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states, "Whereas Canada was founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law." I believe that our rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of truth to understand natural laws were granted to us by our creator and not by governments who we the people elect to serve us and not to rule us by unjust laws.

I truly believe that Saskatchewan people have a vision for Saskatchewan to remain a province with a true and free democracy governed in accordance to the rule of just laws, supportive of the family structure and the free enterprise system, enabling every Saskatchewan citizen to pursue their dreams, which leads to good health, happiness, peace, and prosperity described in this Throne Speech.

Our Saskatchewan Rivers office is receiving an enormous amount of phone calls and emails regarding personal stories of concerned, panicky, and angry citizens over the loss of their jobs, the loss of sending their children to school, the loss of what they call their freedoms. We have also heard of remorse and vaccine injuries becoming more common. Not every human is responding favourably to the vaccine. Therefore public opinion is becoming more vocal in less government interference in personal choices.

One local family took their children and fled to Nicaragua, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They phoned me to ask if it's safe to come home to Saskatchewan as they are fearful of more mandates and restrictions. This is the new Saskatchewan we live in. This is what we are living in now. Is this what our forefathers wanted for us? Is this the freedom many of our grandfathers and fathers fought and died for, as you so eloquently described, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Comply or be sent to a camp after a neighbour phoned the snitch line. Is this the government's principles? I think not. I know in the government's heart they believe in principled leadership, developed over years by our ancestors which have worked until this recent 2020-21 pandemic. Unfortunately, people are not unified.

I have a story. The Prince Albert mayor drove out to my farm to take pictures of it and then he showed it to city council. For what reason? I don't have property in the city of Prince Albert. So why is he stalking me? I have grandchildren who run and play on the

farm.

Mr. Speaker, in reply to the Throne Speech, our motto and fundamental belief of “. . . many peoples, strength” is a great value of the province of Saskatchewan. I am thankful to be a voice of the people who feel their voices are not heard. On this day in Saskatchewan in the year 2021, I am rising in the Assembly to add to the archives of history the many stories told in the province. This story is one of despair, fear, and mistrust of the future for our next generations.

Concerned people are reaching out to me from across our province, across Canada, and across the United States. They know what is happening is unconstitutional and they want to know how the blatant infringement of human rights can be stopped. Your rights cannot be violated in an emergency time. There is no clause in the constitution, despite what the government is propagating to its citizens. Saskatchewan is now on the human rights violation watch list by other developed countries.

Under the *Statutes of Canada, 2017* in chapter 3, an Act was assented to prohibit and prevent genetic discrimination. On May 4th, 2017, the *Genetic Non-Discrimination Act* was passed into law in Canada. This protection provides under GNA [*Genetic Non-Discrimination Act*] federally regulated employers cannot request genetic test results of an employee and bans discrimination based on genetic characteristics.

A genetic test result is defined as a test that analyzes DNA for purposes such as the prediction of transmission risks or monitoring. Now this enactment amends the Canadian Labour Code to protect employees from being required to undergo or to disclose the results of a test, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Dated September 14th, 2021, Dr. Eric Payne, MD, MPH, FRCP, Harvard grad, and former staff at Mayo Clinic wrote:

While I refuse to take this novel experimental mRNA therapy, my wife, children, and I are completely vaccinated, including yearly flu shots. This is not a contradictory stance as these current mRNA vaccines represent a dramatic departure from using, for instance, live attenuated viruses. Rather, they represent a completely novel and experimental therapy with no long-term data.

[15:45]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, obviously some people are refusing or objecting to receive this vaccine while others are welcoming their third, fourth, and more booster shots to come. Government should not be taking away individual freedom and preventing the equality of opportunity for all citizens:

A strong social safety net which protects those who truly need support while encouraging individuals to become self-sufficient;

Dramatic reform to make government more responsive to the people it serves.

Those last two are the principles of the Saskatchewan Party, the guiding principles no. 5 and no. 6.

The Throne Speech states a healthy and a more independent Saskatchewan. Some citizens do not want government intervention in their personal lives. They do not want vaccine incentives and coercion. Vaccines should be a choice, and constitutional right to make a choice. Democracy, freedom, and rights need to be protected. Governments should not have the rights to dictate what you do to your body and your personal decisions.

Many people in our small communities are finding it difficult to navigate the weekly costs, not to mention the fear and anxiety and the mental health that these past two years have caused. This does not unify a province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

How is a better education for our children described in the Throne Speech aligned with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, or even the government's guiding values and principles? How does violating the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms make government more responsive to the government it serves? And how does verbal bullying and threats of job losses make government more responsible to the people it serves? These are the questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that people across the province are asking me.

The reality of today's Saskatchewan should be a very good one. We have everything the world wants — food, fuel, and people. And our greatest resource is the people of the province. We have wonderful families in many communities across our dear province. Our valued Crown employees are contacting me, fearful, now distrustful of the same government who, after many years of faithful service, they are feeling forced to take a medical procedure they don't want. We always had a labour shortage. Are we going to have more of a labour shortage? They are now unable to provide food and shelter, the basic necessities for their children, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I don't want to hear these stories, and I know we can do better. These same employees of Saskatchewan do not know if there will be social nets to help them survive the long, cold winter coming. So families have now fled to Nicaragua, United States, Korea, Brazil, asking me to notify when it is safe to come home — safe to come home. Where in the Throne Speech does it talk about Saskatchewan's security from its government? Is this the new province we created, the one our grandfathers and fathers fought for liberty and freedom?

A global policy advisor who worked in Washington, DC reached out to me. And this person said, Nadine, do you know your province of Saskatchewan is on the human rights violation watch list as to what it's doing to its citizens? The world is watching this turn of events. Well that took me aback. I had to process that one. Saskatchewan? We're talking about Saskatchewan? No wonder many of our neighbours are fleeing the country till this madness, this insanity subsides. We are now parallel where the past reaches the present.

So in conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech discusses provincial autonomy for Saskatchewan, which I agree with. Discussions of taking back the administration of our corporate income tax system from the federal government is a very good sign. I feel considering other measures around the discussions to build autonomy is very valuable indeed. I would like to see more dialogue around the Saskatchewan independent

banking Act promoting private ownership, where private ownership is not controlled by eastern interests.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech concluded with meeting challenges, perseverance, courage, faith, and compassion which I know this government has in their heart. I'm deeply concerned with the future of our once great province and country which millions of Canadians have always held dear and for which I will continue to serve my constituents to do everything in my power to uphold these God-given rights and freedoms, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Canadian *Privacy Act* for current and generations to come. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to begin my remarks by recognizing that Saskatchewan was founded on the territories representing the formal agreements made between the Crown and First Nations and numbered Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8 and 10. Tragically those treaties were not honoured with the spirit and intent with which they were entered. As a descendant of white settlers and an MLA, I am committed to righting the wrongs of the past through the implementation of the 94 Calls to Action arising from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the 231 Calls for Justice contained in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, every day I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve in the Saskatchewan legislature on behalf of the people of my constituency in Saskatoon Nutana. I carry with me their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for their families and their futures in a just, kind, and caring society that invests in its people and its institutions for the betterment of all. It is a solemn duty that I couldn't carry out without the love and support of my family and the able assistance of my . . . I've lost . . . We're good now? Okay. Pardon me. I'll get back into it.

I was just saying that I wouldn't be able to do this work without the constituency assistants team, and in particular Kerry Schaefer. She has been indispensable this past year as we've worked to establish our office, understand our roles, and find creative ways of remaining accessible to the people I represent while staying safe and socially distanced throughout the pandemic.

In that time I have been ever mindful that the role of an elected official is a sacred trust, one that can profoundly affect the lives of the people we are called to serve. This past year has illustrated that relationship in the starkest of terms, as we've witnessed how our government's disastrous decisions and choices have set our course through the pandemic and determined its outcomes with the worst performance of all the provinces in COVID cases and death rates.

According to a recent Angus Reid poll, fully 64 per cent of Saskatchewan people feel that the Sask Party government has failed to handle the pandemic — a clear indication that sacred trust has been irrevocably broken. In our time of greatest need, our Premier, his cabinet, and caucus let us down. They've lost our confidence and left us demanding to know why they refused

to act decisively and courageously in the best interests of every Saskatchewan person.

It is unconscionable that a leader and government would act with such hubris and recklessness in the face of such grave circumstances. On top of my great sadness and anger for the suffering and anguish they have caused, I can only conclude they are not fit to lead. This government has shown themselves to be entirely out of touch with reality, tone-deaf to the suffering, refusing to course correct with targeted public health measures when all indicators pointed to an impending health care crisis, and instead chose to ignore the calls of reasonable and qualified experts.

What causes a government to ignore the science so flagrantly, to think they know better than the experts, or decide that the risks to human health and life are a fair bargain? Can they not tell the difference between sound advice and uninformed opinions? What could justify the disproportionate cost in human misery, suffering, and death? And how could any government take such a gamble?

I can only conclude that this government wilfully chose to ignore the advice of their own officials to implement public health measures, even though they knew the dire consequences where hundreds would become infected and die and our health care system would be brought to the brink of disaster, leaving many without access to health care as our surgeries and other services were cancelled and postponed.

Earlier today our Leader of the Official Opposition spoke on behalf of a family from my constituency. Laura Weins and Graham Dickson whose baby daughter, Helen, has not received the diagnostic care and surgeries she requires to assess her prognosis of cerebral palsy. Every day of delay in her diagnosis and treatment will set the course for her future quality of life as windows of opportunity are missed to deliver that health care.

Not only Helen, but so many more constituents in my community of Saskatoon Nutana have come forward with their stories. A constituent whose mother's heart condition, brother's knee replacement, and nephew's kidney transplant were all delayed. A mother whose elementary-age son is asthmatic and is fearful that if he gets ill, he won't receive the treatment as a pediatric ICU [intensive care unit] is full of adult patients. A granddaughter concerned about her elderly grandmother who, as the hospital was so short-staffed that her family had to feed her, didn't discover her arm was broken until 54 hours after her fall and has received substandard care.

A young, 30-year-old woman and cancer survivor who needs an MRI. Another constituent whose skin care surgery has been cancelled. A constituent who can't get medical care for a kidney stone. Another woman with breast implant disease whose surgery referral was delayed. Constituents affected by the surgery backlog for hip and knee replacements. A father whose collapsed lung waited a week before he was admitted to hospital.

And I often am hearing from Saskatchewan citizens residing outside my constituency that belong on the opposition side, including a woman whose mother has had her cancer diagnostic testing delayed indefinitely.

These cases are heartbreaking. And I could go on and on. There are more than 35,000 surgeries that have been delayed since the pandemic began, and counting.

For a province whose identity and prosperity is so closely linked with its proud legacy of universal public health care as a basic human right, this is unforgivable. Saskatchewan people have counted on their public health care system to be there for them for over 50 years. And after years of leaning the system down to the bone, they've now delivered the final blow from which it may never recover. So much for the birthplace of medicare. This Sask Party government has kicked quality, publicly funded and delivered health care to the curb.

When this government decided to remove all public health care restrictions on July 11th, with the full knowledge and warnings of public health officials, they were making a clear choice to put politics ahead of people. I can't begin to understand how a duly elected representative could rationalize such a decision as sound or just. It displays a total inability to think critically or unbiased, which are the hallmarks of good governance in a modern democracy.

It's not a proud moment for our province when we've drawn international attention, not for being the bastion of universal health care, but because of this government's failed leadership during these trying times. This reckless simple-mindedness and incoherent thinking is especially dangerous in contemporary society.

[16:00]

Increasingly, we live in a VUCA [volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity] world — one that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous all at the same time. Leading under such conditions involves doing the hard thing, not what is ideologically driven or politically expedient. We saw this occur in other provinces, even those with conservative leaders. Objectively, it is fair to say that Saskatchewan's government has led the worst pandemic recovery in Canada due to its failure to recognize and respond to what was playing out before them.

The Premier told us repeatedly that it wouldn't be fair to those who were already vaccinated to impose public health measures. And yet we saw how quickly proof of vaccination and masking was able to bend the curve once he ultimately acquiesced after months — not weeks — of ignoring the advice of medical experts.

How is it fair to allow COVID cases to rise unchecked to the point that the health care services had to be denied to those in urgent need of care for their cancer surgeries and other non-COVID-related services? Whose rights were ultimately denied? We've all paid the price in the end, but most of all those who are most vulnerable and powerless.

What's not fair is that our Premier chose to protect the interests of a few to the detriment of the many. What's not fair is that he chose to make incoherent arguments and misrepresent the truth. What's not fair is that his actions have caused the pandemic to spiral out of control in posing an unfair burden on workers in health care, education, and the service sector for months on end. How is that fair? Where is the justice in that? And where is the

humanity? Honestly.

Why has no other minister around that cabinet table had the decency or courage to stand up and refute such nonsense? What does that say about the cabinet leadership, all those advising the Premier and the Health minister, or the Premier himself? Does the emperor have no clothes? Is his cabinet filled with yes-men who are too afraid to challenge him? Or does he rule with such a iron fist that dissent is disallowed? These are honest and sincere questions.

How deep is the rot in this government that our chief medical health officer's recommendations can go unheeded so dispassionately for months on end to the point where he is reduced to tears and projects a fall and winter of misery? How callous and insensitive is this government cabinet and caucus? How could they let it come to this?

In the past several months, I have heard from many people who are filled with regret for putting their trust in a leader and a government who's offered nothing more than being strong. Honestly, what does that even mean? This isn't the Middle Ages.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are literally sick of this Sask Party government whose leaders offer nothing more than tough-guy diplomacy. What's absent are the qualities of a true leader, ones that inspire people to follow them through challenging and uncertain times. Where is the compassion, empathy, and understanding for all those suffering? Where is the humility to listen and heed the advice of experts? These are matters of discernment and judgment exercised by leaders who function free of bias, not a wannabe strongman.

But the people are starting to see past the bravado. More and more we hear people publicly questioning whether they can stand to stay in a province led by a leader who so stubbornly refuses to listen to experts, admit when he's been wrong, and instead misrepresents the truth and gaslights anyone who speaks out, let alone say he's sorry.

Saskatchewan used to be a place that people flocked to in droves, inspired by . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the member from Saskatoon Nutana speaking, and she has twice said now that the Premier has misrepresented the truth. I would like to see her apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: — Would you like to reply, Opposition House Leader?

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too was listening intently to the member's speech. I would ask that you review the tapes and make a ruling at a subsequent time.

The Speaker: — I will do that. I wasn't listening that well. I didn't hear it. But we will review that and get back to you tomorrow.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just finding where I've left off.

Saskatchewan used to be a place where people flocked to in droves, inspired by its progressive ideals and policies. We were known as innovators in social policy, sustainable resource development, promoting arts and culture, and public institutions that ensured local ownership, service delivery, and wealth distribution. We punched above our weight on the national scene, were prudent fiscal managers, while standing up for our provincial interests within Confederation.

My goodness, look how far we have fallen after 14 years of Sask Party rule. Now instead, we are known for our backward policies that ignore gender inequities, systemic and structural racism, lax environmental laws, and the lowest COVID vax rate in Canada. We've become a dystopian state where up is down and black is white. Is it any wonder so many people across the province are planning their exodus? We have the highest COVID death rate in the country right now because of the refusal of this government to offer leadership and follow the science and the experts.

And don't kid yourself. They have been using the same approach in every other area of government since they were elected. They have been playing fast and loose with our collective futures, striking sweetheart deals and taking crumbs in return. Where are the policies that strengthen worker protections, protect local businesses, ensure a healthy environment, and a living wage for all workers? Ask yourself who benefits when Moe attracts big money to Saskatchewan to extract resources, drain our wetlands, and cut down our forests for so little in return.

They hoot and holler, Mr. Speaker, but when former NDP governments oversaw the development of natural resources in this province, we sought to strike a truly sustainable and fair deal for all, with innovations such as ensuring employment for residents of Saskatchewan's North, environmental quality councils that ensured communities had a voice at the table, and labour legislation that was leading edge in Canada. This wasn't greenwashing like this government is proposing through its Sustainable Saskatchewan brand. With them it will be little more than lipstick on a pig.

This government has set goals for doubling ag and resource investment but with no obligations on developers to give back and while favouring out-of-province profiteers. Our surface rights legislation is 50 years old. A decade ago this government promised landowners they would revamp the legislation to protect their rights and ensure fair treatment for all.

Why won't they support rural municipalities demanding that their tax arrears of over \$19 million be paid up? For far too long, this government has taken for granted rural landowners.

To highlight another pertinent example, one only has to look at the failed ag water management strategy overseen by the Water Security Agency. Here you have a government that today, as we speak, is allowing wetland habitat to be drained and plowed over while they turn a blind eye, refusing to enforce their own legislation. Trust me, you aren't kidding anyone with your greenwashing, and it's an absolute slap in the face to all those who are the true environmental stewards on the land.

Make no mistake. This government has shown us who they truly represent. They have demonstrated that they lack the courage and the fortitude to act with integrity and do the right thing. If there

is one thing that I have learned during this pandemic, it is that the Sask Party has only one playbook when it comes to governing. It doesn't matter if it's COVID, climate, or homelessness. This government denies and downplays the science, ignores the experts, gaslights the victims, and gives credence to disinformation that discounts, deflects, obfuscates, and downplays the reality of the true situation.

Mr. Speaker, and to the broader Sask Party caucus, I want to say, you have let your constituents down and broken that sacred trust through your inability to stand up to your leader and demand better. You can try to rewrite history, but no one will be buying your tired old lines, knowing your government has epically failed to protect their health throughout this pandemic. You can try and change the channel as hard as you want, but the public won't be fooled. The people have lost faith in your government's leadership. They won't forget your failures, or how you put politics before people and damaged their families and their livelihoods. They won't be bought off with blatant and shameless tricks.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks and let it be known that I will not be supporting the government's motion, and instead will be supporting the amendment put forward by the official opposition, because it neither recognizes the COVID-19 crisis in our province, nor proposes measures to address it, which is a direct result of the Sask Party government's choices that put politics ahead of Saskatchewan people, and that the Assembly has lost confidence in this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Well thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It really is an honour for me to rise in this Assembly and speak on the Speech from the Throne and all the good things that were in it.

I obviously have some thank yous that I want to give out before I get into my address, and I'm going to save the very best thank you for last because it's just the way I want to do it. First of all I want to take this opportunity, we were at, obviously, the Remembrance Day service this morning, so I do want to take this opportunity to really thank all our veterans. For all the men and women that have given the ultimate sacrifice that gives me the privilege to stand in this Assembly and speak freely, we must never forget that, Mr. Speaker.

I want to take the opportunity, obviously, to thank some folks. I want to thank, obviously, Dr. Shahab for leading us through this pandemic the way he has. And I know he's obviously had some, you know, personal challenges with this as well as professional. But I think Dr. Shahab really should be thanked for the work he has done.

[16:15]

I also want to take the opportunity, and I know my colleagues have done the same, but I really want to thank our Premier for his leadership and for getting us through this pandemic. He has been just a rock star in leading this province and leading us through this pandemic the way he has. And he's obviously put a lot of time and effort into this as well. And I also want to thank his family for giving up his time for him to be here and to be

where he had to be and not with his family.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Health ministers. They've been front line on this, both the past ministers and the current ones as well. So my hat's off to you for everything you've had to do day to day in dealing with this situation that we're in.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my CA like everybody else has. Sandy has been a real trooper for me, back in Assiniboia in my office, for dealing with the situations that have come in there. Obviously when we're here in Regina we're busy, and she's obviously answering the phone and handling the cases, and we chat about that as well on a daily basis.

I also want to thank my staff upstairs, obviously, you know, led by Grant and Jean-Michel and Ryan and Regina. I have a great team upstairs who look after the challenges that we have had through the agriculture situation. But first and foremost I also want to thank the ministry staff themselves. I want to thank Deputy Minister Rick Burton and the entire team over there. They have been really supportive of everything we're doing, but have really been leading the whole ag sector and what we're doing on all of that. So it's really important to be thanking those people, and I really want to take the time to do that.

So my theme kind of to get into the priorities of the Throne Speech, but I really want to talk about opportunity, and I also want to talk about some thank yous. And to no one's surprise, my theme is going to be really around agriculture and the situations around that. And I really want to talk about the Throne Speech and the, you know, the themes around that about a stronger Saskatchewan, a healthier Saskatchewan, a safer Saskatchewan, and a better-educated Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I hope I can tie that into some of the personal things that I want to say and some of the challenges around that as well.

I just want to obviously, you know, talk about agriculture. And I want to talk about the thank yous, first and foremost, because I think it will lead into some of the other discussion as well. Many of my colleagues have talked about the projects that have happened around the province, both from the canola crush side, the Red Leaf straw board plant, the pulp mill in P.A. [Prince Albert], and the fertilizer plant, and everything like that.

One thing that really should be said is we really should thank these companies. And I want to be on record, Mr. Speaker, as thanking these companies for making the investment here in the province of Saskatchewan. It is first and foremost going to create thousands and thousands of jobs. It's going to give those people the opportunity to buy homes, to buy cars, to do business in wherever location they are. It gives an opportunity of creating economy itself. And I think that just ties into everything that we're trying to do.

When you look at the Cargills of the world, the JRIs [James Richardson International Ltd.] of the world, the Viterras of the world, Ceres of the . . . all of these companies, all of these major companies are making major investments in this province. They've already made major investments in this province, Mr. Speaker. They all own grain terminals all throughout this province. All those grain terminals are located in rural communities. They all hire local people. They all hire local people. A lot of these terminals might have 20 or 30 employees,

all hired within the area of the terminal, and those people live there. But they're all supporters of the communities as well. Those companies are supporting those communities at every level, whether it's through minor sports, whether it's through health fundraising, all the aspects around that too as well. So they really should be thanked, and that's what I wanted to do here today, Mr. Speaker, is really take the opportunity for thanking them for making the investment here in the province of Saskatchewan.

We as a government have done what we can to encourage those companies to invest here, but the biggest thing will be, is it's going to create many jobs for a lot of families here in the province of Saskatchewan who will buy homes and raise their families here. And that's what this government is trying to do, encourage people to live here and move here and raise a family in a very safe province.

I will want to, obviously I want to talk about the drought and I want to talk about the challenges around that. And I want to go back if I can even to last year, Mr. Speaker, and the challenges we had in the agriculture sector, especially in the livestock sector. We saw challenges in 2020 with plant closures across not only Western Canada but also in the United States that obviously impacted the movement of livestock, you know, both across the border but also to processing plants. And our government established the set-aside program that really helped the livestock producers hold their livestock until the plants could regain capacity and take that slaughter. It was a huge investment by the province of Saskatchewan and the federal government, but we did it and we got our way through that.

We also saw a record production crop. We saw just over 39 million metric tons of crop harvested last year. We saw that moved through last year and this year and it was reflected in some of the prices. Obviously the drought of this year had a huge impact on the whole agriculture sector, both from the livestock side and from the grain side. I truly believe our province and our government stepped up to the plate to address both the livestock concerns and the grain side. From the livestock side, you know, we came out with \$100 a head payment. The federal government came to the table; we're going to be at \$200 a head for breeding stock here in the province of Saskatchewan for the livestock and bison and the goat and sheep sector as well. So to see that is something that I heard from the livestock sector was much needed and was very appreciated.

And I'm going to give a couple of individual cases if I can, Mr. Speaker, just because there was people in my constituency that were impacted, as they were in the whole province, but people that I heard from. And from the grain side, I think probably the one thing we did see is when we raised the threshold for writeoff, we saw from 5 bushel to 10 bushel in cereal crops. We saw that farmers that were in crop insurance took advantage of that opportunity and worked out deals with the cattle guys so that they could salvage that crop for green feed. And it had to be salvaged for green feed. But we saw that happen a lot, so I wanted to talk about that.

Obviously our biggest concern on the livestock side was preserving the livestock, the breeding stock. And that's what I think we have done a good job on. I want to talk if I can about a couple of instances if I can. I want to talk about a gentleman, a

rancher in the southern part of the province, south central part of my constituency. He is a third-generation rancher on that ranch, and he's got two boys in their early 20s that ranch with him.

They have, you know, several hundred head of cattle. Called me long before the programs were ever announced, and he just said to me, David, I'm not going to sell my herd. I'm going to do everything I possibly can to save my genetics and to save my ranch and my herd for my . . . for his sons. So he went on Kijiji and he placed an ad looking for straw, and he said, anywhere I can find straw to feed my cattle? He got two phone calls and they were both from north of Yorkton. And he called a gentleman. The one gentleman, he had called him and he said, you have straw for sale? And the first question that the gentleman asked him, he said, is the straw for you or you're speculating? He said, it's for me. He said, then come and get it. And that's the kind of co-operation you saw in Saskatchewan through this.

This rancher from the south had a one-way haul of that straw of 468 kilometres, but he was going to get it. And when we announced the program for him to get the \$100 a head, he did make a phone call to me and said, thank you very much, because he said, it's sure going to help my bottom line. It's sure going to help me pay the cost of trucking that feed home. So there is that story.

The other one I want to talk about is a grain farmer in my constituency that had a durum crop, about half his durum crop, that he figured was probably going to be a writeoff. So he had looked at it, and he had actually called a rancher friend of his to the south of him and said, well I'm considering writing this off. Since we had raised the threshold to 10 bushel to the acre, he said, I'm considering writing it off; would you be interested in it?

Of course the rancher said, I'd be very interested in it. So they looked at it and they worked out a deal, and a good friend of mine wrote off the 12 quarters of crop, and the cattle guy, the rancher, came in. They cut it all and bailed it up. They negotiated a price. It worked out for him. He's got enough feed to get him into next year. Worked out great for the grain farmer because he wrote off that 12 quarters of durum. And it wasn't salvageable. I believe it was adjusted at less than five bushels to the acre. So it worked out for him on that one. So that's just how the crop side worked for the cattle producer as well.

I then had a call from — after we announced the farm and ranch water infrastructure program — from another constituent of mine. Obviously the southwest part of the province was hit very hard. And he'd ran out of water for his cattle. He had about 700 head and he said, well the farm ranch water program, he said I've already utilized it by digging dugouts and obviously no water in them.

So when we raised the threshold to the 150,000 he said that sure helped him, but he got a well drilled. He actually sent me a picture of when they hit the water, and he was really excited about it. And I talked to him just last week. In fact he phoned me. He said, I got to tell you I did see the dugout they dug. It was a big one. And he said, we've already got five feet of water in that dugout. So he said, we are very happy with the program and wanted to thank us very much for that as well.

So that's where I think you really have to put a personal touch on this, on these programs, and what it meant to people. And I think that just ties right into everything. The people I'm talking about are young people in the agriculture industry that want to stay in the agriculture industry, want to live in their communities, and want to do business there.

And we're doing everything we can. I think the programs we announced, everything I've heard from folks that I've heard from said we really did hit the mark. And they were happy with what we did for them both from the grain side, for the crop insurance side, and also from the livestock side, to do the one thing we wanted to do was to preserve the breeding stock here in the province of Saskatchewan. And I think we did it.

Because there was a huge challenge. It wasn't that they couldn't . . . There was just no place to source feed. There was no place to go. They couldn't go 200 miles to the north or they couldn't go even into the United States. They couldn't go to Manitoba. They couldn't go to Alberta. There was no feed. Alberta was selling their feed far down into the United States. The dairy industry was buying it all. So we did see some opportunities around that.

And then I think obviously now we'd also invested in, you know, we're looking at the irrigation side. I think that's just going to add, to strengthen the whole livestock industry as well. It will give opportunity in that side, both from growing feed, but also probably possibly setting up feedlots and things like that.

I want to touch a little bit . . . Like I said, I wanted to keep my theme on agriculture and I really wanted to touch . . . because we did touch on that in the Throne Speech, is obviously around the international presence and looking at opportunities to grow there.

I've had the privilege of being on two trade missions, Mr. Speaker, and it is quite interesting to see how the companies around the world really look at this province and look at our agriculture industry, on just how well we do it. And they look at it from an environmental side of it, but they also look at it at a crop quality side. There's the two major factors that they're really looking at.

So for us, we had to look at opportunities to help the business and help these industry grow their business globally. And I think with the announcement of the four more new trade offices that we have announced just adds to that and gives us further opportunity to increase the ag sector and really get to hitting our growth targets and the opportunity around that.

And so how does this all tie into everything we're trying to do? And I think when you look at opportunities about building business and these crush facilities, what it really is going to mean to the farmer here in Saskatchewan, it's really going to improve their bottom line. It's going to give them a higher return on every bushel of canola that is produced because now they can virtually truck it directly to the crush facilities. It gives them that opportunity.

So what does that do? It puts more dollar in their pocket, and it just gives them opportunity to increase their business at home. We see growth in the ag sector, so then obviously it just means we're going to see new facilities as well because the province will be . . . Obviously there's new jobs, there's going to be a tax

base there. And government doesn't print money, we get our money from revenue, and revenue comes from the tax side.

[16:30]

So we have to look at . . . It gives us opportunity to obviously build schools, which we saw announcements of new schools being built in Regina and Saskatoon and Lanigan and Carrot River and Moose Jaw as well.

And we're also seeing opportunities around long-term care. And that's the one thing that I'm very proud of this government. We really make sure we look after the people that really need to be cared for. And I think that's important that we do that, that we build those facilities for seniors and the opportunity for the less fortunate to be cared for as well.

So I think I've just about run out of my time, Mr. Speaker. I think I've thanked a few people. I wanted to make my theme really around agriculture and how it tied to everything else, because agriculture is still the number one industry in this province. It drives the economy and it also just really helps the companies do business here.

But also they . . . You know, when people call them large companies or foreign companies, they're not, Mr. Speaker. They build their terminals in small communities. The small community that I, you know . . . In Assiniboia there's three grain terminals there. There's over 100-and-some different jobs that are created in a town of 2,500 people because of the grain industry there. And when I look at all the fundraising that's being done, that has been done, all those companies have their signs out front of those buildings.

We're building a new hockey arena in Assiniboia. All the major grain companies have been there. All the farm machinery dealers are there. So it's really important that we do what we can as a government to ensure that we see agriculture grow the way we want it to grow, to hit our targets the way we want it to hit them, and see growth that way.

So in closing, before I get into my final thank you, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say, I will not be supporting the amendment and I will be supporting the motion put forward by my colleagues here and seconded also.

My last thank you, Mr. Speaker — just bear with me — will be obviously to my wife. Lois has been a rock star for me and been by my side through all of this. And of course, obviously, we are both blessed with our son, who is a doctor in Edmonton and hasn't had much time off as he's been front lines too, as many of the health workers here in the province of Saskatchewan as well. But I just want to take this opportunity to thank her and to thank our son-in-law and our three lovely grandchildren. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have appreciated listening to the responses in the House. It's enjoyable to see . . . Everyone seemed to have something to say about sort of the body of the book here. I wanted to speak a little bit about the conclusion at first, but before I did that, I appreciated a lot of what was said in sort of the first part of the Throne Speech is the

what we're going to do and how we're going to do it. The conclusion is a little bit on the why and the how we're going to carry that out.

And it was neat to hear a lot of the what we're going to do touched on by most of the members. And some of the members on this side of the House I think if they had more than 20 minutes, maybe they . . . Hey, I think they ran out of time. They were going to get to that meat of what we're going to do.

But when I look at the conclusion, it starts off and it says, "This decade has not started the way anyone was expecting." And I think that's pretty clear. Today we sat in and had a Remembrance Day service, and I think in the 1940s they could say the same kind of thing, you know, this decade started out in a way that none of us would have expected.

And, Mr. Speaker, part of the body of this Throne Speech was supporting our veterans, and that is so easy to do. You know, you look at the things that they've done, the sacrifices that they have made, and the little bit that the government and the people of this province that we give back to them is certainly exciting to be a part of that. And you know, to see our veterans honoured and thanked is such an important part of who we are and what we need to keep.

It says, "Like every other province and country, Saskatchewan has been on an uncertain journey and we have more road to travel." Mr. Speaker, I don't mind travelling on roads. I, you know, grew up in Saskatchewan, not a lot of real open water, but I did live in other places and was spending some time on a sailboat in Greece. And a friend of mine was the captain of that ship, and he told me lots of stories. And when we talked about these waves that we'd get hit by . . . I remember one night we were sleeping on that boat, and he was reading these stories of great storms that sailors had faced in the past. And you know, it was just interesting to see the perspective of rugged sailors. And when they would get hit by some of these waves, it could actually flip the sailboat and take all the masts and everything and everyone on that ship off and sweep them into sea.

And you know, some of the things that I'm sure they saw in the '40s are far greater in scope than we see today, but this is the greatest difficulty that I think my generation has faced. And you know, when I see that we're on a road, maybe it's not so much a road as we're on a ship, and we're getting hit by waves. And it says, "But we will complete our journey together."

And the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy mentioned in his speech that he gets phone calls from people and sometimes those phone calls last a couple hours. And I must say that I've got a lot of those phone calls as well. The SHA president is my family's doctor and I've been on the phone a number of times with him and the surgeon is one of my best friends, and it's clear their message to our government.

And yet I think Melfort, Saskatchewan, our constituency may be the libertarian capital of Canada and I have had some conversations with very close friends of mine who have a different opinion. And it's been a very tough time to represent the people of your province.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, when I look over at our Premier

answering questions that are oftentimes very personal, I just think of some of those stories that I heard of those sailboats in the middle of the ocean, or on the sea in the midst of a storm, and oftentimes I've pictured our Premier. They had to sometimes strap the captain to the steering wheel. Everybody else was inside where it was safe, and they strapped that captain to the steering wheel. And you know, our Premier, he gets those same phone calls from those good friends of his on both sides pulling aft. This is not an easy time to be the Premier.

I had a phone call with him one day. I just wanted to share some of my own thoughts, and so I texted him, do you have time for a call? I just got a quick call back and we talked for a bit. And you know, at the end of that I asked him, how are you doing? Because, you know, I was a chaplain for the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], and you know, sometimes you're going through incredible stress. There's things you've got to do to keep your health. And so I asked him, have you been running? And it's funny, the Premier's a runner. He said, Todd, for the last 43 days I've ran every day. And you know, he runs about 5 kilometres. And that's so important. It'll keep your physical and mental health strong going through troubles.

And at the end of our conversation I said, you know, maybe we should pray. And so he said, yeah, let's pray. And I prayed and I kind of thought, you know, if you're a pastor lots of times you get to do the prayer with them. But you know, when the Premier prayed — I was pulled over at the side of the highway — I thought, wow this guy is just strapped to the steering wheel. And the rest of us can kind of hide in our cabin underneath at times and ride it out.

Some of us aren't sleeping because, you know, I might not be able to get in and get the operation that I needed to get, or my daughter. Or somebody's going to lose their job because they haven't, you know, complied to the orders. And you know, it's just a tough day for a lot of people.

But I want to say that I'm thankful to our government for being the ones to make those tough decisions. And it says here that we need to complete our journey together. And I just think that's so important. When I was young I remember, Mr. Speaker, my mom was a quilter. And she quilted, I don't know how many people in my community quilts. And then we had a home for juvenile delinquents in Red Deer. She got together the whole bunch of ladies in town, and they were going to quilt a quilt for every person in our home there.

But when I was young, my mom's eyes, she didn't have progressive lenses like a lot of us have now. But she would ask me to come and thread the needle oftentimes. And if you know my mom, if you were baking with her, she always wanted you to . . . And when it came time to eat the baking, oh my, they did all the work and mom did nothing. And she wanted to bring her son in to be a part of this quilting, and so I was always her needle threader.

And you know, when I was young, I kind of learned something about threading a needle. And you just can't ram it through, you know? And if you try you get frustrated. You need to be careful and you need to pull those threads together. Those fibres of that thread have to be tight to get it through that needle. And you know, when I look at coming through COVID, I don't know

what's really the answer anymore. I sometimes wonder. Like we're going to get through it together, but the thing is we've got to stand together and not fight each other.

That's what we really, really need to think of is, you know, we might be a little different. Funny, there's a couple people in our town that I really respect but I'm pretty sure they don't vote for me. And Coach Rogers, we call him. And so Dave Rogers, I asked him . . . any names I use today, I did ask ahead of time. So Dave Rogers and Allison Rogers, two gifts to the community of Melfort.

So my 14-year-old son — 15 now, I guess — he is one of those football players in the high school there now. And I'll tell you that that coach, even though he disagrees with me on a number of issues in life, he's pulling together with me for my community and he's helping me raise my child. His wife, you know, years ago, over 10 years ago now, there was a vision for our community to start a multi-K. And you know, some other people started that off, but Allison, she's one of those ones who's carried it out. She does all the legwork with the others on that committee, and they put things in place.

They don't agree with me, but I'm sure thankful that they are part of my community and making it a better place to live. You know, we can have different perspectives and different views, but we need to pull together, Mr. Speaker, to get through this.

You know, a couple of the things in the beginning of the whats we're going to do, I'm pretty thankful to be a part of this year's Throne Speech because it seems like Melfort kind of got some pretty good things.

And the member from Kindersley was rubbing it in when he was giving his speech that, you know, Melfort got the CT [computerized tomography] scanner. And I'm from the smallest city in the province and I think he's from the biggest town, so we have a bit of a . . . I like the guy.

But Melfort got a CT scanner. How did that happen? You know, Rod Gantefer was the MLA of Melfort, and we had Kevin Phillips was the MLA of Melfort, and now I get the privilege of serving in that seat. But, Mr. Speaker, years ago when that promise was made, Brad Wall and Rod Gantefer were in Melfort and said that we're going to get a CT scanner. And I heard of that CT scanner a lot over the years. And you know, I don't know if you ever watched Sesame Street but Mr. Snuffleupagus, he was kind of, it might never happen. So we always were talking about that CT scanner that was not real, never coming.

And the member from Swift Current laughs. And yet he is probably the best MLA to come out of Melfort. He's a really good guy over there. So anyways, he came the other day to Melfort. And that was a great day; I was pretty excited to be able to spend time with my friend, the MLA from Swift Current, and we did some things together. I was kind of like a kid, you know. He's coming and we're going . . . I had the whole day planned. And so anyways, I guess I didn't plan the CT event, did I? It went off awfully smooth, so that was someone else. So we got there for the CT event and it happened. There is a CT scanner in Melfort serving the people of the Northeast.

[16:45]

So then from there we went and visited the RCMP station and had some conversations. And you know, when I look at what's in here with policing and corrections, our Minister of Policing and Corrections, you know, I really wouldn't want to mess with you, but you know, I can't think of a better person to sit in that seat and be policing . . . [inaudible] . . . Some of the things that we've been asking for and we've been talking about, she brought.

You know, I just want to say, I'm probably going to get off track, not that I really have a track, but here criminologist Daniel Nagin has said that the certainty of being caught committing a crime is a vastly more powerful deterrent than the punishment. You know, you're working to deter people from committing crimes and trying to bring correction into their life, and I got to say I'm thankful that you're that person. And the measures that you put in place, I think our police presence in Melfort appreciates that. And I know some of the things that you're still working for, working towards, and we appreciate all that you're doing. If you commit a crime in Saskatchewan, we hope you know that you're going to get caught.

So from there we went and visited with some good friends of mine. And I mentioned before, you know, the member from Cumberland becoming a friend of mine. I never knew the guy before and yet enjoying getting to know him. He was very passionate, as well as our side of the House, and all the people in this . . . got a private member's bill across with unanimous vote for suicide prevention.

So anyways, in our community I had asked a good friend of mine, Mark Jago and Robert Steffen, two people that I sat down with every week and we helped each other out with mental health. We didn't really think of it in those terms, but we were three friends getting together to discuss how we're doing.

And my dad passed away this year. My dad was a big part of that in my life. I would go and sit down with my dad probably five days out of seven, and we'd just share what's going on, what's on our hearts, how we're succeeding, what we failed in. We prayed for each other, then we'd go our ways. And some of our parents are gone that we had that relationship with, but Mark Jago and Robert Steffen, we'd meet in what they call the shack. Mark Jago, he's a man's man. He's got this shed in his backyard and there's a trail to the shed. He emptied it out, put a little wood stove in there. We would sit in the shack. You know, funny, the neighbours were like, what in the world are they doing back there?

But anyways, we would be visiting and talking about life. So I asked those two guys, could you guys start a mental health group for Melfort? And Robert Steffen, he's a doctor, super guy. And Mark's a car salesman actually for the member from Prince Albert Carlton there, and you know, he's also a chaplain and a pastor. So these two guys they looked into it and said, yes, there's something called EA, Emotions Anonymous.

So they started Emotions Anonymous and would've been going for about . . . How long, member from Swift Current, have they been running? Probably a year and a half, almost a year and a half now, a year and a quarter. So 14 months, maybe. But they had set aside . . . And there was two ladies from that EA group

that were going to come, and they were going to give a testimony of what they had found at EA, to our Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. And I didn't know what to expect because I hadn't been to the EA meeting yet. So I went into that and sat down in my office, around the table. And the first lady shared, and I started crying. And the second lady shared and I thought, what on earth? What's going on there?

So anyways, the Minister for Mental Health and Addictions and Rural Health had to leave and so I was going to go bring greetings on his behalf at 8 o'clock that night. So I figured, I've brought greetings on other people's behalf many times. But this was a very different bringing of greetings. So I went and I sat down. It was in the basement of the United Church, and I sat down and I looked around that room and I thought, well I know a bunch of the guys here, or girls. This is great. Wow. So I thought, and I was thinking, when's my turn going to come to bring greetings on behalf of . . . And so we started the meeting and everybody went around the room and introduced themselves and then I introduced myself. I thought, hmm, I wonder when I'm going to go. And then they started the meeting and I thought oh, well lookit here. I'm in for the meeting.

So everybody went around and said, hello, my name is such-and-such and I have no power over my emotions. I had probably the best day that I've had in a long time. My good buddy came. We spent the day together. We enjoyed our time. And I'm sitting in that room and I've listened to a few other people and so I just followed suit. Hi, there. My name is Todd Goudy and I have no power over my emotions. And then I shared some things. And I had been at supper and I talked to my wife and my kids. And here I am. Why, you're a pastor for 27 years and, you know, you've got a wife and six kids and you've got a fairly stable life. You're the MLA of your constituency. You've got, you know, a fairly solid, stable life.

But, Mr. Speaker, I had some funny thing going on in my heart that day. And I'm just going to be honest, and it's embarrassing to be honest. Wow . . . [inaudible] . . . Anyways, I shared a little bit of what went on that day and then they went around to other people, and they shared. And it was like, wow. And I started getting more and more and more convicted as it was going around with everybody sharing.

So then I put up my hand. I didn't know if you could do that, but anyways I put my hand up — out of turn, the way that it works there — but Todd, what would you like? I said, well you know what? I wasn't completely honest. Can I be a little more honest? I feel like I should say something else. And they said, oh sure, you go ahead. So the one person finished up, and then it was my turn again. And you know what? You know what I said? I said, you know what? I wasn't completely straightforward on my emotions of the day, but I felt unappreciated. It sounds so silly right now, but I'll tell you it was like a thousand-pound weight was lifted off my shoulders.

And everybody supported me in that group. You know, I had a wife and my kids at home. We had supper together. It was great. It was so nice. But then I went to EA that night, and I shared what was kind of . . . what I didn't even realize was a burden on my own heart. And I shared that thing. And I left like walking so much lighter. And I'll tell you, I go to EA sometimes when I can, when I'm around, because that is a part of my community that

encouraged and supported me.

And so the member from Cumberland and all of us here, you know, some of those things that our Minister of Mental Health and Addictions . . . You're going to be putting . . . We see all sorts of money — half a billion dollars — to things to get people back onto their feet. But when they come back to our communities, what are they going to do? I hope that you're going to be there with them and that you've got people in your communities that are going to be there with them, that once they get their life back together and they go back into those places where they face those same temptations and those same troubles, that you are going to be there. And there's community members that you're going to ask to be there, and we're going to have those self-help groups to support people. Because I'll tell you what. That was so nice for you to come and visit and hear. And I'm appreciating being a part of the, as our campaign or our slogan was, "strong economy, strong communities, and strong families." And that's what we need, Mr. Speaker, to get through this pandemic and whatever we face in the future.

Because we need to stick together and not be fighting each other. In that room I have no idea what the political stripes or what the, you know, any other perspective of life of those people in that EA meeting were that day.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we sit in this House, and it's an interesting place. Like this is a gorgeous place. Like look at this. You know who designed this or who was the premier of this province when we built this place, the guy who had the vision? He was a person who had mental health problems, severe mental health problems. He was manic depression. That was his life. That guy struggled. Part of the time he wasn't even in the province. He was trying to get his mental health back in order.

You know, the people who walk among us with smiles on their face at times and maybe even some of us in this . . . You're like me; you need to get some things out; you need to have friends you can share and they can share with you. You can support each other. Like when I saw the Premier, who's like strapped to the steering wheel for the province and he's taking it from both sides. Waves are hitting him from every direction and he's the final one to make the . . . It is tough. And I hope that we support each other and the people in your constituencies feel supported and my constituency feel supported. Boy, I sort of got off track there.

But lots of other really great things. I got into politics because I was on the school board and I wanted to see strong families pulling together with their children. You know what's the number one indicator for outcomes? I think it's parental engagement. So when I look at this in what are, again, ministers — my goodness, every one of you guys and girls — I just am so appreciative. And the Minister of Education, too. What in the world? How did we get that guy? So the things that he's working on, it's exciting. Did you see that?

So Debbie Pushor, a lady who I've had a lot of conversations with over the years . . . sounds like I knew her forever. I've only known her probably for five . . . but anyways, when I started thinking hey, we've got to get something connecting families to the students, I hear someone says you've got to talk to Debbie Pushor. So I phoned up Debbie Pushor and was I delighted to talk to her. And so this fall my government will begin a new

parent-teacher home visit pilot project to strengthen relationships between educators, students, and their families.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I love to tell parents that the most important person in your child's life is you. I used to go into the prisons regularly to visit people in there, and I would tell those guys and girls too, you got to get your life in order because you're the most important person in your kid's life.

I just talked with a lady working together with . . . What's the group there? Russ Misskey, good buddy of mine out of Saskatoon. . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Nope. They work with gang members — Str8 Up. Str8 Up. So anyways, this lady from Str8 Up . . . and we were talking and I said to her, you know, when you were in that lifestyle, did you want your . . . like if you were to say, hey sweetie, I want you to . . . Did you want her to follow in your footsteps? No, I wanted my daughter to have values and beliefs and culture that would lead her away from where I ended up.

You know, every parent wants to see their children succeed in life. And we need to engage those parents with their children. What did we do wrong with residential schools? What was the foundational problem with what we had there? We figured that our beliefs and cultures and values were better than the parents', so we thought, we'll teach those kids our values, beliefs, and culture. Well I am so thankful to have an Education minister who is working to engage parents with their children so they can pass on their values, their beliefs, and their culture to their children. We'll teach them knowledge and skill, but that character, we're going to engage with their parents.

And we're starting a pilot project, but this is going to grow and this is going to become something that's good that the world will see. That's how you do education. That is how you . . . When I was a trustee I kind of always would sneak over the Sun West table to sort of sit in with them. I loved North East School Division. We unpacked all of the curriculum into rubrics. We did a ton of work. Everybody should thank North East School Division because we did all that. But Sun West School Division, they did some neat stuff in online learning. There are some neat things.

I am running out of time. I need to close up. I married a wonderful wife. Peggy Gordon, she's my CA. She's finishing up. She was there with us from Rod Gantefoer, Kevin Phillips, Todd Goudy. You wonder how that CT scanner ended up in Melfort? She was right from the beginning to end.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I am going to say that I'm going to vote to support the motion from our side of the House, from the government, and I'm not going to support the amendment by the opposition.

And with that, I would adjourn the debate on the motion, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, what's that?

An Hon. Member: — Adjourn the debate for today.

Mr. Goudy: — Oh, adjourn the debate for today.

The Speaker: — It now being the hour of adjournment, this House now stands adjourned till 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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