



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

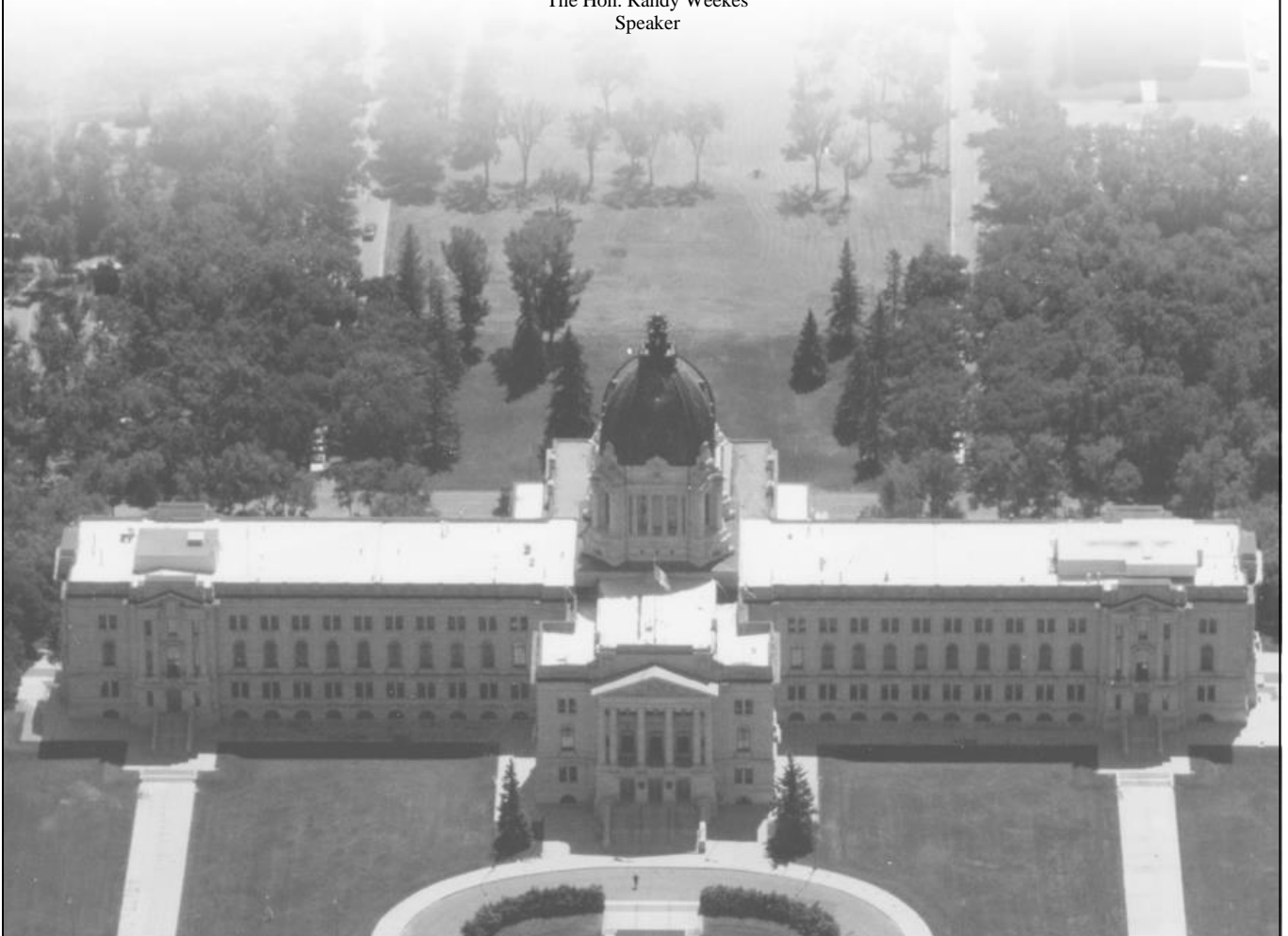
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
AND  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)  
Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Randy Weekes  
Speaker



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**4th 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** — Carla Beck

<b>Beck, Carla</b> — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	<b>Lemaigre, Jim</b> — Athabasca (SP)
<b>Bonk, Steven</b> — Moosomin (SP)	<b>Love, Matt</b> — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)
<b>Bowes, Jennifer</b> — Saskatoon University (NDP)	<b>Makowsky, Hon. Gene</b> — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
<b>Bradshaw, Fred</b> — Carrot River Valley (SP)	<b>Marit, Hon. David</b> — Wood River (SP)
<b>Buckingham, David</b> — Saskatoon Westview (SP)	<b>McLeod, Blaine</b> — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
<b>Burki, Noor</b> — Regina Coronation Park (NDP)	<b>McLeod, Hon. Tim</b> — Moose Jaw North (SP)
<b>Carr, Hon. Lori</b> — Estevan (SP)	<b>McMorris, Hon. Don</b> — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
<b>Cheveldayoff, Ken</b> — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)	<b>Merriman, Hon. Paul</b> — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)
<b>Clarke, Jared</b> — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP)	<b>Moe, Hon. Scott</b> — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
<b>Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy</b> — The Battlefords (SP)	<b>Morgan, Hon. Don</b> — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
<b>Conway, Meara</b> — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)	<b>Mowat, Vicki</b> — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
<b>Dennis, Terry</b> — Canora-Pelly (SP)	<b>Nerlien, Hugh</b> — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
<b>Domotor, Ryan</b> — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	<b>Nippi-Albright, Betty</b> — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
<b>Duncan, Hon. Dustin</b> — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)	<b>Ottenbreit, Greg</b> — Yorkton (SP)
<b>Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn</b> — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)	<b>Reiter, Hon. Jim</b> — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
<b>Fiaz, Muhammad</b> — Regina Pasqua (SP)	<b>Ritchie, Erika</b> — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
<b>Francis, Ken</b> — Kindersley (SP)	<b>Ross, Alana</b> — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
<b>Friesen, Marv</b> — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)	<b>Ross, Hon. Laura</b> — Regina Rochdale (SP)
<b>Goudy, Todd</b> — Melfort (SP)	<b>Sarauer, Nicole</b> — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
<b>Grewal, Gary</b> — Regina Northeast (SP)	<b>Skoropad, Dana</b> — Arm River (SP)
<b>Hargrave, Hon. Joe</b> — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	<b>Steele, Doug</b> — Cypress Hills (SP)
<b>Harpauer, Hon. Donna</b> — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	<b>Teed, Nathaniel</b> — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
<b>Harrison, Daryl</b> — Cannington (SP)	<b>Tell, Hon. Christine</b> — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
<b>Harrison, Hon. Jeremy</b> — Meadow Lake (SP)	<b>Vermette, Doyle</b> — Cumberland (NDP)
<b>Hindley, Hon. Everett</b> — Swift Current (SP)	<b>Weekes, Hon. Randy</b> — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
<b>Jenson, Terry</b> — Martensville-Warman (SP)	<b>Wilson, Nadine</b> — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
<b>Kaeding, Warren</b> — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	<b>Wotherspoon, Trent</b> — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
<b>Keisig, Travis</b> — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	<b>Wyant, Hon. Gordon</b> — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
<b>Kirsch, Delbert</b> — Batoche (SP)	<b>Young, Aleana</b> — Regina University (NDP)
<b>Lambert, Lisa</b> — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Young, Colleen</b> — Lloydminster (SP)
<b>Lawrence, Greg</b> — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	

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**Standings**

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 14;  
Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Iris Lang  
**Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel** — Kenneth S. Ring, K.C.  
**Deputy Clerk** — Kathy Burianyak  
**Principal Clerk** — Robert Park

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Lyall Frederiksen

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within hours after each sitting.

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been requested. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my absolute pleasure on behalf of the government to welcome His Excellency Patrick Van Gheel, ambassador of Belgium to Canada. I know him more simply as Patrick.

We met in 1997 in Germany at the University of Tübingen on what was a post-grad young lawyers program for German speakers through the German government's Academic Exchange Service, or Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, to learn about German and European law. There were 16 of us. I was the only Canadian. Patrick was one of only two Belgians and, Mr. Speaker, it was an interesting mix.

Everyone was looking to reinvent themselves a bit over the course of our year together. There was one fellow — Patrick and I were talking about this last night — who'd gone to Princeton, worked at a so-called white-shoe firm in Manhattan, who decided to throw it all over that year for music management. I had found articling a bit dry and I was drawn to legal journalism in London.

And I distinctly remember Patrick telling me that he planned to pivot too and do his diplomatic exams. And the rest is history: high-level interior ministry work, a focus on trade, an ambassadorial posting in Cuba and now, as of a few years, in Canada — a distinguished career and it's just getting started.

As I told Patrick, I remember our sometimes passionate political discussions back in the day. And I actually find it emotional that the province I remember telling him and the group about, which I loved, which was on the cusp then of great change and of beginning to fulfill its real economic promise and potential, should be his host province now and that he should learn in great detail, probably too much detail, about its export strength and powerhouse status.

Patrick, you will have to bring Isabelle, whom I remember your singing with at your wedding, to Saskatchewan the next time you come.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming to Saskatchewan my friend, His Excellency Patrick Van Gheel.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I just want to briefly join with the Minister of Justice in introducing Patrick to our Legislative Assembly. It's a pleasure to meet you. I appreciated the minister sharing stories of law school days. It's always interesting to hear about those times in one's life.

I hope your trip here is enjoyable and fruitful. And I ask all members to join us, once again, in welcoming this gentleman, Patrick, to our Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Melfort.

**Mr. Goudy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's also my privilege to introduce a friend here in the Chamber this morning. Pepito Escanlar, the honorary consul general, is here from Regina, and he is escorting Consul General Zaldy Patron from Calgary this morning. And Zaldy and I have become friends over the last number of years, and I have the privilege of touring him around the northeast part of Saskatchewan over the next few days and braving the weather.

I just want to say a few things about Consul General Zaldy. I have watched him at many opportunities, meeting together with the Filipino people. And we had discussed in the past, it would be great to have a bridge from the Philippines to Canada. And over the last number of years since this government has been leading in Saskatchewan, since 2007, over 40,000 Filipinos have immigrated to Saskatchewan and made this their home. And as I've watched his service to his people, I've always noticed the servant heart and the true care and concern that he has for the people of the Philippines.

So you know, I just want to say thank you so very much for coming today, and to Pepito as well for escorting you around. But please join me in welcoming Consul General Zaldy Patron to our Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to join with the member opposite and welcome the consul general to the Saskatchewan Assembly. And it's a wonderful opportunity to welcome Pepito to his Assembly, Mr. Speaker, an incredible leader in our community and in our province, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for being here, my friend. Thank you for all your leadership within this province. And thank you to all the Filipino-Canadians that have chosen Saskatchewan to build and better their lives, and in so doing, building and bettering Saskatchewan and our country. Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to welcome these leaders to their Assembly here today, and I ask all members to provide a very warm welcome, and thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

**Hon. Mr. T. McLeod:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And this

morning it is my pleasure to introduce Pastor Dave Wicks and a group of seniors from the Hillcrest Church in Moose Jaw who are seated in the west gallery. If they could just give us a wave.

Mr. Speaker, Dave is a member of the pastoral team at Hillcrest Church, and part of his work includes developing programs for seniors within our community. Today the group will be attending the morning session followed by a tour of the Legislative Building. Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to meeting with the group and visiting with them after today's proceedings.

I'm very thankful for the ongoing work that Hillcrest Church does to help the residents of Moose Jaw and surrounding community. I would ask all members to please join me in welcoming Pastor Dave and this group from Moose Jaw.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour this morning to introduce two guests seated in your gallery, neither of whom are strangers to members of this Assembly nor the proceedings here in this building or across government.

First of all, our chief of staff who sometimes sits down here on the floor with us. He's up in your gallery today, Mr. Warren McCall. And I want to publicly thank him for taking on this role at a very interesting time for us and let everyone know here how thrilled we are to have him back and serving both our party and the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is also my honour to introduce, to welcome Mr. Ron Styles to his Legislative Assembly. Ron will be no stranger to most people here. A 35-year-plus distinguished career serving the people of this province as a civil servant; perhaps, you know, the top civil servant, if you look at his LinkedIn page, Mr. Speaker. I pulled it up, I'm not even going to start to touch all of the ways that Ron has served the people in this province, five different premiers over the years; someone who, you know, really shows what we are when we're at our best in this province, a gold standard of the civil service. And Ron has dedicated his career to making lives better for people right across this province in so many ways.

Some will know, Mr. Speaker, that Ron has done something that he has never done in his career before. And that is today we were thrilled to announce the fact that Ron has joined our team to continue his work, continue helping this, the official opposition but also, Mr. Speaker, to help people across the province in ways that are so obvious right now that are needed. I know this is a significant decision that has been made here by Ron, and I know this is a way to continue to serve the people of this province in a way that he has done so honourably up until now and will continue to do.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members here to join me in welcoming Ron Styles to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just over my shoulder, Mr. Speaker, in the Speaker's gallery, it's my pleasure to introduce somebody who's no stranger to many members, is Deb Davies, who is the Foster Families Association

executive director. Deb and her association work very closely with the ministry to deliver important services to our most vulnerable children. They work to support and recruit and retain foster families.

I've been to several dinners over the last month as we celebrate Foster Families Month to help thank those who choose to foster. And I've been able to interact with those folks, thanks to the work of Deb and her crew at the association. So I'd like all members to help me welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

**Mr. Love:** — Request leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been requested for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to welcome a large delegation here — I think split between a couple galleries — to celebrate two very special residents of Saskatoon Eastview. Harold and Mary Orr are with us today. Incredible individuals, an incredible couple, and a wonderful, incredible Saskatchewan family who's come here today to hear Harold and Mary be recognized and celebrated in their Assembly.

I'll save the accolades for a member's statement to come in just a few minutes, Mr. Speaker. But I would like to take this opportunity to welcome my constituents Harold and Mary to their Assembly and as well to recognize their family members who have come here to celebrate with all of us today the lives and the marriage of these two wonderful people.

I'd like to welcome their son, Robert Orr; Rachel Friesen, granddaughter along with her children; Joseph Pradzynski, grandson along with his family of seven; Walter and Ruth Pradzynski, along with David Pradzynski and his family; sister, Alice Williams; son, Randy Orr; and daughter, May Thiessen. If I've missed anyone, I sincerely apologize. I'll look forward to chatting for a few minutes when I'm able to slip out of the Assembly later this morning.

But I want to thank you for coming here today. I know it's a journey to get here to your Assembly. They came down from Saskatoon to be here. And thoroughly want to say how much I appreciate Harold and Mary as constituents, the discussions that we've had on their doorstep. Mr. Speaker, I'll admit that I have not spent the amount of time with these two that I would like to to gain the wisdom from their lives of service to our province. And I'll have more to say about that in an upcoming member's statement.

But at this time I'd ask all members in the Assembly to give Harold and Mary and their entire family a warm welcome to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome a few guests here to their legislature here this morning. First of all, welcome back to my legislature to my beautiful wife, Meagan, and our little guy Bennett joining us again today. It's sure been a pleasure to watch him grow and to do that with Meagan every step of the way, and sure appreciate Meagan's support as I spend a lot of my time down here in Regina.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to welcome to her legislature Viv Graw from Battleford and one of my constituents and fellow residents in the town of Battleford. You know, I'll just quickly say Viv, her latest claim to . . . or one of her latest claims to fame is being the steward of a Little Free Library in the West Park neighbourhood of Battleford and encouraging literacy in our community. But Viv's other claim to fame is that she is the proud mother to Mitch Graw who I get to work with every single day in my office.

[10:15]

And so it's a real pleasure to have Viv and her husband, Gord, here yesterday for the Throne Speech and then Viv join us again for question period. So I'd ask all members of the Assembly to welcome these guests to their legislature.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't often get to introduce my wife, Sandy. She works full-time in Saskatoon. So she came down yesterday for the Speech from the Throne. It was my first day with the official duties and I had sort of a slight disagreement with the Premier as to the order of exiting after the event. It was my view that I was to follow the Speaker's party out, and it was the view of the Premier that I was to walk with my wife out, so we've had some discussion about it in caucus. And I've not agreed with the Premier on his ruling, but I'll accept it for the time being.

But what the Premier had to say to me was nothing compared to what Sandy had to say with me later on. So we've had some continuing discussions. So anyway, we've been married since 19 . . . or almost . . . We've been married for over roughly 30 years, Mr. Speaker, and she's been remarkably patient and exceptionally supportive. I've said often at events that when I introduce her, I can call the event a date night. So what I'd like to do is ask all members to welcome Sandy to our date night.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Westview.

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a lot of family that I would like to introduce in the west gallery in the very top row: my son Corey and his wife, Jade; and their daughters, Bentley and Hayden. They came here from Alberta and Corey was participating in the ceremonies yesterday. But a special thank you to Hayden. Yesterday was her 10th birthday and I'm not sure that this is what she envisioned for a 10th birthday. But welcome to this Assembly.

And I also want to thank and introduce my wife, Karen Buckingham, up there. And you know, we say this often and we

need to say it all the time that, you know, we don't serve here alone. And family has always been very close and there for me and so I just want to say thank you for that. And we've been married for 40 years so you know she's a strong woman. So with that, please help me welcome them to this Assembly.

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a busy place this morning. I wanted to join with the minister opposite in welcoming Deb Davies to this, her Legislative Assembly. Deb is the executive director of Sask Foster Families Association.

Foster families across this province are such an important aspect of the child protection network that we have in this province, especially as we see, you know, families struggle, more and more families struggle, child poverty rates, mental health and addictions struggles. Foster families play an absolutely crucial role in opening their homes and making their communities a better place. So I just wanted to thank her for all of her work and welcome her again to this Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce 20 grade 12 students from the Greenall High School in Balgonie. They're accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Marley, who has brought classes in before, and does just an absolutely amazing job prepping them. They have a very good understanding of what goes on here, maybe don't always agree with what goes on here, but they have a very good understanding. And so I'm looking forward to having a picture with them and then meeting with them after and answer any questions as to what goes on as far as the proceedings.

But, Mr. Speaker, more importantly, this is a very big night for Greenall High School. They're playing in the city championship tonight. Is it Griffins, I believe? Yes. Go Griffins tonight and win a city championship. Cheer hard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce again to this Assembly Michael Sorowski. He is seated in the west gallery. Members will remember Michael. I introduced him last week. He has been out front at the legislature with a sign that says, please help, you know, asking for help from this government, working to advocate for a meeting for himself. At this point he is on 31 days of his hunger strike, Mr. Speaker.

You know, he hasn't heard from anyone in government. He hasn't met anyone in government in that time. I would urge them while he is here to go up and say hello, Mr. Speaker. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming Michael to his Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you and to you and to the rest of the Chamber, I want to join with the member from Moose Jaw. It was a pleasant surprise to hear him introduce Pastor Dave Wicks from Moose Jaw.

I just want to as well welcome Dave and Pat, his wife Pat, to their Legislative Assembly. They are my wife's aunt and uncle, and when they're not busy pastoring people, Mr. Speaker, they are — despite the weather, and I hope they have their motorcycles away — they are fond of being on their motorcycles whenever they can. Mr. Speaker, they are wonderful people and I am so pleased to be able to just quickly introduce them to all my colleagues in the legislature.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Saskatoon Fairview.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to fix the rural health care staffing crisis. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that recruitment and retention of health care professionals is a particular issue in Saskatchewan's rural health care facilities leading to many emergency room, acute lab, and X-ray service disruptions.

And I will note that yesterday hundreds of nurses marched past the legislature for the first time in 24 years. Their message was that patients deserve safe staffing and what the government is doing isn't working, Mr. Speaker.

I'll 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 fix the rural health care staffing crisis.

This is signed by individuals from Wilkie and Landis, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise again and present a petition to this Assembly calling for adequate funding for education. It's important to note that folks who signed this petition have seen the impact of cuts in our schools and in our classrooms.

Over the last 10 years, Saskatchewan has added over 19,000 new students, yet we have 157 fewer teachers working in our pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] system. Last year alone, Mr. Speaker, we saw nearly 4,000 new students and 66 fewer teachers serving those students.

The folks who signed this petition would like us to note that the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], who represents all 27 public and separate school divisions, criticize this budget, stating that it further erodes public education in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan teachers describe their response as baffled by this government's disregard for students.

Mr. Speaker, I'll 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 provide adequate, sustainable, and predictable operating funds for our 27 public and separate school divisions to ensure that schools, teachers, and other caring professionals are able to meet the needs of every student in Saskatchewan.

Today's petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for the government to improve labour laws in Saskatchewan. Those who have signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: that even after the October 1st, 2023 increase, Saskatchewan's minimum wage will still remain the lowest in Canada at \$14 an hour and the opposition has been calling for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage since 2018; the opposition has twice introduced paid sick leave legislation since the onset of the pandemic, calling for a minimum of 10 paid sick days each year, and this government has chosen not to pass that; paid sick leave has been proven to save employers money while making workplaces healthier and safer for all workers.

Mr. Speaker, 71 per cent of workers in Canada have experienced workplace violence or harassment. And in 2023 the Canadian Bar Association at their AGM [annual general meeting] adopted a resolution discouraging the use of nondisclosure agreements to silence whistle-blowers and victims of abuse, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace, and that more needs to be done to ensure that workplaces in Saskatchewan are harassment free.

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 improve conditions for Saskatchewan workers by passing legislation to increase the minimum wage, guaranteed paid sick leave, limit nondisclosure agreements which could silence survivors of workplace harassment, and require employers to track and report incidents of violence and harassment in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this petition today come from Saskatoon and Regina. I do so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Westview.

#### 150th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 2023 marks the 150th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The RCMP is rich in history, traditions, and culture. We are proud to have Depot right here in Regina.



The Buckingham family has a history with the RCMP that goes back 50 years when my oldest brother, Rod, started training on the 100th anniversary of the RCMP, and that led him to a 36-year career in policing. Rod's youngest daughter, Julia, is following in her father's footsteps and just a few weeks ago began training at Depot.

And yesterday was a very proud day for me. The parade into this Assembly for the Throne Speech was led by Rod's oldest son, Staff Sergeant Morgan Buckingham, and by my son, Sergeant Corey Buckingham. Morgan is an elected director with the National Police Federation and has served the RCMP for 21 years. And my son, Corey, who I am so very proud of, is a detachment commander in Vermilion, Alberta and has 16 years of service. Who knew 50 years ago, when Rod joined the RCMP, that it would lead to several of our family members following in his footsteps to a life of service?

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the RCMP on their 150th anniversary and to thank all those who have served and currently serve. You put our safety before your own every day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Breast Cancer Awareness Month

**Ms. Mowat:** — October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the profound impact of a breast cancer diagnosis and the life-saving potential of early detection. But this year it's also a time where we're hearing from countless concerned women and families who are living with anxiety and fear as they wait.

Regular mammograms are a crucial tool in early breast cancer detection, with recommendations for women to undergo screening every two years. However, wait times have increased and the number of mammograms performed in Saskatchewan has declined significantly, falling far below pre-pandemic levels.

These are women who are left not knowing if they have cancer or if their cancer has returned. This morning we heard from Lindsay Rogers, who already has waited months for an urgent biopsy. Lindsay has a lump that has grown and a family history of breast cancer. An urgent biopsy is supposed to take place within two weeks.

Cheryl Harvey gets a mammogram every year, having fought breast cancer in 2010. She waited five and a half weeks for an urgent biopsy that confirmed she has cancer again. Her wait time was only shortened because she had the cancer clinic advocate for her.

Mr. Speaker, we need to work immediately to enhance our breast cancer detection. And today I ask all members to commit to taking swift action to safeguard the lives of those who are at risk of breast cancer and to pay tribute to those whose lives have been touched by this disease.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

#### Spiritual Care Week and Pastoral Care Week

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Spiritual Care Week, this year celebrated from October 22nd to the 28th, is a time for organizations to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of spiritual caregivers and the essential ministry they provide. Since its inception in October of 1985, Pastoral Care Week has grown into an international event, underscoring the global importance of spiritual care.

This year's theme, Chaplaincy and Mental Health: It's Healthy to Get Help, emphasizes the close relationship between spirituality and mental well-being. One's spiritual perspective significantly influences their mental health, making the collaboration between chaplains and mental health professionals crucial.

During Spiritual Care Week, chaplains, pastoral care counsellors, educators, and providers showcase their diverse range of services, from assisting individuals facing serious health challenges to promoting self-care, guiding families and couples, leading grief support groups, offering multicultural spiritual counselling, addressing addictions, facilitating trauma recovery, and assisting with end-of-life care. These caregivers play a vital role in the healing process.

[10:30]

This occasion is also an opportunity for individuals to reflect on their own spiritual journey. The integration of spiritual care with mental health support enhances the overall well-being of individuals, helping them lead more balanced and fulfilling lives. It's a reminder that seeking help is healthy.

In the spirit we honour our own legislative chaplain, Fred Hill, up in the west gallery today from Leading Influence Ministries and recognize his and others' unwavering commitment to providing non-political, non-partisan, and meaningful care throughout the year.

Let us extend our appreciation and blessings to all those who serve in this vital capacity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

#### Couple Celebrates 70th Anniversary

**Mr. Love:** — Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate two wonderful constituents, Harold and Mary Orr, for achieving an incredible milestone — 70 years of marriage. This is not just a testament to enduring love, but is also a shining example of unwavering commitment to family, community, and faith.

Harold Orr, a distinguished engineer, a member of the Order of Canada since 2017, and recipient of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal in 2022, not only excelled in his professional life, but also exemplified the true meaning of partnership in his marriage to Mary. His groundbreaking work in energy-efficient construction left an indelible mark on the world of engineering and sustainability.

And standing alongside Harold at every step of the way has been

Mary, his remarkable wife. Mary is not just a partner. She is the backbone of their family, the cornerstone of their household, and a pillar in their faith community. Her hospitality and expansive love created a sanctuary for many and she ensured their children had access to opportunities inside and outside the home.

Together the couple raised 12 children, became grandparents to 22, and have 29 great-grandchildren. As we celebrate this remarkable milestone, we honour not only their incredible achievements but also the profound love and faith that sustained them. I ask all members to join me in celebrating Harold and Mary Orr, a couple whose story stands as a testament to love, commitment, and service to their community and province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

### **Saskatchewan Polytechnic Vital to Growing Economy**

**Mr. Friesen:** — It's a great day in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, and as an alumni I stand here today to recognize and congratulate Saskatchewan Polytechnic on reaching a 10-year enrolment high. Mr. Speaker, over 11,000 students have enrolled this fall term, an increase of over 27 per cent from last year. International student enrolment has increased by 60 per cent. These numbers speak to Sask Polytech's growing reputation on the global stage.

Student and employer surveys from Sask Polytech show an overall 95 per cent graduate employment rate and a 92 per cent Indigenous graduate employment rate. The survey also shows that 92 per cent of employers would hire a Sask Poly graduate again.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the vital role that Sask Polytech has in training a robust and skilled labour force for our growing economy. That is why we were happy to announce a commitment of up to 200 million for Sask Polytech's campus renewal project in September. Sask Polytech will partner with the University of Saskatchewan to create an innovation corridor at Innovation Place in Saskatoon. This project will dramatically improve future students' educational experience, bringing unprecedented opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Dr. Rosia and his team at Sask Polytech on a great job. Thank you.

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

### **Unity Athlete Wins Bronze at Powerlifting Competition**

**Mr. Domotor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unity athlete Shauna Hammer has returned home from the IPF [International Powerlifting Federation] World Masters Powerlifting 2023 competition in Mongolia with a bronze medal while representing Team Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Shauna has been competing in powerlifting events for years, with plenty of success stories. Shauna earned a gold medal this past summer at the Western Canadian competition in Brandon, Manitoba

Mr. Speaker, Shauna applied to Team Canada to compete in the IPF World Masters Powerlifting competition in Mongolia back in the early spring. Shauna found out in mid-July that she had been selected, so that became her focus. Shauna has an extremely focused routine that allows her to be engaged with her work, her home life, and her athletic aspirations.

Mr. Speaker, Shauna not only got to have an amazing sporting experience in Mongolia, but she also got to experience international travel — a 24-hour flight to and from Mongolia. She made new friends and indicated she did things far outside of her comfort zone.

Shauna's last weeks of training were interrupted by an injury, so to come home a bronze medal winner is even more special. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating Shauna Hammer on her recent bronze medal win in Mongolia and wish her continued success with her powerlifting endeavours. Thank you.

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

### **New School to Open in Carrot River**

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm incredibly proud to be able to report to the constituents of Carrot River Valley that the new school is on track to open up its doors in late 2023. Students from Carrot River Jr. Sr. High School, home of the Wildcats, will begin to transition to the new school late in the 2023-24 school year, and students from the elementary school will transition at the beginning of the '24-25 school year. Mr. Speaker, I think these kids and the faculty at their school will be in awe of the state-of-the-art facility.

I would like to take this opportunity to give a big thank you to everyone involved in this project. Thanks to your hard work and dedication, the youth of Carrot River will have a brand new facility where they can dedicate themselves to their education.

And to the students, the teachers, the parents of Carrot River Valley: I truly hope you enjoy this facility for years to come, and thank you for your patience while we get this project done. I know from speaking to many of my constituents there's a lot of buzz around this new school, and I have to say, after seeing its progress since the sod-turning, it is well worth the hype. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

### **Cost of Living and Affordability Measures**

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing to deliver cost-of-living relief. Yesterday the Premier had a golden opportunity to show that he'd learned his lesson, that he'd learned from the disastrous emergency session, from the by-elections, but, Mr. Speaker, he clearly still isn't listening.

The vast majority of people in this province will see no cost-of-living relief as a result of yesterday's Throne Speech. How much

longer are the people of this province going to have to wait from this tired and out-of-touch government before they deliver some relief on the cost of living?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — The vast majority of people in this province have experienced tax reductions under a Saskatchewan Party government since 2007, Mr. Speaker, to the level of removing 112,000 people off the provincial tax rolls altogether, Mr. Speaker.

As we have said on the floor of this Assembly, \$2 billion is annualized in each and every budget, Mr. Speaker, affordability measures for Saskatchewan families in Saskatchewan, which I would say have contributed to Saskatchewan being one of the most affordable places to live in the nation of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday with the Speech from the Throne being delivered, those affordability measures were added to, Mr. Speaker. In particular, in the case of families that want to buy a home — anybody that wants to buy a home in Saskatchewan for that matter — with the PST [provincial sales tax] rebate on new home construction. Added to that was a secondary suite program, where there is also a PST incentive to put a secondary suite in your existing home or in a new home that you are constructing, Mr. Speaker.

So \$2 billion each and every year, Mr. Speaker, in our budget in affordability measures, added to with the rebate, the PST rebate on new construction yesterday, Mr. Speaker. Most certainly, if you add that to all of the other initiatives that we have in this province, I would agree with recent articles that say that Saskatoon and Regina — one of them number 1; one of them number 10 — most affordable cities to live in, in the nation of Canada.

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

#### Provision of Health Care

**Ms. Beck:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province, who are telling us repeatedly that cost of living is the number one issue facing them, don't have it wrong. That Premier and that government have it wrong, Mr. Speaker. This cost-of-living crisis is real, but this government, this tired and out-of-touch government is offering nothing new to offer some relief.

Mr. Speaker, there's also nothing new in that Throne Speech to address the health care crisis in this province. Let's take breast cancer screening, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we learned of a woman who had to wait two months, two months to get an appointment for an ultrasound. She's going to have to now wait until November to get a biopsy. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker, with a history of breast cancer in the family. Stories like this, stories like this should be keeping that government up at night.

When will we see urgent action from this government on the problems facing our health care system?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, half a dozen or so questions in that particular question. Back to affordability in the province, Mr. Speaker, much has been addressed, up to and including the Speech from the Throne that was delivered yesterday that had not only the PST rebate on new home construction but the second suite grant program — the Minister of Finance has corrected me — which I think will add to the fact that Saskatchewan today has been ranked as one of the most affordable places in Canada to live.

Mr. Speaker, we need to continue to invest in health care, no doubt, in particular in the area of cancer care. Cancer, a disease that has touched virtually every family in this province including mine. A family member today finding their way through breast cancer treatments, Mr. Speaker.

I can say that this government is entirely supportive of the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] and the cancer clinics, Mr. Speaker, in recruiting the professionals that they need to provide the very excellent care that they have for years to date, Mr. Speaker, so that they can provide that care for years into the future.

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

#### Support for Ambulance Services

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing on health care. They're failing on ambulance service as well. Yesterday our friend from Saskatoon Centre had a serious fall on the ice here outside of the legislature. She was in pain and an ambulance was called. Mr. Speaker, she waited for over an hour and a half for the ambulance to arrive. But none was available. Eventually the staff here at the legislature took her to the emergency room. She got great care from the staff here and at the hospital, and luckily and thankfully she's on the mend. But, Mr. Speaker, this could have happened to anyone, an hour-and-a-half wait for an ambulance.

Mr. Speaker, when will we see some urgent action from that government to fix our broken ambulance system?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — This past budget, of which the members opposite voted against, Mr. Speaker, was close to \$10 million for our ambulance care here in the province to add people, to add EMS [emergency medical services] technicians, to add advanced care paramedics in our communities across the province. There's been 33 full-time equivalents that have been added to our rural ambulance care; 95 full-time equivalents added to what was last year's numbers, Mr. Speaker. That includes twenty-four and a half right here in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker.

Admittedly when it comes to health care, there is more work to do. More work to do in recruiting and retaining folks that are working in our cancer care, Mr. Speaker, working in our emergency services, and working in our ambulatory services that are offering that care to the residents of the province, Mr. Speaker.

To the people of Saskatchewan, I would say that this is a government that most certainly is committed to doing that work

today and long into the future.

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

### Closure of Seniors Care Homes

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, they want to talk about their investments. The lack of action, the lack of the ability to fix those problems is evident when we have someone waiting for an hour and a half at the legislature for an ambulance. And these stories are right across the province, Mr. Speaker.

And they're also failing seniors. Yesterday we had a group of families here who were worried about the fact that their loved ones in private care homes in this city, Mr. Speaker, were given less than 30 days' notice to be vacated from the place that they thought their seniors would live for the rest of their lives. These residents in personal care homes have nowhere to go, Mr. Speaker. And this government has closed under their watch more than 200 spaces for seniors in this province.

[10:45]

There was nothing, nothing in that speech yesterday, Mr. Speaker, about seniors, except for them patting themselves on the back. So this is the question: why is this Premier doing nothing? Why is he ignoring the plight of these seniors who are being thrown out onto the streets?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, I think for all of us, these are not just seniors; these are family members. I've asked the Minister of Health to reach out to ensure that, in this case of private care homes that are changing their course of business, reach out and ensure a number of things: one, there is capacity in the city of Regina for these family members; two, is that making sure there's appropriate time for them to find a new location that's adequate and that the family is supportive of. And to do some of this work . . . In the case of the Lutheran care, there's a different direction that is being charted there, Mr. Speaker.

And in this city here — in addition to the investment in an urgent care centre on north Albert Street here, in addition to an investment for a safe place to park at the Regina General Hospital — I'd point towards the largest long-term care investment in the history of the province of Saskatchewan is coming to the city of Regina in 600 additional beds here. You contrast that, Mr. Speaker, with the members opposite, who in their time in government, closed 1,200 long-term care beds across the province of Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

**Mr. Love:** — Mr. Speaker, the fact is that seniors across this city are being kicked out of their homes without notice and this government is doing nothing. There was nothing for seniors in this Speech from the Throne. Families and residents are worried about where they will go next.

What does the minister have to say to the family members and

residents at Parkview Villa, Princess Villa, Precious Memories Villa about the fact that they are losing their homes?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Seniors.

**Hon. Mr. T. McLeod:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And let me just begin by saying we value our seniors, and ensuring that our seniors receive quality care is a priority for this government, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to meet with the families and some of the staff that were from the facilities that the member opposite mentioned. We recognize that they are going through a very difficult time, Mr. Speaker, and we are committed to assisting the residents and the staff in any way that we can as they are impacted by the decision of Orange Tree.

Mr. Speaker, as the Premier mentioned, it's unfortunate the members opposite don't seem to understand the difference between personal care homes and long-term care homes. The personal care homes are private businesses that are run by private companies offering a service to seniors, Mr. Speaker. As the regulator of those facilities, we certainly expect that the operators will treat our seniors with full respect.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

**Mr. Love:** — I'll remind that minister that we know the difference and so do the people who came to their legislature yesterday. And they didn't come here to celebrate that minister. They came to point the finger at him and his failures to keep seniors in their homes.

Mr. Speaker, these homes aren't the only ones closing. The Regina Lutheran care home is being closed because of this government. When we asked about it last week, that minister changed his story and said that the SHA had assessed the building and found that taking over the home wasn't viable. Families and residents are not buying it. They love their home, and they want to stay there.

Will the minister table that assessment in the Assembly today?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Seniors.

**Hon. Mr. T. McLeod:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I met with the families yesterday from the Orange Tree homes, I also met last week with the families from the Regina Lutheran Home.

Mr. Speaker, our government takes the resident care very seriously, and our expectation is that SHA and management at Regina Lutheran will work closely with the residents and their families to explore all options available in our long-term facilities. And, Mr. Speaker, the SHA is committed to doing that work. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

### Status of Employees in Seniors Care Homes

**Mr. Love:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a hard truth for this minister to accept that we're losing four care homes in Regina, and his government has no plan to fill that gap.

This is a serious problem for residents and for their families, but also for the staff. I met with some of the staff from Precious Memories Villa yesterday. Many of them haven't been paid for months. And there are temporary foreign workers here in Saskatchewan that are worried that this closure will force them to leave Canada and they won't be able to stay here in the province that they love.

Will the minister commit to reaching out to these employees who are losing their jobs, and will they commit to seeing how they can be brought into more than 1,500 vacant positions currently posted in the SHA?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have been in contact obviously. The minister and I had a discussion yesterday and this morning about what the path forward for these individuals is going to be.

Our officials have reached out to the individuals in question. We're going to work with them and work with the Government of Canada on what the options are going to be for these individuals to continue to reside here in Saskatchewan and find employment going forward. It's something we take very seriously, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Cost of Living and Affordability Measures

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government just isn't listening to the concerns of Saskatchewan people as they face the crushing cost of living. That message was sent loud and clear in the north Regina by-elections, but instead the government recalled an emergency session to sow division.

Yesterday's Throne Speech was but another opportunity to finally roll out long-delayed cost-of-living relief, but again that government isn't listening and failed to deliver. The vast majority of families struggling to pay their bills won't see a dime of cost-of-living relief under the plan released yesterday by that government, a government that time and time again has made that crushing cost of living worse, Mr. Speaker.

Why is this tired and out-of-touch government unwilling to reverse course and offer the meaningful cost-of-living relief that Saskatchewan families deserve?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And there's no doubt that we're in inflationary times, and everybody in the province and across the nation is affected when inflation is up. However there is no one answer to how that can be addressed.

What I can say and have said a number of times in this Assembly, that this government has had affordability as a priority, not just this year, not just, you know, one year, one time.

We have significantly reduced personal income tax which helps seniors. It helps families. It helps students. It helps all individuals by reducing that personal income tax to a level that is among the lowest in the nation, Mr. Speaker. It's indexed so it's cushioned for inflationary pressures.

We have programs to assist families. We have programs to assist seniors. We have programs to assist students. We have increased the programs that we have for those most vulnerable. It's over \$2 billion in each and every budget. That's aside from the 450 million for the Saskatchewan affordability tax credit.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — What an out-of-touch and dismissive answer, Mr. Speaker. This government is sitting on very high revenues, but they continue to pile on new costs and new taxes onto Saskatchewan people. As a result there's no relief in sight for Saskatchewan families, who are struggling more than anywhere else in Canada. We lead the nation in mortgage arrears. And according to the latest numbers from Angus Reid, more Saskatchewan people said paying for groceries was "very difficult" than anywhere else in Canada.

Why is this tired and out-of-touch government ignoring the real financial pressures facing people and the hardship they're facing just to put food in the fridge? And why are they failing to offer any cost-of-living relief to families?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to hear the member opposite — the no-plan NDP [New Democratic Party] member that supports the carbon tax, which is driving up the cost of absolutely everything in this province, Mr. Speaker, the party that supports the carbon tax — say mortgage arrears.

Did he not listen to the Throne Speech? Perhaps he didn't. I know that it can get long. And you know, he may or may not have heard that there is a housing program that will — and he will hear more details next week, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker — that will address housing affordability. But it also will have a secondary suite program that goes directly to those individuals and families that will have an option in order to help them with their mortgage payments, should they be impacted with the interest rate increases. You would think, you would think that member opposite would support that. And they have no plan what they would do.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — That minister knows full well that the official opposition opposes the federal carbon tax and opposes the tax hikes of this tired and out-of-touch government, Mr. Speaker. The measures announced in the Speech from the Throne are wholly inadequate to address the real cost-of-living challenges that families are facing today, narrow measures that

shut out the vast majority of families that are struggling.

There's so much that this government could be doing to make life more affordable, like rolling back and cutting their PST increases; deal with utilities; to the price at the pump. This Throne Speech was another opportunity to act, and again this Sask Party is failing to step up and they're failing Saskatchewan families. How did this government fall so out of touch with families across Saskatchewan?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring into the record a quote, and it said, "Why shouldn't consumers actually pay the price of carbon for producing food?" You know who said that? It's the member from Walsh Acres, Mr. Speaker. How can that member be so out of touch with his own members, with his colleagues? How can he be so out of touch?

I have more quotes, Mr. Speaker, from members opposite in support of the carbon tax, which drives up the cost of fuel. It drives up the cost of food. It drives up the cost of absolutely everything that is transported in and out of this province, Mr. Speaker. So how can he be so out of touch? And is he talking to his cousin Jagmeet Singh and saying, you cannot support this. This is directly affecting affordability. No matter how much we reduce taxes, Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax is going up.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

### Surgical Capacity and Wait Times

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Wait times in health care continue to rise with no signs of slowing. In the last eight years, surgery wait times have doubled. Saskatchewan has the longest wait times for knee and hip replacements in Canada. As we keep saying, Mr. Speaker, health care is a prepaid service. Saskatchewan citizens paid for this service in advance and when they need it, it isn't there.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the members opposite to imagine a resident has a vehicle needing repairs as the result of an accident, but when they call SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] they are told it'll be 6 to 12 months before the repairs can begin. They would be outraged, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the government: how is our prepaid health care services any different? How is their failure to deliver promised prepaid health services any different?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are working very hard as a government to get people and patients across this province the surgeries that they need, Mr. Speaker. This year the annual investment for the surgical program across Saskatchewan, \$670 million, \$670 million for surgeries right across this province, an increase of \$144 million. Additional funding to tackle the surgical backlog here in Saskatchewan that built up over the pandemic, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I could tell the House that the funding is in the

second year of a three-year target to increase that baseline for surgeries by adding 13,000 more surgeries, having 13,000 more surgeries completed in '23-24 and an additional 18,000 more surgeries completed in this province in 2024-25, Mr. Speaker. We had last year just over 90,000 surgeries completed from April of 2022 to March of 2023, the highest number of surgeries ever completed in the province's history, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

### Crime Rates and Policing Services

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I once again want to address the crime epidemic that we are seeing in our province. The violent crime rate is the second highest in the country. Robbery and theft are now the second highest. Non-violent crime is the highest in the country. The homicide rate has been breaking record highs consecutively for three years in a row.

[11:00]

Saskatchewan RCMP are now telling us homicides are rising once again this year and are paced to break last year's record, a fourth year in a row. Mr. Speaker, our homicide rate is the highest in the country. It's three times higher than Ontario, nearly five times higher than Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, I have just read this government's report card on crime. They have been the governing party for 16 years. Given the record highs across the board on crime statistics, what grade would they give themselves? Are they content with their results?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do recognize that there are challenges out there in our rural areas, and that's why we're working very closely with the RCMP. I've had the opportunity to meet with the RCMP since being appointed into this position, multiple times. I've met with the chiefs of police to be able to address some of the concerns that the member opposite brought forward.

Mr. Speaker, we've made investments of over 143 front-line officers that have come into play across our province. We've also had the opportunities to create specialized teams so they can go to specific areas, the warrant enforcement team, the community response team. Mr. Speaker, these are exactly the teams that we need to be able to address the issues in specific areas. But I do give full confidence, and if the member is asking for a grade, I'd give our front-line officers an A. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not a new phenomenon. Why has the government failed to address this while record-high crimes rates are broken year after year? What is the RCMP's response, Mr. Speaker? Has the Premier met with Assistant Commissioner Blackmore on this emergency? Do the RCMP have the necessary tools to tackle this situation? Who will start taking responsibility for this crime?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the member opposite might have noticed yesterday that Assistant Commissioner Rhonda Blackmore was in attendance for our Speech from the Throne, as well as other officers, chiefs of police, Mr. Speaker, to exactly see what . . . were here and to support the government in what we're doing and working with the federal government on the RCMP, and making sure that all of our detachments are at capacity.

This is something that I brought up directly with the federal government when we met with them in Quebec two weeks ago — the future of the RCMP, the support of the RCMP, Mr. Speaker, making sure that we're securing the officers at Depot. This is exactly what all the provinces are looking to the federal government, to see how we as a province can work with the federal government to support RCMP in our rural and remote areas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on House Services.

##### Standing Committee on House Services

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I have been instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to present its 13th report. This report includes changes to the ratios on the standing committees of the legislature. It also names the new membership for each committee and changes the parliamentary calendar for the observance of the Remembrance Day holiday. I move:

That the 13th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved:

That the 13th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I skipped over, but is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Is the Assembly ready to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### SPECIAL ORDER

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While preparing my response to the Speech from the Throne, I reviewed the comments made last year by our colleague, Derek Meyers. He's an incredibly tough act to follow. His enthusiasm and excitement literally sprang off the pages of *Hansard*. He is someone that is truly missed. To Laurie and family, I want to offer sympathies from Sandy and myself. I watch what they post on Facebook and it's obvious that they were huge fans of Derek. And I think we all were.

I've indicated that it's not my intention to run again in the next provincial election, so this may very well be one of my last opportunities to address the House and the members. I'm now regarded as the old guy in caucus and the new guy from Lumsden-Morse, although he doesn't look new, will be seconding the Speech from the Throne.

I want to congratulate him and welcome him, and note that in the last few days he's been hiding a rather Gorbachev-looking scrape on his head. But I ask the members welcome him and would feel free to make any comments they want on the wound.

Mr. Speaker, my long-suffering wife, Sandy, is in the House today. I just want to report, to clarify we were married August 21st, 1995, some 28 years, 2 months, 4 days, and 17 hours ago — roughly 30. Support from family, Mr. Speaker, is something that all members cherish and value. Without their help, love, and support we would not be able to do our jobs.

Sandy grew up in Rosetown. Her family have been long-time supporters of their current MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. Many times in recent years I would go out to visit the in-laws and I would see that member's four-by-four sign in the field near Zealandia. After a while I just couldn't stand it anymore, so in one of my trips out I took out one of my four-by-fours, a hammer, nail, and screws, and I covered it up with one of my signs. I was worried at the time that the landowner might be somewhat unhappy, but I later learned that he saw the sign and felt that my sign had increased the value of his land. Two years later, my sign is still up at the farm near Zealandia.

I want to congratulate the three new MLAs on their success in the recent by-elections. I remember when Kevin Doherty stepped down we had a by-election. I went door knocking with our candidate who I thought was excellent, but Yens Pedersen won the by-election for the NDP and served until the next general election. Well the next election, we ran the same candidate and the seat went back to the Sask Party — no particular message for the members over there, but just saying.

**An Hon. Member:** — Well we'll see what happens this time.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — And we will see what will happen. Anyway I want to thank the constituents of Saskatoon Southeast for electing me in 2003, 2007, 2011, 2016, and again in 2020. For me it's been a wonderful experience. I want to thank my supporters, volunteers, my executive, and the CAs [constituency assistant], the three CAs that I've had over the last number of

years. I've thoroughly enjoyed politics, the citizens, as well as the people in this House. I am tired of getting up at 5 o'clock Monday mornings to drive down here on icy roads, but other than that it's been an absolutely great 20 years.

I want to thank all of the MLAs for their service. We have had some significant political differences, but I believe that all members have the best interests of the constituents at heart and want to do the very best for their constituents. Some of them have become friends.

I want to specifically reach out and congratulate Warren McCall in spite of his new job. He is now the new opposition chief of staff. As an MLA he worked hard and was a good person. He worked to lobby for schools and resources. I remember well the budget day when I was Education minister and we announced two schools in his constituency. He came over and sincerely thanked me. It was one of the best moments I've ever had.

It was sort of a bit like when I put a Saskatchewan Party licence plate on Graham Addley's car, because we were in opposition and I put the licence plate on and I thought he would notice it right away. He didn't. I was worried there might be some consequences, so I went to see Speaker Kowalsky. Speaker Kowalsky congratulated me, so I left it there for a few more weeks, and eventually I had to point it out to poor Graham. He thought it had been there for less than a day. But in any event, I think it improved the value of his Toyota.

I've had the pleasure of working for two of the best premiers that Canada has ever known. Brad Wall was an amazing communicator and as a premier, he was very much a boss. When we formed government in 2007, I was the only lawyer in our caucus, and my being appointed Justice minister was sort of seen as the free square when Brad Wall formed cabinet.

After about two years, he called me in one day and said that in Manitoba and Prince Edward Island they had Justice ministers that were not lawyers. In fact in Manitoba they even had a lawyer in cabinet but they made him the Health minister. Premier Wall smiled at me and said, Morgan, if I had known this when I created cabinet, I could've had Justice minister Harpauer or Justice minister Lyle Stewart. He smiled, but I always had an uncomfortable feeling.

He was very much a boss. If you were summoned to his office, it was usually because you had done something wrong or he wanted to give you some very specific direction. He also had a fairly significant sense of humour. One evening after attending a Canadian parliamentary dinner in Regina, I received a call from Premier Wall's then assistant who said the premier wanted to see me first thing in the morning, apparently over something I had said at the dinner.

Of course, I was extremely worried and spent the next several hours reliving the evening in excruciating detail in my mind. I even thought about the conversations I might have had in the washroom with whoever was at the next urinal. In any event, the next morning the premier told me that I had done no wrong but he was getting back at me for some real or imagined wrong. Of course because he was the premier, you'd take no issue with it, but his assistant who now made the call has become the Health minister. I will have an opportunity to get even.

The current Premier came up through the ranks. He's very much one of us — thoroughly collaborative, will involve other ministers or MLAs in discussion. Anything of significance goes to cabinet and to caucus. Hilariously funny, and occasionally but not always laughs at my humour. Enjoys teasing the Sergeant-at-Arms when he goes by with his brass pole. I've never been part of the pranks, but I've also been a victim of his. He frequently goes around the building and if there's a computer that's unlocked, he will go in and send messages from whoever that was at that computer last time, inviting people over for dinner or various other comments that he chooses to make at the expense of somebody else.

I've also had the pleasure of serving with some of the best and interesting MLAs. For several years my seat mate was Ag minister Bob Bjornerud. I needled him about having a name that no one could ever spell. I eventually stole his House book, took it back to my office, replaced the cover page with one that spelled it "Benrod," B-e-n-r-o-d. He never noticed. I realized that he never looked at any notes. He just talked.

Later on I was paired with Lyle Stewart. He was also the Ag minister, and I used to ask him my embarrassingly stupid ag questions. He usually just patiently explained, but one time he answered in a voice loud enough so that everybody on our side and probably half the other side could hear, "Morgan, what you know about ag is less than you would learn from casually driving past a farm."

Last year, I was pleased to work with colleagues on both sides of the House to distribute Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medals. The MLAs did a remarkably good job of apolitically identifying worthy citizens. I attended several of the events and it was made even more meaningful because of the Queen's passing partway through the process.

I also had the privilege of working with several different Lieutenant Governors. I started with Lynda Haverstock, then Barnhart, Schofield, Molloy, and now Mirasty.

I once got a ride on the government aircraft when Vaughn Solomon Schofield was coming back to Regina from an event. We had to wait for her to arrive at the airport. When she did arrive, I had said to and coached the very young pilot that the Lieutenant Governor was going to have to sit on the jump seat in the back of the aircraft that was usually used as a porta-toilet. She looked at the young pilot and ran with it. She said, "You're expecting me as the Queen's representative to sit on that throne?" The Lieutenant Governor played along with it and asked the young pilot if he'd actually said that and actually was doing that. He was incredibly embarrassed and was somewhat in denial. She looked at him and said, "if that's what you want, I'm going to do it." Then, of course, she smiled and laughed.

I also like to do the odd joke on April Fool's Day. I bogused up a news release saying that the library in the building was going to close and being converted into a country and western bar. I didn't intend for it to get out, but Leslie MacLeod somehow sent it out anyway and it got rather large circulation. I had drafted another one after the Queen's passing indicating that Albert Street was named after Queen Victoria's consort, Albert, was now going to have to be changed to Camilla street. I also considered changing the name of Regina to Rex because we now



have a male monarch, but with various other events taking place, never sent those out, and I'm glad.

[11:15]

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I've enjoyed my time here. It's been great. Most of all, I thank Sandy for putting up with the hours, the calls, and the road trips.

I want to move on and make some remarks on the Speech from the Throne. The message of "build and protect" resonates with me, and I'm sure it will resonate for the residents and constituents of Saskatoon Southeast. They are people who understand the need for growth in population and in the economy. They also understand the risks and the need for security and better methods of dealing with drugs, mental health, and the issues of security. Protection is critical to everyone in Saskatchewan. I hear about it at the doors and everywhere that I travel to.

I've very, very much appreciated the shift in how our government does throne speeches. Now there's a lot more specifics. People can see what direction the government goes. They can react and give comments.

Our province has done very well since 2007. I have some facts. We have 200,000 more people since 2007; 60 new schools; 30 major school renovations; 45 major health capital projects are in planning, construction, or completed; nearly 20 000 kilometres of highway repair — this includes twinning and passing lanes; \$780 million in post-secondary capital; \$22 billion in Crown Investments Corporation capital; wireless service now covers 99 per cent of the population.

Mr. Speaker, we are a trading and exporting province. We are opening trade offices where our export markets are. We provide oil, potash, wheat, canola, and many other things that the world needs. Our challenges are labour shortages, which affect not just manufacturing, but also health care, education, and a variety of services.

Sadly we also have a federal government who has declared war on our energy sector. Fortunately the Supreme Court has struck down most of Bill C-69, which is the impact assessment piece of the legislation sometimes referred to as the no-more-pipelines bill. This will allow us to go ahead with pipelines, mining, and electrical generation facilities. Environment Minister Guilbeault has referred to the Supreme Court judgment as "being the opinion of a court" — remarkably naive. What if we referred to the carbon tax decision as merely an opinion?

We need to look after the citizens of our province. We don't want a free supply of drugs. We want to provide drug users with treatment and health. Our government continues to invest in treatment beds, emergency shelters, and shelters for those with complex needs.

In 2023-24 fiscal year our government is providing \$100 million for the construction of the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital, \$12 million for capital and operating funding for the Regina urgent care centre, \$3 million for the Saskatoon urgent care in partnership with the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation Developments, \$38 million for the Weyburn hospital project, \$20 million for the new long-term care facility in La Ronge, 10 million for the new

long-term care facility in Grenfell. Continued planning for long-term care facilities in Estevan and Watson is under way. \$500,000 each for the Regina General Hospital parkade and Yorkton Regional Health projects. Planning money has been committed for the new Rosthern Hospital, Battleford District Care Centre, and the Esterhazy integrated facility.

We are continuing investment in our health human resources action plan which aims to add 1,000 more health care professionals to the province and is making very good progress, including 750 more nurses since December 2022. Thirty-four RNs [registered nurse] from the Philippines have arrived in Saskatchewan with more on the way. The introduction of up to 12 physician assistant positions. \$25.2 million for 550 new post-secondary positions.

Seven million dollars is being invested to address diagnostic wait times for patients, which will mean CT [computerized tomography] services for an additional 10,500 patients, MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] services for an additional 4,700 patients, interventional radiology for an additional 150 patients. This is very important. Firefighter WC [workers' compensation] coverage will be expanded to give presumptive coverage for six more cancers: primary site pancreatic, thyroid, penile, soft tissue sarcoma, mesothelioma, and laryngeal cancer, giving Saskatchewan the broadest presumptive cancer coverage for firefighters of any province in Canada.

We have already added in the last two years 5,000 new child care seats, and we will add 2,500 more seats. \$147 million for education which will build a francophone school in Regina, St. Frances Cree Bilingual School in Saskatoon, kindergarten to grade 12 school in Lanigan, joint-use school in Moose Jaw, elementary school in La Loche, Regina north joint-use school, Saskatoon city centre school, Harbour Landing west joint-use school in Regina. Also something that's huge: \$200 million to centralize Sask Polytech on the University of Saskatchewan campus.

Mental health is something that is important to each and every one of us. This year we will provide rapid access supports to children and youth in 13 communities including Estevan, Weyburn, Carlyle, Oxbow, Regina, Saskatoon, North Battleford, Humboldt, Prince Albert, Kindersley, Yorkton, Swift Current, and Moose Jaw.

We will focus on affordability by maintaining some of the lowest utility costs in Canada. To support new home construction, the rebate for new housing, which will rebate 40 per cent of the PST, will be extended retroactively to April 1st of this year.

We will also provide the secondary suite program, which will provide help to renters or people that will need additional income to maintain mortgage payments. We will have paid down \$2.5 billion of debt over the last two years.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite typically vote along party lines and vote against budgets and throne speeches, but everything in here is something that should be supported by all residents of the province, including the members opposite.

So I want to give them a brief bit of history. It has happened before. Bill Boyd, while in opposition, lobbied then Finance

minister Janice MacKinnon for some capital expenditures in his constituency. He told her that if she did it, he would vote for an NDP budget. She did and he did. So, Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, just think about it.

With that, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move the following motion, seconded by the member for Lumsden-Morse:

That the humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, His Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

I so move. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member moved:

That the humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, His Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Mr. B. McLeod:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to all of my colleagues in this House today and to deliver my maiden speech, as it is often dubbed. The member from Saskatoon Eastview has already given me a gracious introduction, and I will be sure the next time a low object appears in my path that I will duck at the appropriate time. Thank you, member from Saskatoon Eastview . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Southeast, sorry, Southeast. Thank you so much. Helpful people all around me.

I stand here today as the newly elected MLA from Lumsden-Morse, and I'm feeling very thankful, tremendously grateful, and abundantly blessed. Mr. Speaker, being elected on August 10th of this year, I'm now the green and fresh MLA from Lumsden-Morse with many things to learn. I may not look green and fresh on the outside — grey hair has a habit of doing that — but I still feel like I am on the inside, green and fresh.

I'm a husband, a brother, a dad, a papa, an uncle, and a hard-working dairy farmer who decided it's time, it's high time to have a voice from the inside right here in this revered Chamber. That's just one small voice, one of 61 members, only 1.64 per cent of the entire voice of this legislature, Mr. Speaker. But it's a voice that I trust will represent my constituents well and will bring some positive changes within the continued good work of our government.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't mention a few words regarding the former Lumsden-Morse MLA, the Hon. Lyle Stewart. I know as I speak in regards to the Hon. Lyle Stewart, I know he's watching and I wish him well. I wish him well. He has been a friend and a mentor for many years, and I would like to acknowledge his faithful service to the province of Saskatchewan for twenty-three and a half years.

When Lyle decided to retire for some very obvious health reasons on March 10th of this year, I thought long and hard about filling those shoes. Who could possibly do that? I've committed many years to political engagement and often helped with events and elections throughout our constituency. But in the last eight months, I gained a new appreciation and understanding of the importance, the commitment, and the very hard work that this role requires. Although we all sit in this room, and some of us on the opposite side, I know that we can agree on a few things, Mr. Speaker: we all want what is best for this great province of Saskatchewan that we call home, we want what's best for our families, and we all want what's best for our future.

And speaking of wanting what's best for the future, I am confident that my grandfather had that in mind as he headed west in the early 1900s. John Isaac McLeod never realized completely what his journey from Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, would eventually establish. Born the seventh son of a Scottish immigrant, he and his brother Bill eventually arrived and settled in the Welwyn district where my grandpa worked for an established farmer. In time he married the farmer's daughter and saved enough to buy a half section of land. He later purchased another quarter of land for the exorbitant price of \$200. Wow, I wish I could buy that land.

Tragedy struck this young family and his first wife died, leaving him with three young daughters. The call for a nanny went out and Elsie May Hussey arrived, answering that call. A recent new immigrant from England herself, she came to help from Selkirk, Manitoba. Fate would have it that she would never leave. And together she and John McLeod would raise their own family of 11 — nine boys, two girls — my father, Bob, being the first-born. Clearly they listened when they said "be fruitful and multiply."

Life was not easy, Mr. Speaker, but they persevered with the confidence that hard work and sacrifice would bring its own rewards. In an 18-by-30-foot log house with a soddie addition, this young family left their mark on the young province of Saskatchewan.

My Uncle Bruce, second born in the family who at age 90 still helps us on our dairy farm, remarked recently that he marvelled at how my grandma was able to keep them all fed. He never recalls being hungry, and was quick to say that there was always room at their table for any guest who may have been in need. They were all taught to work hard, take responsibility for your

own actions, and do your part to ensure those around you are also cared for. Mr. Speaker, isn't that the Saskatchewan way?

[11:30]

A very inhospitable land, which was first inhabited by our First Nations people, who innately understood that strong communities is the only way to survive. And then a wave of immigrants who recognized the value of hard work, personal responsibility, and the knowledge that together they could accomplish much more than they could separately.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today in this greatly revered and honoured Chamber knowing that a firm foundation has been laid by all of our ancestors. We have only begun to fulfill the vision of our forefathers, and I hope to have a small part in continuing the great work that is Saskatchewan, a province blessed with abundant natural resources, many which are unmatched in the world, 40 per cent of Canada's arable land mass, and a population of resourceful and hard-working people.

I commit to the building of Canada's greatest province and protecting the investment — some of which was made with blood, sweat, and tears — protecting the investment of those who came before us.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take some time to thank those who have made this journey possible. First of all I want to thank my family. Though my mom and dad, Bob and Ruth McLeod, are both gone, I acknowledge the godly upbringing that grounded me with a strong personal faith in God. Our home was one where responsibility was required at a very young age, and by example my parents instilled in me the necessity of working hard to find my place in the world.

Growing up with six sisters and one brother meant there were always many healthy competitions in our household. One of the sisters is in the gallery opposite. Thank you for being here, Carol. Fortitude, compromise, the art of persuasion, and enduring love for each other were all great lessons that we learned in our large family, but the most important lesson, Mr. Speaker, was make sure you get up early in the morning so you really get to use the bathroom when you need to.

My greatest joy in life comes from my wife and family. God has blessed us with three children — two sons, Michael and Mark, and a daughter, Jessica — and 10 grandchildren. They are indeed my first calling in life. They know and understand first-hand the interesting family dynamics that exist. They all see the best in me but they've also seen the worst. They know my thoughts, my body language, my heart, and they keep me grounded. And I am assured of their unfailing love.

My thanks go out today to my dearest Marlie Beth, my wife of 42 years. And the member from Saskatoon Eastview. I actually remembered that statistic.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Southeast.

**Mr. B. McLeod:** — Southeast. Goodness sakes, I'll get it right.

My wife of 42 years could stand here today and deliver this speech because together we have lived the words I have written.

She's my best friend, my confidant, the only woman who has known my deepest love and will always have first place in my life. Marlie Beth, I could simply not do life without you.

Our kids, they certainly asked some hard questions when it came to seeking this position. Let's face it. Not only do you elect an MLA, but his or her family are also put under the microscope.

Our children have taught us lessons, many lessons, many life lessons. Perhaps the biggest is how to put others first. As we entered the years of parenthood, our focus naturally moved to their needs, and so putting others first becomes a natural occurrence. My life was no longer just about me but me representing them, standing up for them when needed, bringing correction when needed, and eating the occasional piece of humble pie, even though I would have preferred my wife's homemade peach pie — nothing better.

I think I can rate all of that to my new role as the MLA from Lumsden-Morse. This role isn't about me. It's about humbly representing the people of my constituency and, by extension, the province of Saskatchewan. It's about standing up for what they need, serving faithfully, and occasionally, yes, eating some humble pie. Right up front I recognize and acknowledge that no one is perfect, and if I ever think I am, I have indeed lost my way.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat the words that I first spoke at my nomination meeting. If I were to summarize my life's motto, it would come from the Bible, where the greatest command is given to us in the Gospel of Matthew:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: love your neighbour as yourself.

My wife and I have practised that in our lives and have always sought ways to help anyone around us who is in need. I will take that attitude and mindset to this very legislature and will be that person who is ready and willing to serve and meet the needs of all who reach out. Maybe not always successfully, but always with an open door, a listening ear, and a caring heart.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to acknowledge and thank the efforts of an amazing team that helped me win the seat that I stand in front of today. Let me start with my campaign Chair, and now constituency assistant, Brandy Magnus. Brandy is a busy wife and mom of four boys under 13, a partner in a local business, and actively involved in community events. I remain in awe of her capacity to keep things organized and on track.

And to Kelly Hinderager, who will also assist in running our office, Kelly, your attention to detail and especially the financial aspects of our constituency administration is greatly appreciated. I look forward to working with both of you and continuing to develop a strong friendship.

To those that helped with signs — Dan, Greg, Bruce, Carson, Glynn, Jim, and Cody — thanks for your excellent efforts.

To those that helped with knocking doors — Brandy, Linda, Carol, Kathy, Chris, Lilly, Theo, Lori, Brad, and Glynn — I'm pretty sure I missed one or two in there, but forgive me. I can't

thank you enough for your faithful service during some of the hottest days of the year. Absolute scorchers.

To those who took the time to drive me around and make introductions in our rural communities — Jim, Dale, Carson, Gary, Randy, and Verne; Carson is here today with my sister, my brother-in-law — your time spent with me during the busy farming season was amazing. Somehow we made it work.

To our dedicated phone volunteers, thank you so much. And a special thank you to my mother-in-law — my favourite mother-in-law absolutely, and my only mother-in-law, just so you know. Just to clarify, Peg, you've done an amazing job for me and I thank you so much.

And all those who contributed financially, amazing. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. It truly does take a dedicated team to be successful.

Mr. Speaker, the campaign to win this seat has taught me a lot. Every door has a name, and the people inside may hold different values than the next. Some have bigger needs than others. Some have been living in the constituency for a few short years. Some have lived here for decades. Some are farmers or ranchers and were born and raised here. Some are teachers. Some are health care workers. Some need jobs, while others feel overworked. All the conversations, all the conversations added value to the experience of running for office. And I want to thank my constituents for opening their doors this summer and taking the time to talk.

And, Mr. Speaker, all the voices are important — *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, to quote a title from a Clint Eastwood movie. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me and for giving me this chance to represent you. And I will see all of you again in October of 2024.

I would be remiss to not thank the efforts of our party office staff, a great team of individuals, and especially to Patrick and Dylan. Your leadership and consistent conference calls during the election kept us all on track.

Several of my colleagues in this House also joined in and helped our campaign — the member from The Battlefords, Regina Pasqua, Melfort, Moose Jaw North, and Arm River. You all gave of your time, your advice, and your encouragement, and many of you as well sent notes of encouragement. I appreciated it all.

But a special thanks to the member from Moose Jaw North for graciously letting us co-exist in a shared constituency office. Though we share a surname, I am here to say that we are not related, other than having great Scottish roots together. And a personal thanks to the Moose Jaw North constituency administrator Jacqui for the hands-on mentorship that she has provided to myself and my office staff. Together on this journey, my staff and I are learning a new language and we are so grateful for all the help.

Mr. Speaker, I have been graciously welcomed to our caucus with lots of helpful advice and offers of support: advice on when to stand, when to sit, how much time I have to speak. Some of the best advice I was given reflects my own upbringing. I've often heard from my parents that you have two ears and one

mouth, so listen twice as much as you speak. Great advice.

I'm truly grateful for all the advice I've been given. Actually I need to correct that statement. I'm grateful for most of the advice. And I need to set this up a little bit by saying that I'm a dairy farmer. And if you know anything about dairy farming, its consistency and attention to the detail are super important. Every cow has their place. Every cow has a social standing, and if you mess that up you are in real trouble. It's not going to go well for you.

So when looking for a place at a recent caucus meeting — not my first one, but my second or third, and I don't recall exactly when — but the chairs were just a little bit different. And I thought, okay, where do I sit? It was pointed out that there was an empty spot by our caucus Chair and I should try sitting there. Thankfully I didn't take that advice since the Premier had yet to take his place. Good-natured fun. I think I will be good friends with the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

And so, Mr. Speaker, as I put my hand to the plow, to borrow an agricultural axiom, I will continue to look forward to the opportunities to build and protect the investments made in this great province. And when I do look back it is going to be to acknowledge the sacrifices made by all of our forefathers, knowing that our best days are yet to come. The world needs more of Saskatchewan, and so I commit to making that happen, to helping to make that happen.

Mr. Speaker, our province is experiencing tremendous population growth, the largest growth in more than a century. Continued investments in infrastructure and human resources are vital to sustain that population. Strong economic growth will continue to allow our government to invest in Saskatchewan and all of its people. Let us commit today to leaving no one behind.

With that said, I'm very pleased, honoured, and grateful to second the motion in support of the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The member opposite got a standing ovation from at least one member on this side. That was a great speech.

So it is an honour to rise in this House to enter into debate on the Throne Speech here on Treaty 4, homeland of the Métis. I will be moving a motion at the end of my remarks today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

After the time we spent on our feet over the last two weeks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's getting to feel like we're old hands at this, at least maybe on this side. And you can quote me, my team can quote me next time I complain about having to get up first on any debate or motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I want to kick off my remarks by reminding the viewing public and reminding the members of this House that this time last week the government called an emergency sitting to ram through undemocratic legislation that will possibly harm children and youth.

[11:45]

And so while we're here and it feels a bit like business as usual, as we enter in our remarks on the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wouldn't feel right about hopping on my feet and acting like this year feels the same as last year. I mean, this time last year — you know, I was thinking about this — we did have a government opposite that at this moment was fumbling its way through their invitation of a convicted wife murderer, which received international condemnation. I believe this time last year they were still in the phase where they were defending that decision. It wouldn't be until, I guess, next Monday of this year that they actually apologized and acknowledged how despicable that was, and concern over the message that might send in the province with the highest rates of domestic violence.

And this time last year, they were defending their summer separation tour which, again, was being met with national and even international ridicule. I believe the former deputy chief of staff of Stephen Harper called it the equivalent of a baby's high chair after a spaghetti supper. So the bar for feeling like we're into a new normal, let me be clear, that bar has been set pretty high by this government. But here we are.

At least with the summer separation tour, you know, there were some formal stops along the way, at least a pretense of consultation. Sure, it was closed door and rather sketchy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but 18 letters is all it took these guys to follow the member for Sask Rivers, their north star, the leader of the Saskatchewan United Party. So again that bar for feeling like we're operating under a new normal, it has been set rather high by this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I would be remiss if I didn't open my comments on this year's Throne Speech, the first of my colleagues to enter into debate, by reminding this House that this government has failed in its most sacred duty, to do no harm — to do no harm. It corrupted the rules of this House, to do it with as little transparency and scrutiny. It took away the only tools that this opposition has to do its job in the process.

So while there's nary a peep of Bill 137 or these events that have just transpired in this year's Throne Speech . . . There isn't even a mention of the word "parent" in this year's Throne Speech, not even the mention of the word "parent." Very curious, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know they don't want to talk about this dark chapter in Saskatchewan history, but you can be very sure that they made history last week.

And that is the starting point for my remarks on the Throne Speech today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I want them to know that the stench still lingers in this Chamber. It still lingers and it will for a long time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And even as the dust settles and we move beyond this perversion of democracy and of decency, it will remain at the forefront of this opposition's mind. It will remain at the forefront of many of the Saskatchewan public's minds as we go forward during this fall session and beyond, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I felt it important to start there.

And you know, these weeks have felt heavy. My heart is heavy. I know the hearts of my colleagues are heavy, not just for these reasons, not just because of a heartbreaking conflict on the other side of the world and remarks from this government that show

concern for life on only one side of that conflict, Mr. Deputy Speaker — as we heard from UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund] today that they believe that more than 2,000 Palestinian children have died this month alone — not just for that reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But generally I will say that perhaps we find ourselves in a time that is more divided, more contentious, more ugly than before, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And while I have to believe that politics can be an honourable calling, it should be handled with utmost care, Mr. Deputy Speaker, particularly, particularly by the members opposite, sitting provincial Government of Saskatchewan who are in the very privileged position of holding power, of having power, of wielding power, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Situated as they are to actually build things, to actually protect the things that we build, to find solutions to the many challenges facing Saskatchewan people today, and to do great things, to do great things. And I was reading this Throne Speech and I was thinking, when did the Sask Party government stop wanting to do great things?

Because truly this is a government that has lost its way, lost focus on the things that matter to people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm struck again and again, and I talk about this a lot in here, by the doublespeak that we hear coming from this sitting government — the doublespeak. Not just on Twitter, not just in attack ads, but in the Throne Speech.

And I've suggested that any time we hear the Sask Party government workshop one of their new talking points, our spidey senses should be tingling. Sask first. Well Saskatchewan has the worst jobs growth in the country. Growth that works for everyone. While our life expectancy plummets, the homelessness crisis skyrockets, parental inclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while parents can't get the mental health supports that they need and want for their kids, while parents can't get a school built, and where this government can't get off their cushy tushies to fix a leaking roof, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The failure to focus on the things that matter to Saskatchewan people is truly stunning. And now from a government that has done so much to dismantle and neglect the social safety net that the people of Saskatchewan rely on, they've landed on this new slogan, "Build and Protect." It's more of the same, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This is a Premier, this is a Sask Party government that has cut funding to our schools. They have redlined our health care system. Again and again they have left our seniors dangerously exposed. A housing Throne Speech? Mr. Deputy Speaker, are you serious? Not for the hundreds of seniors in Regina alone that are being kicked to the curb.

They've failed to bring in a decent minimum wage. They think that people, parents, families out there working 40, 50, 60 hours deserve to live in poverty, deserve to use the food bank, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They tripled our debt. They tripled our debt, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And again they have neglected and dismantled the social safety net that has been built in this province over decades. So this is not a government that is in the business of building and protecting. This is a government that is in the business, sadly, of dismantling and neglecting.

What strikes me about this Throne Speech, in addition to the utter lack of imagination, the failure to focus on the things that truly matter to the people of Saskatchewan, the programmatic responses to massive policy crises that have been building for a long time. It's the pilot program-itis government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's how they've recycled and regurgitated almost, it seems, without thought, almost without thought, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Even page 1, page 1, it's right there. That old Brad Wall tag line. "Saskatchewan is no longer the place to be from. It is the place to be." Yeah. These tag lines we've heard before, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The ideas are recycled too, not just the tag lines. I notice their trusty old Ctrl F failed them again, Mr. Speaker. And at page 2 we have, "... growth that works for everyone, from the family that pays thousands of dollars less in provincial taxes than they did in 2007."

That tagline, "growth that works for everyone," I thought they had abandoned it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It became the launch pad for all of the ways that Saskatchewan people were fed up with this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while they clucked and strutted about their economic record, while families out there were struggling like never before.

It became the beginning of one of the most brilliant meme sagas that we've ever seen in Saskatchewan provincial politics. They were made a laughingstock, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Their response was to send cease-and-desist letters that misrepresented the law. They like to clamp down on that ... any time Saskatchewan people get involved in their democratic process. So we can add to tired and out of touch, totally lacking in any sense of humour, Mr. Speaker. They've taken it out of most of the speech but there it is on page 2, "growth that works for everyone."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they claim they have a new approach to homelessness in this Throne Speech. This new approach sadly signals more of the same. It signals more of the same and it's woefully inadequate. Thirty new complex needs emergency shelter spaces for Regina and Saskatoon, when the mayor has said, the mayor of Saskatoon has said they need 100 in Saskatoon alone. My God, do they want a medal? Thirty beds, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They were sure quick to provide shelter and food to the five zebras that we've been hearing so much about, but right now Saskatchewan people continue to die in our alleys — and that is a fact — because of the lack of supports that are available to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

No mention of SIS, again, the Saskatchewan income support program, Mr. Deputy Speaker. No mention of SIS, which has done more to pile on the most vulnerable in this province. It has significantly deepened the homelessness crisis. Poverty rates which should be the collective shame of our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, further entrenched under this government. The outcry from the public has been ignored.

And you know, I think if they were going to do anything about SIS, this was the last chance to do it. And that lack of any attention to this program is sort of a nail in the coffin. They clearly are totally disinterested in course-correcting on this program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so things will continue to get worse. This program continues to rip apart the people of Saskatchewan unlucky enough to fall on hard times under the

most calloused and uncaring government perhaps on record, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[12:00]

SIS is a master class in what not to do, but they're going to keep doing it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Six hundred million wasted on vacant Sask Housing units — 600 million. While people can't access a home, those assets sit there vacant, unused, costing the public more money. And not a single word of that in this Throne Speech. No plan to address that asset, that wasted asset, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A housing Throne Speech?

Something that is an improvement in this Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker — I guess you can't fix a problem until you've acknowledged it — and we do see the announcement of a jobs plan. They've finally acknowledged that they need a jobs plan, something we've been calling for for years in the province with the worst jobs growth in the country, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Crisis growing across multiple sectors — the disability sector, the community-based organization sector, the health care sector, the child care sector. It is a step forward; I'll give them that. But unfortunately health care will continue to redline under this government's priorities.

There was one line I found particularly bold, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's on page 10 of the Throne Speech. And this is just a different kind of bold, Mr. Speaker, really caught my attention as perhaps one of the most shameless lines in the Throne Speech:

In 2007 my government inherited a health care system decimated by hospital closures, long-term care bed closures, declining numbers of doctors and nurses practising in Saskatchewan, and the longest surgical wait times in Canada.

Now that right there is an invitation to Saskatchewan people to really question their own sanity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to really question their perception of reality. It's almost like they're describing themselves. Sixteen years they've been in government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, long years. And they're talking about something that happened when I was a child. Did these things happen? Well I'll come to that in a moment, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the audacity — 16 years.

Our health care system is redlining. The state of long-term care under these guys, I mentioned before. The closure of most of Pioneer Village, the closure of the Lutheran care home, the closure of three private long-term care homes in a week in Regina, and the Premier in question period today found his feet and wants to talk about what the NDP did 20 years ago? It's sad, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think people expect better.

Record number of people without doctors, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Record number of people without doctors. Nurses rallying across Wascana Lake for the first time in 24 years. The worst-in-the-nation hip and knee surgeries, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And the hospital closures. Oh, I really want to get into the hospital closures. I'm not sure if I'm going to have time though. Okay, let's talk about the hospital closures, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is a tired line we've seen from the Sask Party government again and again: the closure of 52 rural hospitals.

But you know, they didn't start talking about that till 2007. Apparently, supposedly that happened in 1993, but they didn't start talking about it until 2007 before the election that they won, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now my guess is they didn't talk about this because any changes to health care services that they talked about in the '90s or early 2000s, people were probably going to say to themselves, well if they had to do that, it's probably because of the near-bankruptcy that the Devine government put them in — you know, the Devine government, the precursor to the Sask Party.

But 1993, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was the year the NDP supposedly closed 52 rural hospitals. That was just a few years before the Sask Party would form in an exercise of rebranding, as we've covered in here before, to get that tainted history off, get the stink off, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But hospital closures. 2007, the election campaign, God, hospital closures sure had a great ring to it, much better than hospitals converted from acute care to health centres in communities of fewer than 1,000 people who were within 100 kilometres of acute care services. That didn't have the same ring to it in an election year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the truth about these facilities? Some were hospitals. Some were integrated facilities, you know, acute care services attached to long-term care homes. They were expensive, they were often ill-equipped, and they weren't that well used, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The population of 45 of these 52 communities had fewer than 1,000 people. The total combined population of these 52 communities is less than the current population of Moose Jaw, which has one hospital and one emergency room.

**An Hon. Member:** — Is it open?

**Ms. Conway:** — It's open. Today. Every single one of these communities, with the exception of Mildren, Saskatchewan, which had a population of 167, were converted into health centres. They were converted into health centres. Mr. Deputy Speaker, all but three of these communities were within 100 kilometres of acute care services. Well, that is when they're presently not experiencing closures or disruptions under the Sask Party government. The only party closing health care today is that Sask Party government. They can't keep these health centres functioning. They can't even keep the acute services that are open available to people, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So not only do they fail to mention that only one of these 52 acute services closed; the other thing they don't talk about is the fact that they haven't reopened acute services in Mildren, Saskatchewan. They haven't reopened the Plains. They haven't converted any of these 52 health centres back into acute services. Sixteen years, Mr. Deputy Speaker — sixteen years.

And you know, I go to page 10 of the Speech from the Throne and they're listing all of these health facilities that they've built: Humboldt, Moosomin, North Battleford, Wigmore Regional Hospital. In 16 years . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — The children's hospital.

**Ms. Conway:** — Exactly, the children's hospital. In 16 years, one new facility. One new facility, the children's . . . And that was a good thing, but it would be great if they could staff it. It

would be great if those services were reliable for the people of Saskatchewan.

Speaking . . . You know, the Minister of Corrections is chirping at me about how we used to announce things over and over. How many times is this government going to re-announce the francophone school in Regina or the Regina North joint-use school? How many times are they going to strut over to Imperial during an election, do a photo op? When are they going to open that school? When are they going to build it?

And when they went there in this most recent election to do their fourth or fifth photo op, did they actually tour Imperial? Did they have a look at the derelict state of that school? When is it going to happen? When is it going to happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Everything in here is tired or recycled or regurgitated. They are so out of touch. They are so out of ideas. And they want to talk about what the NDP did when I was a child. My God, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 16 years — 16 long years.

Daycare. Before I close out my comments, I do want to make a comment about the daycare announcements because it's a bit sad. You know, they've committed to 2,500 spaces in this Throne Speech, and I'll tell you why it's a bit sad. Under the agreement that they signed with the federal government, they committed to creating 28,000 spots in five years. Their target was to create 6,000 in the first year, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know that they . . . of that goal, 37 per cent, about 2,000 spaces. But that doesn't include the spaces that closed while they were creating those new spaces.

So when you look at the spaces that closed and the ones they can staff, they've created 642 new spaces of the 6,000 they promised. They need to create 25,788 spaces by 2026, and to reach that they need to at least create 6,000 a year until then. So their big, bold target of 2,500 . . . And if past behaviour is predictive of future behaviour, they will come nowhere near this target, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They've given up. They stand in their place. They have said this is an area of commonality with the federal government, that they have given up on providing accessible, affordable, high-quality child care in Saskatchewan. At least it would seem that they have, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And last week we had the director of Wiggles and Giggles from Whitewood here for the third time. Last time she came here begging, saying, my centre will crumble if something is not done. She's a leader in her community, the southeast director for providers. And usually when we have to bring people in here to bleed on the floor of this Chamber — because that is not people's first choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker — they at least try to shine up that turd, give it a little love. But she had to come here three times and still no action on the part of that government.

Oh and they're really upset that I used the word "turd." So I apologize and withdraw for the use of the word "turd," Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Families interesting in converting their home daycares to licensed spots, the people that they have said are the low-hanging fruit, are getting letters from that ministry saying short-staffing, sorry we can't do it. You know, it's smoke and mirrors, Mr.

Deputy Speaker.

I said a nice thing about the jobs plan. This is nothing to do with the province of Saskatchewan. I have the Minister of Corrections saying, “Do you have anything nice to say about this province?” I absolutely do, Mr. Speaker. This province is full of incredible potential, Mr. Speaker. And I want to take this opportunity to particularly thank the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre who trust me to be their voice in this House as they face challenges they have never seen before, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I’m going to wrap it up. I should have taken the time to thank all of the people that make this work worthwhile and possible such as my family, my constituency assistants, my executive, the many community-based organizations across Regina Elphinstone, but I will have more opportunities to do that.

And with that, I’ll move a motion. And the motion is as follows:

That the motion be amended by adding:

And, that the Assembly does not support the agenda outlined in the Speech from the Throne because it fails to include adequate measures to address the cost-of-living crisis and the health care crisis the people of Saskatchewan are facing, and further;

That the Assembly has lost confidence in the government.

I do so move.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre wants the motion amended by adding:

That this Assembly does not support the agenda outlined in the Speech from the Throne because it fails to include adequate measures to address the cost-of-living crisis and the health care crisis the people of Saskatchewan are facing; and further;

That the Assembly has lost confidence in the government.

I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you’re looking good there today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in that Chair. Not to bring you into debate, Mr. Speaker.

It’s a pleasure to rise in this Assembly and respond to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, here on Treaty 4 territory, the homeland of the Métis, Mr. Speaker, and to speak to the hope and opportunity and strength in this province that we witness every day, and of course, to speak to where they’re being let down in a very significant way by a government that’s really grown tired and out of touch with the realities that Saskatchewan people face, Mr. Speaker.

It’s an honour to rise in this Assembly. We’ve been entrusted with these responsibilities to serve as MLAs and be that voice for the communities and the people that we represent, and that’s a responsibility that I don’t take lightly, Mr. Speaker.

[12:15]

And I want to thank the good people that I represent for entrusting me to make this entry on their behalf, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank them, Mr. Speaker, for all the ways they lead, all the ways that they deliver, all the ways that they enrich our community and build hope and opportunity in this province.

I want to thank my wife, Stephanie, and my son William who are full partners in this service and just, you know, real awesome partners in life, Mr. Speaker. Stephanie of course is a schoolteacher, Mr. Speaker. She’s a teacher-librarian as well. She knows full well lots of the cuts of this government, Mr. Speaker, but she never loses the purpose of what teaching is all about and that opportunity she’s provided to extend opportunity and support and learning in the classroom, Mr. Speaker. And she’s an awesome check as well on matters of public affairs, things like the Throne Speech, to talk through issues and to be a sounding board. And she’s strong and smart and always able to challenge me and to challenge others as well, Mr. Speaker. She’s a wonderful partner.

Certainly William, he’s growing up, Mr. Speaker, and he’s observing what’s going on on these fronts as well. He loves hockey. He loves hunting and hiking and fishing and his friends and art, Mr. Speaker. But he also is more engaged than ever in the discussions that go on through this place, and active throughout our community and present with me in learning lots and building relationships, Mr. Speaker. And I find it pretty awesome to have that responsibility and that opportunity to have a nine-year-old accompanying me through this process as well, and he’s a great partner in the community as well, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank Jennifer Morin, our constituency assistant who delivers for the good people throughout the constituency of Regina Rosemont day in, day out, fielding calls, providing advocacy, helping me connect with them to push on their behalf, Mr. Speaker. And I’ve said often, you know, sometimes people are connecting, just sharing a bit of perspective or a bit of advice or a little bit of insight, sometimes just to visit, Mr. Speaker. But lots of times when folks are connecting with our constituency offices, they’re dealing with real challenges in their lives, Mr. Speaker. And in those moments I’m thankful to have Jennifer’s support in advocating for the good people that I serve, Mr. Speaker.

The good people I serve, Mr. Speaker, are throughout the communities of Rosemont and Mount Royal and Dieppe and Normanview West and Prairie View, Mr. Speaker. And they have amazing community associations attached to those as well, Mr. Speaker, who do so much to provide programs and supports, Mr. Speaker, and to enrich our community and to enrich many lives, Mr. Speaker, and to build the kind of community that provides people an awesome quality of life, Mr. Speaker.

And so I want to say thank you to them, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I want to say thanks and to recognize all those awesome students, Mr. Speaker, and those that are in those schools throughout the riding as well, whether it be St. Francis or Rosemont or Walker, Mr. Speaker, Ruth M. Buck and McLurg and St. Josaphat and St. Joan of Arc, Mr. Speaker — all awesome schools — as well as Martin Collegiate and Martin Academy, which is just an awesome place, Mr. Speaker, and such good energy within it, Mr. Speaker.



I want to recognize those teachers and those ed workers and those school community councils and those parents and the volunteers that make all of this happen, Mr. Speaker. And in the case of Walker, Mr. Speaker, in our community, I want to recognize the very sad loss of Brian Stevenson, an amazing teacher over at Walker School, Mr. Speaker, someone who's beloved by his students and his staff, Mr. Speaker, someone who made a difference in so many lives and the life of our community. I want to extend our deepest condolences to the entire team there: Principal King; all the teachers; all the ed workers; all those students; all those parents; to his wife Margo, also an amazing teacher, Mr. Speaker; and to his family.

I got to see Brian Stevenson in action, Mr. Speaker, because he was always involved in anything that involved community, Mr. Speaker. I got to see him in action recently at a wonderful community chili night, Mr. Speaker, for the Outdoor Hockey League, where we were running a practice and bringing together community. And he was there, of course, with his students and with community and serving chili, Mr. Speaker.

I've seen him in action as well where he put together, along with the school community council, an outdoor learning space over at Walker that will leave a learning legacy and a legacy within the community for generations, Mr. Speaker. And I know often students will share their fond memories of the stories and the teachings of Mr. Stevenson, often outside, out on the rock circle facing beautiful A.E. Wilson Park, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to say of course to his family and to all those that loved and benefited from the life of Brian Stevenson, to let him know that we will miss him dearly and we're so thankful for his life of service, Mr. Speaker.

I want to recognize all those that are involved in the community, whether they're teachers or volunteers or coaches, Mr. Speaker, those through the churches and various organizations, Mr. Speaker, local leaders. We have elected local leaders and we have those that just lead, Mr. Speaker.

We have people like Amanda McCall within the community, Mr. Speaker, who steps up and says, you know, there's a real challenge around supplies for students in preparation for school, and puts together hundreds and hundreds of backpacks, Mr. Speaker, with donations in support of others throughout the community. These are people that recognize challenges and step up to the plate and provide care and support, Mr. Speaker.

And then we have our elected leaders, Mr. Speaker, who also provide such important service to constituents, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank and recognize our city councillors Shanon Zachidniak and Jason Mancinelli for their service, Mr. Speaker. I want to also recognize our public school trustees, Mr. Speaker, Sarah Cummings Truskowski as well as Lacey Weekes, Mr. Speaker. And I want to recognize all of those that are elected for the Catholic school board, Mr. Speaker. They don't have specific areas that they represent. They represent as a board for the entire city.

But these are leaders that are doing all they can, Mr. Speaker. And like I say, there's those that are elected into these roles and then all those others that simply lead, neighbour to neighbour and within the community, Mr. Speaker. I think of this week

throughout Rosemont and Mount Royal, all the snow angels that were deployed, Mr. Speaker, to help those that couldn't help, you know, couldn't move some of that snow that made things so treacherous here this week.

So when I look at this Throne Speech, I think of all those that I serve. I think of all those that work so damned hard, Mr. Speaker, to build lives and opportunity for them and their families, and all those that are involved in local business, Mr. Speaker, to build a brighter future. And when I look at that, what we see is people going above and beyond, punching above their weight, Mr. Speaker, on front after front and often, Mr. Speaker, filling gaps that have been left by a government that's been so neglectful on so many fronts, Mr. Speaker — filling those gaps, Mr. Speaker.

But at the very least, Mr. Speaker, when I see the good people I represent and how hard they work, Mr. Speaker, and what they strive for and what they work for — for their families and for their community and for their province — they certainly deserve a government to hold up their end of the bargain, Mr. Speaker. And that's where they're being let down in such a big way once again by this government that's grown so tired, Mr. Speaker, and so out of touch with the realities that families face, so out of touch with the realities that they can't even offer meaningful cost-of-living relief, Mr. Speaker, that they can't work to fix health care. They can't address the challenges in our classrooms.

It's almost as if, Mr. Speaker, that this government, they've been there for a long time. They got a big majority, Mr. Speaker. Now we sense change happening on these fronts, Mr. Speaker. But it's almost as if, Mr. Speaker, that they've sort of just tuckered out. It seems that they've gotten to that stage that it's more about them, Mr. Speaker, sort of this arrogant and entitled approach, so often using their very platforms to deny the reality that Saskatchewan people know, whether that's cost of living, whether that's health care, whether that's poverty, Mr. Speaker, whether that's the opportunity for First Nations and Métis people in this province in communities across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. A government that seems all too often to have just thrown in the towel, thrown in the towel, a sort of a good-enough approach, Mr. Speaker, trying to ride on the coattails of maybe a few things they accomplished, you know, 15 years ago, Mr. Speaker.

Well that's falling short on the realities that people are facing, Mr. Speaker. In fact often we hear folks that say, hey, I used to support the Sask Party government, but, Mr. Speaker, we hear from many of those folks that they're done with that, that the current cast of characters, the current lot has changed, Mr. Speaker.

And I think they're right. I've seen change in that. I know many others have as well. And even if you see the sort of divisive stunts and behaviours that we see of late that distract from the real issues that people deserve action on, Mr. Speaker, you hear from a lot of people that say, well that's not what I voted for, Mr. Speaker. That's not reflective of the province that I know and love. And I know full well Saskatchewan people deserve better, Mr. Speaker.

I want to touch on of course cost of living, Mr. Speaker. It's been crushing for people, Mr. Speaker. This government's response to the cost of living and the inflation and the federal carbon tax that

we oppose, Mr. Speaker, has been for this government to stack on more taxes and more bills, more costs for families that are struggling to make ends meet, Mr. Speaker. So not only are they sticking Saskatchewan workers in an unfair way with the lowest minimum wage in Canada, they're sticking them with higher and higher bills. The biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history, Mr. Speaker, brought to you by this Sask Party government. Bill hike after bill hike — just look at those power bills, Mr. Speaker.

Now we've brought forward solution after solution, proposal after proposal to cut those costs, to cut those taxes, Mr. Speaker, to cut those costs. But that's been denied by members opposite, you know. And it wasn't that long ago, Mr. Speaker, that we brought a motion to this Assembly to suspend the fuel tax, Mr. Speaker. Now that's the 15 cents a litre that this government collects on people when they show up at the pumps with prices that have been through the roof, Mr. Speaker. None of those dollars rebated to Saskatchewan people. And, Mr. Speaker, that tired, old Sask Party government voted against that motion.

Whether it's the PST that they've piled on from everything from children's clothing to food, to insurance, to restaurants, to construction, to Rider games and entertainment, Mr. Speaker, to used cars, or whether it's the power bill hikes or whether it's no relief on fuel, this is a government that has failed to listen to Saskatchewan people and have failed to accept the proposals that we have brought to them, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to touch on health care. The challenges people face right now are real and the people I represent care deeply about timely access to ERs [emergency room], Mr. Speaker. They care deeply about access to a family doctor, Mr. Speaker, at a time where more than 200,000 people in this province don't have access to a family doctor. We don't see action in this Throne Speech on any of these fronts, Mr. Speaker. We don't see anything on the surgical wait-lists that are now worst in the nation, Mr. Speaker.

There was once a time, at the start of this government, Mr. Speaker, where there was some progress being made by a certain Health minister at that time, Mr. Speaker, but that's all been lost. And you know, the trend that was, you know, coming together was encouraging, Mr. Speaker. But I'll tell you what. Those ministers — many ministers since, Mr. Speaker — have failed miserably on this front, and those waits are just simply unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

People that I represent care about making sure that people have access to mental health and addictions services and treatment when they need them, Mr. Speaker. All too often we have folks that are suffering and dealing with depression or stuck in times of despair, Mr. Speaker, or in the grips of addiction. And when they reach out and say that they need help, Mr. Speaker, what's the response from this government? Well there's no space. In fact the response is usually not even a response, Mr. Speaker. It might be some sort of response three or four months down the road, Mr. Speaker.

[12:30]

The consequences couldn't be more tragic for so many, Mr. Speaker, when we have a window of opportunity to extend the care and support and treatment that's needed, Mr. Speaker. But

we don't see that kind of action. We see some recognition of the problem in this Throne Speech by way of rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, but what we have is a failed record of this government in denying a tragic reality in communities all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And let me be clear. This isn't an issue that's a concern to just one part of the province or just the people I represent. This is an issue in urban Saskatchewan. This is an issue in our smaller cities. This is an issue in the suburbs. This is an issue in rural Saskatchewan. This is an issue in towns and villages and First Nations across Saskatchewan, and it's certainly an issue in northern Saskatchewan. And I look to my colleague and friend, the member for Cumberland, who's been a champion on this front throughout his entire service in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

I see a Throne Speech that fails to deliver for education, Mr. Speaker, a government that has cut per-pupil funding in a drastic way. Here in Regina alone, Regina Public Schools, that cut has been \$1,300 in inflation-adjusted numbers, Mr. Speaker, since 2015. Bigger classrooms, fewer supports, kids being denied of the supports they need and deserve, and school boards being hamstrung from being able to do what they can do best.

In my riding, Mr. Speaker, we need adequate funding for those classrooms and for supports. We need adequate funding to be able to reopen Dieppe — which was closed under this government and their inadequate funding, Mr. Speaker, — to serve Dieppe and to serve Westerra, Mr. Speaker. We need those dollars to rebuild Rosemont School and make sure those improvements are there in the schools throughout the riding, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to touch on a couple other things before my time is up. We need this government to be active on some other fronts as well in a couple of my other critic areas. On the economy, Mr. Speaker, we just see this government failing. And our critic for the economy has identified that this government has a record that's back of the pack, Mr. Speaker.

This Premier is last place when it comes to GDP [gross domestic product] and to jobs, Mr. Speaker. And it's Saskatchewan people that are paying the price. We see in this budget some recognition of that with an announcement of a jobs plan that that member and this opposition has called for for years, Mr. Speaker, but we just haven't seen them deliver.

What we have seen them do is we've seen them outsource all sorts of jobs and work. What we have seen them do, Mr. Speaker, is to stick the PST on construction labour, a gut punch to growth, Mr. Speaker, a hit on our competitiveness, Mr. Speaker, at a time where we need to be securing jobs and investments, Mr. Speaker. We have a government acting to drive that away, Mr. Speaker.

We have tremendous economic opportunity when it comes to renewables and solar and energy efficiency conservation, retrofits, Mr. Speaker, create thousands of jobs, drive down costs, Mr. Speaker, and reduce emissions. But, no, this government's not having any of that.

And of course we have a tremendous opportunity, Mr. Speaker, which gets identified often as the sleeping giant by the member for Cumberland with respect to Indigenous peoples in this

province, and the opportunity that's presented, and the duty that we have in this Assembly to work as partners and towards that better future.

I want to just touch on two other critic areas briefly. And my House Leader, she's one of the finest House Leaders in this nation, Mr. Speaker, and just thank her for obliging me for a moment.

When it comes to economic pieces as well and about connecting Saskatchewan, we need to deliver on connectivity. High-speed, high-quality internet and cellular coverage is essential, Mr. Speaker. And this government continues to slow-walk this very important service, Mr. Speaker, an essential service in this day and age. And it holds back communities — rural communities, Indigenous communities, northern communities — and there's no excuse.

We're going to continue to call on this government to act on this front, but as we get closer to an election, we're ready to act on this front and deliver and make sure we connect Saskatchewan. This is a government that's raided SaskTel of dividends year after year that should have been deployed to connecting Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. All too often they've left folks without the connectivity they need and deserve. And it's a matter of basic safety as well.

One last area I want to touch on, Mr. Speaker, is agriculture, Mr. Speaker. And we have a world-class agricultural sector in this province led by producers and, of course, researchers and all of those manufacturers and those involved in commerce on this front, Mr. Speaker. We have a current situation where producers aren't getting the support they need and deserve out of ag recovery after facing another serious drought, livestock producers that have been hit really hard. The program as it's been rolled out is leaving many short and leaving many out of the support that they need and deserve, Mr. Speaker. We need leadership from this minister on this front. We need better from the federal government as well, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to the backstop that producers deserve, we need equity in a backstop that can be trusted for livestock producers in this province, Mr. Speaker. It's well past time that the provincial government and the federal government step up to the plate and ensure that the livestock sector receives equity in line with what the grain sector gets and has premium contributions from the federal and provincial governments with livestock price insurance.

We need improvements around forage insurance, Mr. Speaker. And of course, as we've pushed, we need to make sure that we are addressing the lack of competitiveness in the meat processing industry to make sure we deliver fairness for producers and for consumers, Mr. Speaker. And this is a government that's failed to act on this front, rejected calls to investigate, rejected calls to act on the anti-competitive behaviours of the out-of-province slaughterhouse capacity, Mr. Speaker. We need to do better to build local processing value and opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

In closing, I want to touch on something that's personal to me through working with many and something that's a positive in this budget. And I just want to give a shout-out to the firefighters of Saskatchewan, who have long made the case that their job puts

them in face of very serious risks, risks of cancer, many other risks as well.

Along with the firefighters, we've advocated for a long time for the expansion of cancer coverages, Mr. Speaker. We saw that in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and that's a positive thing. I want to say thank you to the firefighters for leading the way. We've been proud to work with them and to push for this for a very long period of time.

I know my time is up, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say to the people of Saskatchewan there is so much hope and opportunity in this province. This opposition is ready to deliver on that front. We'll do all we can in this role for the time being as an opposition, but we'll be asking for their trust and their partnership to deliver on that hope and opportunity as the next government in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to deliver affordability, to fix health care, to deliver in classrooms, and to build the local jobs and kind of economy that works for people.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to second the amendment brought forward by the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Friesen:** — Well thank you, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think one of my colleagues said it really well in the back bench here, but now for something completely different.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to congratulate my colleague here from Lumsden-Morse on a great speech even though he tossed me under the bus a little bit. It was still great. I really appreciate his words.

And I do want to acknowledge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Lyle Stewart, great friend, mentor in my short time here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And my thoughts and prayers go out to him on a daily basis.

I do have a lot of positive things to say, which I'm sure is obviously very difficult for the opposition to hear. But we have so much positive in this Throne Speech and going on in this province with our people and our constituents, certainly the ones that I serve as I'm going to speak about that.

I do want to say a couple of thank yous though. My kids. My daughter Morgan got married five weeks ago and it was just a wonderful wedding to Dawson Sawchuk, who actually I've known since he was a baby, held him as a baby. And he had the . . . He came to me and asked for my blessing, which I was really impressed by. But just an amazing wedding, and I was so glad to be part of that.

My son Christopher. It's interesting, you know, we raise our kids, and we have to go through all the disciplinary measures. And I have very strict rules, not a ton of them, but I have very strict rules. And so when you get through to a point now — my son's 22, and it's so great — it's such a different dynamic. My son is now my best friend. And we talk about families supporting us in this job, and my son Christopher is my rock. And he's there day or night, doesn't matter, will stay up late and chat with me if

needed. And that happens from time to time as this job is a difficult job, but it's worthwhile.

There's so many announcements in this Throne Speech that I'm going to speak about in a few minutes. But I'm so thankful for my children. My oldest daughter, Danielle in Vancouver, also got engaged this year. And I don't have any grandchildren yet, but I've been informed that it's a grand puppy I have. So my daughter and her fiancé Taylor have a beautiful, beautiful stray dog that they rescued, Tibby. And she even reacts when she's hears me on the phone with their FaceTime call, which I'm happy to be able to have very often with my daughter because she lives in Vancouver.

My friends and colleagues, amazing support system, and we've said this in this House many times, but our colleagues here, this is a family on this side of the House. And I am so blessed to be part of this family. And I don't think we can say that enough.

It's great. One of the things I love to do is — or I just happen to do, I guess. Maybe it's a disease, I don't know, but — I wake up early. And this morning I was up at 3, and at the building by about quarter after 4. And I just love it. There's colleagues that come in quite early and we get to share that morning coffee and just go over what's going on in our personal lives. And it's just a real blessing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I've got to thank my constituents, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I am so honoured. And I've said this in this House multiple times, and it always, in my opinion, bears repeating because it is true. Every time when I walk up those front steps I feel such an honour. And I'm so humbled to be part of this Assembly with these great colleagues and to work in this beautiful facility.

And yesterday there was a number of people here that were new to the building. And what a great experience for them, you know. I know what it's like every time I walk in and I think about how great the building is and how great this Assembly is and how honoured I am to be here. But you know, the people that have never been here before are just blown away with what the facility is and with really what we're doing here. So it's just great to be reminded of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I've got to thank my constituency assistant as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've had a few challenges with my constituency assistants as I lost one last year, and Alison Klassen has . . . Even though she's had some significant health challenges this year, she has just worked so hard in the office and tries so hard. And I'm so happy to have her. Yeah. She is just so very caring and just will take anyone into the office and have a conversation with them and help them in any way she can.

I've got to start . . . This is the way I start my members' statements, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I have got to start my speech this way. And there's a reason. But I've got to say it's a great day in Riversdale, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And there is a reason that I start my speeches like this. The doom and gloom from the NDP opposition is disappointing and it's depressing and it makes me wonder if they live in a different province. And so I have tried to bring positivity to whatever I do in my life — to my friends, my colleagues, my family, and my constituents.

And so I thought, you know, one day, we've got to bring some positivity into the members' statements in this House, and I started my speeches like that. And I really do believe it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Absolutely. Sunshine. I don't know why we don't want to smile and talk about the good things. And my colleague over here, just making me laugh right now.

[12:45]

We can always look at things in a positive light or a negative light, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I know that the colleagues on this side of the House, we choose the positive light, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yeah, the opposition should try it sometime. That is definitely not what we hear from the NDP opposition. And in a couple speeches already today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very clearly spoken of doom and gloom in our province, certainly by the member from Regina Elphinstone. It's actually disappointing and disturbing, some of the comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I do want to talk about a couple of the things that I've been given the honour to do while . . . Since I've been elected, I was appointed to the Meewasin board, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I've actually become Chair of governance on the Meewasin board, as well as served on their linkage committee and steering committee for revenue generation. And I've really enjoyed this appointment and met some great people.

And you know, I have to point out that this beautiful river valley in Saskatoon, it is, I would say, one of our best-kept secrets unfortunately. But to our locals and to people travelling into our province and our city, over 2.32 million trail visits last year alone. Incredible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want my speech to be, as I've said, a lot different than we've heard from the opposition, and I'd like to talk about hope. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was, for me, hope to work in this building one day, hope to represent the people of the community where I was born and where I was raised and where I bought my first house, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and where I ran my business for 25 years. I want to talk about what that meant, the hope to work here, and how that started.

It was a random experience where I was at a Premier's dinner and I was asked to get up and to go meet a couple of people as I had expressed an interest of running. And within a few short months, I had my nomination papers in. As a lot of people know, I ran in 2016 and didn't quite win, but you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I didn't give up hope. I didn't give up hope.

And I kept working in the community that I've been representing, with youth, and in a number of different ways for many, many years. I kept representing that community, and I kept being the voice of that community with government even though I wasn't elected, because I still had the ear of government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And you know, another thing I'd like to say about hope is, hope of the Saskatchewan people, which really started in 1997; and then it really grew in 1999; and in 2003 that hope just about became a reality; and in 2007 that hope was realized. The hope of the people of this province that wanted positive change.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 2007 we were given the honour of forming government, the Saskatchewan Party. And we take it very seriously, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The things that we hear from constituents, the things that we hear from the people of our province, and yes, even the conversations at hockey games or grocery stores. I mean how weird would that be, that we would actually talk to people at a hockey game or a grocery store? I guess we're not supposed to do that, apparently, I've heard in speeches earlier. But we actually meet people where they're at, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And on this side of the House, we take great pride in having those conversations and making sure we have even those tough conversations.

Another thing about hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is hope to grow the province. The Saskatchewan Party had a dream to grow this province, and our former premier Brad Wall, with a goal that was told to be unrealistic. We can't grow this province. We certainly can't grow it to 1.2 million. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here we are. We're here over 1.2 million. We have a growth plan to 2030 to go to 1.4 million people. And last year alone was the largest rate of growth in this province's over-100-year history, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And the NDP opposition will say we pat ourselves on the back. You know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? These are just facts from hard work from my predecessors who started this party and were able to form government in 2007, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And to all those colleagues, former colleagues, I want to say thank you. Thank you for your vision. Thank you for your hope to do better in this province.

Growth, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Over 180,000 newcomers to Saskatchewan. Over 180,000 newcomers. And I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things I've had the great honour and pleasure of doing since I've been elected is meeting these communities. And I've been in a number of their houses for dinner. I've had them over at my house. And our immigrants in this province are so driven. They have such a great work ethic, and they feel so blessed to be in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So why don't the members from the opposition feel that? They are so blessed to be here. They are so proud to become Saskatchewan people and Canadian citizens. And I think we need to think about that more often and actually realize where we are, what a great place we live, and just be thankful for that.

Hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to build new schools — 60 to be clear, one being planned right now and going up in Saskatoon Riversdale. And to be fair, one school had been advocating for a new school since 1997, with deaf ears of the provincial government, the NDP at the time. And plans were started and actually discussed many times on renovations. There were some renovations done. But the plans were already in the works in the background on the new school years ago. And I know my community is certainly very happy with the fact that we are building such a great school, with a daycare in the facility, in the school, an inclusive school, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Another thing that is happening in my community, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is . . . And there's hope to fix the health care system. And as the member from Regina Elphinstone stated . . . which is really interesting, as I spoke to our Minister of Government Relations about this a number of times, but he was the Health critic before he was elected and then instantly was thrown into

the Health ministry. And at that time, you're absolutely right — to the member from Regina Elphinstone — we had the longest surgical wait times in the country. And then what did we do? In a few short years, with a plan, we had the shortest surgical wait times in the country, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And you know what? We've done it before. We went through a very challenging couple of years with our health care system during a pandemic, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are going to do it again. We are committed to this work and we will do this again. I hear this from my constituents that have been on the surgical wait-list. And over this last number of months, the Health ministers have done an amazing job in taking people off those surgical wait-lists, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm very proud of my colleagues and all the hard work they've done in that regard.

We also got a children's hospital, as was mentioned, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I know this for a fact: under the NDP opposition, when they were government they wanted nothing to do with the children's hospital. But you know what? Some of the advocates and funders and fundraisers actually said, you know what, we got to push forward with this anyways. And they pushed forward and brought forward that dream to this current government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it was made real.

Urgent care centres, Mr. Deputy Speaker, taking the pressure off our emergency centres and also with a division for mental health and addictions. One of these being done with Ahtahkakoop First Nation in my community of Riversdale, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So we want to talk about what is in this Throne Speech. Wow, I could keep talking for, as I told the Whip, probably an hour on all the good things in my community and in this Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Major renovations just announced at St. Paul's Hospital, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This has been under discussion for a while, and it's going to be an amazing thing. I've met with the people from St. Paul's many times, had a tour there recently, and was actually born in that hospital, Mr. Speaker — also in Saskatoon Riversdale. So excited to hear that announcement today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to continue with my conversation on hope and hope. You know, in the days of the NDP government, there was hope that our children would stay in this province. And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's often been said but the most common gift was luggage back in those days. And I am proud to say that that is not happening anymore. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my friends that moved away in those times are moving back, and it is just so great to have those connections back.

I want to touch on a little bit of graduates. Not too many years ago, under the NDP government, there was roughly 25 per cent of the University of Saskatchewan graduates would stay here. And speaking with President Stoicheff here a couple of weeks ago, and over 75 per cent are staying in this province now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Students in Sask Polytech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over 94 per cent are staying here in this province. And you know what, it cannot go unsaid about our graduation retention program, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Over \$739 million has been given already for our

graduation retention program, and you know, that is another thing that we should be very, very proud of. I certainly am.

Hope, to have good highways, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I mean the plan back then was just fix your own potholes. And since the 16 years we've been elected, almost 20 000 kilometres have been repaired or replaced, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hope, to build this province with our Indigenous people. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm proud to be part of a number of organizations, certainly working with Morris Interactive. They have started a program in the Indigenous mining sector, Mr. Deputy Speaker, training Indigenous youth and building careers for those people and giving them hope.

Hope for the struggling, people struggling with mental health and addictions. And I heard the member from Regina Rosemont touch on this. I don't believe he really read the Throne Speech. Five hundred beds in the province. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we were talking 150 beds before. Five hundred beds. I know that this really resonated. Because one thing that was mentioned over there that is true is when someone is struggling with mental health and addictions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they need that help and they need it now.

And so I'm so proud to have this announcement. This is something that I know my colleague who I miss dearly, my seatmate Derek Meyers, lobbied hard for this and advocated hard to our government for this. And this is something I've been very passionate about myself. And I am sure proud to say that we are moving forward on this, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hope in Riversdale, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and interesting . . . I don't have a lot of time here, but I do want to talk about some of my community-based organizations — Sanctum, OARS [Opioid Assisted Recovery Services], Westside Community Clinic — amazing work that they do. I have contact with the executive directors or staff, you know, probably every other week, sometimes on a weekly basis. And they have hope as . . . with government as they've heard the recent announcements and certainly with the engagement that I do with them, understanding what their challenges are.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I talk a lot about hope. Hope itself will not accomplish all of these great things that have happened in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's one thing in common, all the things I've mentioned: hard work and the support of our great people of this province. It is the work of my colleagues here on this side of the House. We plan on doing this, Mr. Speaker. We are not going to stop on these jobs and tasks in front of us.

And again, thank you so much for the honour to stand up and speak and represent my constituency today. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The time now being 1 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 Monday morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]



# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

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