



FIRST SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

of the

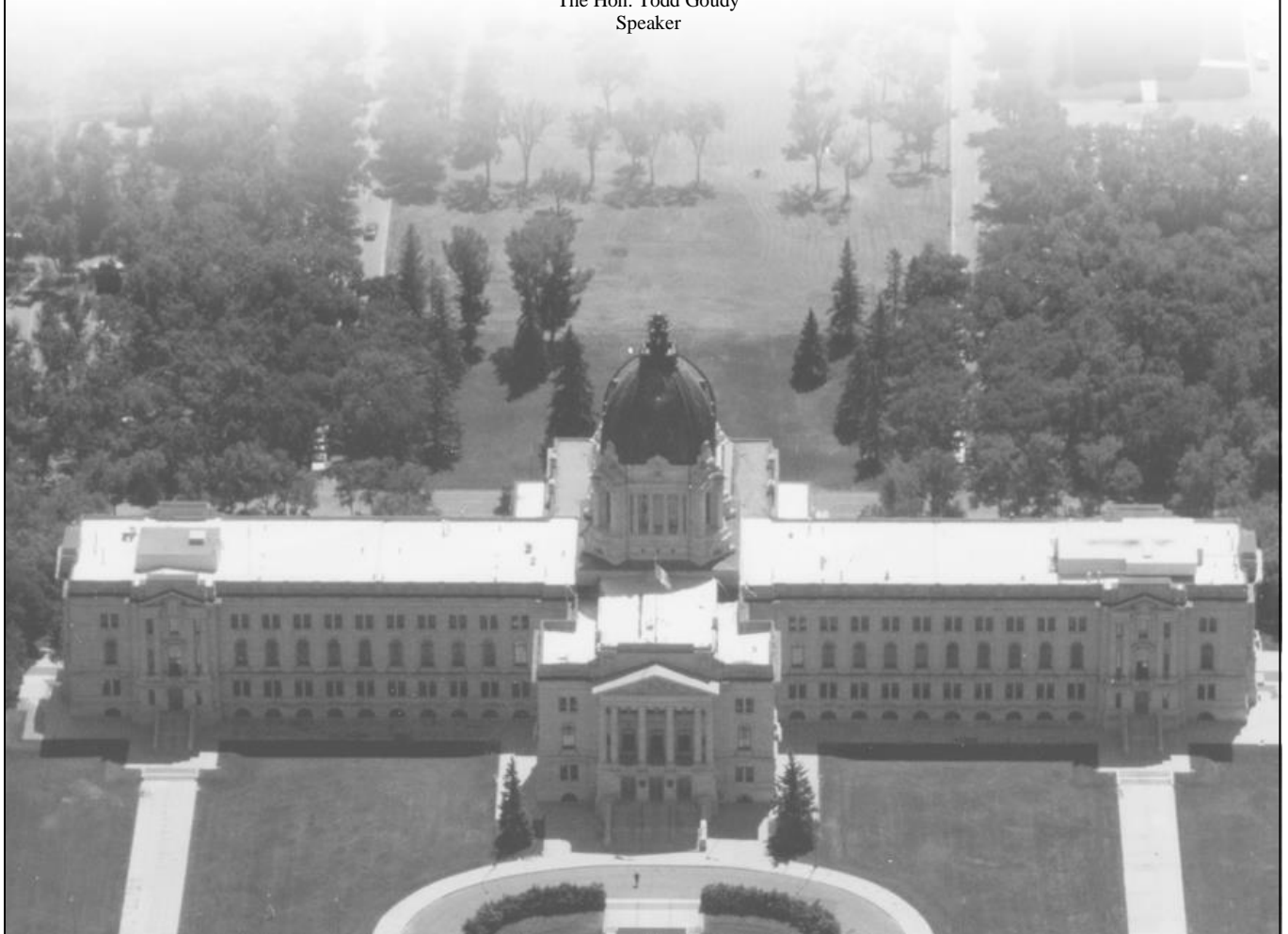
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
AND  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)  
Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Todd Goudy  
Speaker



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**1st Session — 30th Legislature**

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

**Speaker** — Hon. Todd Goudy  
**Premier** — Hon. Scott Moe  
**Leader of the Opposition** — Carla Beck

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**Standings**

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 34; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 27

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**Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Deputy Clerk** — Kathy Burianyak

**Principal Clerk** — Robert Park

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

**Speaker Goudy:** — Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Moosomin-Montmartre.

**Kevin Weedmark:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce Victor Santos Cardoza, who is with us in the Speaker's gallery this morning. He and his family are constituents in Moosomin-Montmartre. I've known Victor and his family ever since they first moved to Moosomin. He and his family are an important part of the Moosomin community, and Victor was a first-time voter in the recent provincial election. And you'll hear more about Victor's amazing story this morning. So I'd like to welcome Victor to the House. Thank you.

**Speaker Goudy:** — So I'm not sure who I introduce them through, but maybe myself I guess. But I'd like to introduce to everyone in the Chamber a couple cowgirls up in the Speaker's gallery.

So Zoe Schellenberg is a good friend of my children. And her parents and aunts and uncles and cousins, the Schellenberg crew, if you see any of the pro rodeo stuff in the States, you oftentimes see a Schellenberg connected to it. So Zoe is here for the Agribition and she's a cutting horse . . . I think you can see the shiny belt buckle there. She's got a few medals in her belt and so we're sure glad to have her here with us today. And also Shelby, no stranger to the area though. Another fellow cowgirl. So please welcome them to their Assembly.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Regina Pasqua.

**Bhajan Brar:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that Saskatchewan is one of two provinces to experience a decline in per-student funding in our public schools, a loss of 10 per cent since 2012; that per-student funding over the same period increased by 8.3 per cent at the national level; that the Saskatchewan Party government's cut to education means that teachers, EAs [educational assistant], and support staff continue to be overworked and underpaid while students do not have the support they need; that international . . . [inaudible] . . . show Saskatchewan students are drastically falling behind in reading, math, and science.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately provide adequate funding to public, Catholic, and francophone schools in Saskatchewan and fix the crisis in our classrooms.

The signatories of this petition are residents of Regina. I do so present. Thank you.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silverspring.

**Hugh Gordon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to bring to the attention of the Legislative Assembly a petition to address the affordability crisis.

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that inflation is the highest it's been in more than three decades; that according to Angus Reid, 84 per cent of Saskatchewan people are feeling stressed about money, the highest such rates of financial insecurity in Canada; that half of Saskatchewan residents were living paycheque to paycheque before transportation and food costs skyrocketed in 2022; that the Saskatchewan Party government power, PST [provincial sales tax], and tax hikes makes life more expensive. While other provinces acted, the Saskatchewan Party government continues to ignore the opposition's calls for gas relief.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to meaningfully address the affordability crisis in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of the petition are from both Regina and Moose Jaw. I do so submit.

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

**Noor Burki:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We the residents of this province, Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: Saskatchewan people are struggling to keep up with increased cost of food, shelter, and other necessities, as wages have not increased with the rate of inflation; that according to an October 2023 Angus Reid poll, more than one-third of people of Saskatchewan are struggling with the cost of living; that Sask Party government could provide immediate cost-of-living relief to Saskatchewan families by suspending provincial fuel tax; that the Saskatchewan NDP [New Democratic Party], the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, among others, have been calling for immediate fuel tax relief not for only months but for years; that other jurisdictions such as Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, Newfoundland have suspended or reduced their fuel tax prices to make life more affordable for the residents of their provinces.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call on the Government of Saskatchewan to suspend the collection of the provincial fuel tax to help families struggling with the high cost of living.

The signatories of this petition reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Regina Rochdale.

**Joan Pratchler:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to call on the government to reverse the ban on third-party sex education providers in public schools. Banning third-party sexual education health has broader reach, as this ban impacts additional prevention education programs such as focused on the body safety, consent, and healthy relationships.

Parental inclusion in a child's education has always been a top priority for teachers, and parents have always had the right to withdraw students from sexual health education. All children have the right to comprehensive age-appropriate sexual health education. Third-party providers have always strived to provide the best education with oversight from the school boards.

I'll read the prayer:

In the prayer that reads as follows, we call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately reverse its policy decision to ban third-party sexual health educators in Saskatchewan schools and listen to the experts and the stakeholders in developing comprehensive sex education curriculum for all publicly funded schools.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories today reside in Regina. I do so present.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling on the government to address the housing crisis in Saskatchewan and calling for more affordable homes and tenant protections.

Mr. Speaker, the undersigned of this petition are calling on the province of Saskatchewan that they are telling us that the cost of housing in Saskatchewan has skyrocketed, making it increasingly difficult for many individuals and families in securing stable and affordable housing. Over the past decade homelessness has surged, pushing people onto the streets. Meanwhile the government has made drastic cuts to our housing programs. Mr. Speaker, monthly rent prices in Saskatchewan have also significantly increased while wages for Saskatchewan families have remained stagnant.

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 immediately implement a comprehensive affordable housing strategy aimed at helping individuals and families in securing stable and affordable housing. The strategy must restore the cuts made to the housing portfolio and invest in the development of affordable and low-income housing units.

We also urge the government to enforce rental protections for tenants and allocate resources towards development of second-stage housing and crisis shelter.

Mr. Speaker, the undersigned reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

## READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order, a petition calling on the government to immediately address the short-staffing crisis in health care, presented on November 27th, 2024, has been reviewed and pursuant to rule 16(7) is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

### Integrated Youth Services Delivering Supports in Saskatchewan Communities

**Megan Patterson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The province's second integrated youth services site opened its doors in Moose Jaw earlier this month. It will deliver supports to young people ages 12 to 25 and their caregivers. Operating under the name Homebase, the site will deliver access to mental health and addictions services. It will provide physical health, education, and employment training. It will offer peer supports, cultural and traditional services, as well as social and community supports.

Mr. Speaker, the John Howard Society is leading the implementation of this hub, and it is being operated by the YMCA. The John Howard Society is currently developing three other hubs with \$3.4 million in funding from this government this year.

Earlier this year we launched the integrated youth services hub in Humboldt. In the Regina and Sturgeon Lake First Nation hubs, the development and hiring of staff is nearly complete. We are making it easier for young people to find the supports they need, where they need it, in the right place, at the right time. Mr. Speaker, we look forward to seeing the benefit of this initiative in our province. Thank you.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

### World AIDS Day Offers Opportunity for Reflection

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. December 1 will mark World AIDS Day and the beginning of Indigenous AIDS Awareness Week in Canada. This is a time to remember those we've have lost to HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] and honour the resilience of those living with it.

Once considered a death sentence, HIV is now manageable thanks to advancements in treatment. With regular antiretroviral therapy, people with HIV can live long productive lives and maintain undetectable viral levels. Preventative medications which are 99 per cent effective have also been developed to protect those at risk.

Despite these advancements, Saskatchewan leads Canada in new HIV infections. The province reports 19 new cases per 100,000 people, four times the national average. Injection drug use remains the most common risk factor. These numbers are staggering considering HIV is almost entirely preventable with

sound public policy and health care access.

On this World AIDS Day, I call on the government to take urgent action to invest in health care, to improve access in rural and remote areas, and prioritize harm reduction strategies to combat the spread of HIV.

On this World AIDS Day, let us remember those we've lost and commit to policies that will reduce and eliminate new infections in Saskatchewan. Thank you so much.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

### Hockey Day in Saskatchewan Celebrates Sport and Community

**Sean Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hockey Saskatchewan has selected the town of Canora to host the 2025 Hockey Day in Saskatchewan event from January 14th to January 19th. Every year Hockey Saskatchewan selects a community to host the six-day event in which multiple communities will travel across the province to highlight the importance of the sport and the community that comes with it.

[10:15]

Hockey Day in Saskatchewan helps communities support their local hockey programs, and helps them to raise money to keep their rinks alive, renovate rinks, and to make rinks the hub of their communities. This 2025 event will work as a fundraiser for the town of Canora in their goal of building a brand new ice rink and community centre which will serve multiple purposes, creating a centre that will last in the town for many generations.

Hockey Saskatchewan is also a great way for towns in Saskatchewan to showcase their community and support local businesses with extra exposure and extra business. Hockey Day in Saskatchewan in Canora is sure to be an exciting and fun day which will help the town of Canora in their efforts to build a new rink. I invite all members of the Assembly to thank Hockey Saskatchewan for their contributions to the sport, and I wish them luck in their future events. Thank you.

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

### Saskatoon Teams Compete at National Amateur Curling Event

**Kim Breckner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I had the pleasure of serving as an alternate for the women's Team Saskatchewan at the 2024 Everest Curling Club national competition in Barrie, Ontario. The Everest Curling Club nationals is a competition among the best amateur men's and women's curling teams from across Canada. Twenty-eight teams participated, with each province and territory represented in addition to a team representing northern Ontario.

I would like to congratulate skip Samantha Yachiw-Omelian, third and my constituent Amanda Bell, second Kenzie Derald, and lead Renae Sotnikow out of the Saskatoon Sutherland Curling Club for doing an excellent job representing Saskatchewan. They placed first in their pool in round robin play

and ultimately lost out in the second round of playoffs.

I also want to congratulate the Saskatchewan men's team of skip Aaron Shutra, third Justin Heather, second Trevor Woiden, and lead Stephen McDonald out of the Saskatoon Nutana Curling Club, who finished 3-3 and narrowly missed playoffs.

Team Ontario and Team Nova Scotia won the men's and women's events, respectively. At the conclusion of the event, all players voted on which of their peers best demonstrated sportsmanship throughout the week. I am proud to say that Ms. Bell was awarded this honour for the women's third position.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Moosomin-Montmartre.

### Youngest Town Councillor Elected in Moosomin

**Kevin Weedmark:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are many councillors, reeves, trustees, and mayors to congratulate on local elections this fall, but I want to extend a special congratulations to Victor Santos Cardoza, who at 20 years of age is the youngest person ever elected to Moosomin town council.

Victor has an amazing story. His family fled to Canada in 2011 after his father witnessed the murder of a journalist in Honduras, and the family found safety in Moosomin. The family's refugee claim was denied, and they were scheduled to be deported in July of 2017. There was a massive community effort to allow the family to stay, and it paid off. Last year they became citizens of this country.

Their family has contributed greatly to this community, and Victor was the first youth councillor on Moosomin town council, which is a new position that was created to allow young people to have a voice. He wanted to contribute even more as an elected member of council so he ran for council this fall, and in a field of 11 candidates, he was elected. Victor has graduated high school and is apprenticing as a carpenter on his way to a Red Seal designation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone who put their names forward for local elections this fall. I want to congratulate all those who were elected, and I especially want to recognize Victor Santos Cardoza, who wanted to pay back a community that did so much for his family, who became the youngest councillor ever elected in Moosomin, and who has a bright future ahead of him. Thank you.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silverspring.

### Celebrating Minor Hockey in Saskatchewan

**Hugh Gordon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member from Canora-Pelly pointed out, another exciting year of hockey has begun in Saskatchewan. As a father of a child who played many years of minor hockey, I know how hectic and exciting it can be for parents and for the kids.

Minor hockey gave my son not only the chance to develop his skills, but also helped to develop him into the young man he is today. The time we spent in the many hockey rinks around the

province provided my family with some amazing memories as my son played and we revelled in his successes. It truly was a special time for our family.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all the kids playing minor hockey in the Wild and Redwing zones in Saskatoon Silverspring the very best of seasons. I'd like to thank all the coaches, the managers, and the volunteers who've stepped up to help create another year of fun and excitement for our kids, their families, and their communities. I want to thank all the parents. I know how much work goes into making a hockey season a success for these kids, from all the fundraisers and events they organize to all the help that they give each other throughout the year.

I'm looking forward to hearing about and reporting on all their stories of their on- and off-ice successes that they will enjoy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Indigenous Forestry Company Contributes to Northern Saskatchewan's Economy**

**Kevin Kasun:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just this fall our government was proud to announce that we have allocated 1.2 million cubic metres of timber to Saskatchewan-based and Indigenous-founded company One Sky Products, which will set the stage for One Sky to open an oriented strand board mill in Prince Albert in 2027. The building of this mill is expected to bring 800 new jobs to Prince Albert.

One Sky Forest Products was founded in 2020 by Montreal Lake Business Ventures, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Big River First Nation, and Tatanka Oyate Holdings. These four Indigenous groups aim to use this to help their communities' economy, which they can use to create job opportunities for Indigenous people and get them involved in the supply chain.

Saskatchewan currently leads the nation in terms of Indigenous participation in the forestry sector, with 32 per cent of our timber supply being allocated to Indigenous communities and 27 per cent of the forestry sector's workforce being Indigenous. The forestry sector currently supports nearly 8,000 jobs and is the second-largest industry in the province's North, after mining. Investing in forestry is investing directly in the future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, we're proud to support the economic success of our northern communities and their residents. Thank you.

### **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**Speaker Goudy:** — Before question period . . . I'm sorry, Cindy Ring is in the Speaker's gallery as well. And I didn't introduce her because I didn't know who was sitting with her, but she must be awfully important to sit with Cindy. So certainly welcome to your Assembly, Cindy, and we appreciate all the work through the years that you did in making the office of Remote and Rural Health, the different ministers, serving us all so very well. So welcome here, you and your guest, and we appreciate your attendance. Thanks.

### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Cost of Living and Impact of Tariffs**

**Carla Beck:** — This out-of-touch Sask Party government is doing nothing new to offer Saskatchewan families relief when it comes to the cost of living. One of their first acts in this fall session was to block fuel tax relief, tax relief that Saskatchewan families desperately need right now. That is their record.

But there's more that they could be doing to reduce costs for Saskatchewan families. The Saskatchewan Party government's PST on groceries is adding hundreds of dollars of costs to Saskatchewan families every year — PST added to staples like granola bars, salads, cooked chickens — all thanks to decisions made by that Sask Party government.

Why won't the Sask Party government scrap their PST from food and grocery stores and give Saskatchewan families a break when they need it?

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

**Hon. Scott Moe:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just be clear with Saskatchewan residents. There is no PST on groceries in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Also to be equally clear, Mr. Speaker, to be equally clear there was a provincial campaign that was held here, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the month of October where both parties put forward their platforms.

The Saskatchewan Party platform was largely focused on affordability and reducing the cost of living for Saskatchewan residents in a province where we are already the lowest level of cost of living in the nation of Canada, Mr. Speaker. And we want to ensure that that is the case for years into the future, and that's why we had put forward a number of affordability commitments to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

In this fall session, the first session after that month-long discussion on affordability measures on our respective campaigns — and Saskatchewan people voted for the affordability platform that we put forward — we are going to enact that platform in this very session, Mr. Speaker.

And we would invite the NDP at the first opportunity to join us and join Saskatchewan people in enacting those affordability measures on their behalf.

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

**Carla Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, whether the Premier understands this or not, or whether any lessons were learned in this last campaign, Saskatchewan families are struggling with the cost of living today. And they need a break today, not in the spring when they file their taxes.

Yesterday at Agribition I spoke with producers worried, worried about tariffs threatened by the US [United States] and damage that it's going to do to their livelihoods and to the economy in



this province, but also concerns that these tariffs would further raise costs for people here at home and right across both sides of the border. We need an effective plan on these tariffs and — and — we need to cut families a break right now in this province.

Later today we're going to be bringing forth another emergency motion to take the PST off of food in the grocery store. The question is, will this out-of-touch Sask Party government block cost-of-living relief for Saskatchewan families twice in one week?

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

**Hon. Scott Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, again there is no PST on groceries in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this government is entirely focused on . . . Mr. Speaker, I'd reiterate one more time, Mr. Speaker, there is no PST on groceries in the province of Saskatchewan.

There is an affordability plan that was put forward in the campaign, Mr. Speaker, by this party. It was voted on by the people of the province. And we would ask during this session, as we attempt to enact that plan and will enact that plan, we would ask the NDP opposition to join the government and join the people of Saskatchewan in ensuring that that plan can move forward in this very session. Or are they going to block that?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

#### Provision of Care for Mental Health and Addictions

**Betty Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is National Addictions Awareness Week. The Sask Party government claimed in a member's statement “. . . we have surpassed our original goal of opening 200 more spaces . . . [including] 60 treatment spaces through Willowview Recovery in Lumsden.” Mr. Speaker, that's nearly one-third of all the beds this government claims they've opened so far.

A simple question for the minister: how many in-patients is this facility in Lumsden treating today?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member of Mental Health and Addictions.

**Hon. Lori Carr:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, she is correct. We are working very actively on mental health and addictions beds within this province, the goal being 500 new beds over the next couple of years, Mr. Speaker. And the beds that have opened are running successfully, Mr. Speaker. We have in-patient beds. We also have virtual beds, Mr. Speaker. And clients right across the province are able to access those beds. Thank you.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Betty Nippi-Albright:** — Mr. Speaker, we've heard these lines before. During the leaders' debate the Premier said, “I would say 500 intensive recovery beds, committing to building that. Over 200 built today is not in any way rhetoric.”

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately it's all rhetoric from the Sask Party government. Just yesterday, employees of the treatment centre told our team that the 60 in-patient beds still haven't opened. Who should we believe, this Saskatchewan's front-line addictions worker or that out-of-touch Sask Party government?

**Speaker Goudy:** — Sorry, I'm going to ask . . . You know, comments, words like “rhetoric” and “who should we believe,” I want to caution you as you're asking questions. Thank you, member.

I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

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

[10:30]

Mr. Speaker, we're working with many providers, and one of them is the Willowview facility in Lumsden, Mr. Speaker. We're actually working with EHN Canada and the RM [rural municipality] of Lumsden to find a pathway forward on that. Our expectations are that the in-patient services will begin soon, Mr. Speaker. We're just working through some details, and at that point in time those beds will be open.

In the meantime we do have the option of some virtual spaces that are available, Mr. Speaker. We have facilities right across the province that we're able to send patients to, Mr. Speaker. And as soon as we can get those beds open, when it's safe to do so, we will, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Betty Nippi-Albright:** — Mr. Speaker, these 60 beds are closed. Front-line staff say there's no timeline for when they will open. One employee says there's too much red tape. Another employee even said that Saskatchewan people struggling with addictions should travel to Toronto because there's already a year-long wait-list, and these beds haven't even opened.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government open these in-patient beds?

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

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

Mr. Speaker, EHN Canada began providing intensive out-patient services on October 29th as a temporary measurement in the meantime until we get those in-patient beds up and running.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight that we have 15 withdrawal management spaces at Onion Lake. We have 15 in-patient treatment spaces at Muskwa Lake near Pinehouse. And the ones that I'm listing are actually the new beds that have come online as part of our commitment towards that 500 beds, Mr. Speaker. Fourteen in-patient treatment spaces through Poundmaker's Lodge in North Battleford; 17 in-patient treatment spaces at Thorpe Recovery Centre.

You know, the members opposite may think this is funny, but this is a very serious issue, Mr. Speaker. I am talking about services that are being provided for the province of Saskatchewan and the people who need them.

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

### Care for Cancer Patients and Health Care Staffing

**Vicki Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, this out-of-touch Sask Party government is failing to make sure that people can get the care they need when they need it. That applies in mental health and addictions, and it's also true when it comes to cancer care. The former Health minister received a briefing note earlier this year outlining the serious problems with short-staffing at Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. Problems that lead to patients dying of cancer before they're able to get treatment.

When will we see a plan from this Health minister to fix short-staffing in cancer care?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Health minister.

**Hon. Jeremy Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke about, once again, Canada's most ambitious health human resources action plan which is right here in this province by this government to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that we are attracting more and more health care providers — whether that be physicians or nurses or specialists — to this province so that we can ensure that Saskatchewan residents, whatever they're going through whether it be cancer care or another condition, Mr. Speaker, they're getting timely access to care.

Mr. Speaker, I would direct the member opposite to the news release that we put out earlier this week with the announcement of hiring of new physicians at the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, Mr. Speaker, making sure that Saskatchewan residents who are going through their cancer journey will have better access to care. Thank you.

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

**Vicki Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, except 4,000 front-line health care workers left Saskatchewan in 2023. Mr. Speaker, this memo includes quotes from some of those front-line health care workers providing cancer care in Saskatchewan. Here's what they have to say: "Patients have died waiting for treatment due to the overwhelming demand and lack of available staff." Another worker said, "Treatment delays and errors are common due to the high workload."

What does the Sask Party government say to these front-line health care workers who are burning out while their patients go without the cancer care they need?

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

**Hon. Jeremy Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, we have just announced the hiring of new physicians at the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, Mr. Speaker. All of us in this House, all of us in the

province know how important it is that people in Saskatchewan who are going through their cancer journey have access to that care, Mr. Speaker.

You know, that being said, we still have challenges around staffing in this province. We are working on those challenges. We have a plan for that. I know the former minister of Health met with this group virtually. We've reached out to the union, from my office, to meet and discuss the issues that we're seeing at the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, as I'm saying today, this government has a plan to address staffing, Mr. Speaker. We're executing on that plan and again ensuring that Saskatchewan people, whatever they're dealing with, will have timely access to care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Vicki Mowat:** — Four thousand front-line health care workers gone in 2023, Mr. Speaker. It's time for a new plan. Here is what one of the nurses at the Cancer Agency had to say about what they see every day: "Patients have died before being seen because physicians couldn't physically take any more on in their day." Another quote: "Treatments have been delayed because we can't fit everyone into a clinic before their treatment is due."

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people know that it's this Sask Party government who has broken our health care system. Why should these health care workers have any faith that this minister is up to the job of fixing it?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Health Minister.

**Hon. Jeremy Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's bringing challenges. We have a plan, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we announced on Monday, as I've mentioned previously, that we've hired nine new physicians for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, Mr. Speaker.

I'll just mention some of the highlights here. Here in Regina at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre: two physicians for gynecology, oncology; four hematologists; and one clinical associate. In Saskatoon at the Saskatoon Cancer Centre, we have one medical oncologist starting in December, and one clinical associate began last month, Mr. Speaker.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is part of our plan to try and make Saskatchewan the most attractive jurisdiction in Canada for health care professionals to work and live, Mr. Speaker. Again, this is all in an effort to ensure that all of the residents in this province have access to care when they need it. Thank you.

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

### Costs Associated with Marshals Service

**Nicole Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government has done nothing while community safety in our province has plummeted to last place. They promised a marshals service that has been widely panned by municipalities across the province,

the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], and many local police. And so far, Mr. Speaker, not one single new cop in Saskatchewan.

But one thing this government has done is waste thousands of dollars on campaign hats for these marshals. Can the minister explain why he's so focused on buying hats when he doesn't even have police officers to wear them?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

**Hon. Tim McLeod:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're working to build public safety across this province by investing in additional police services, including the Saskatchewan marshals service. We're also investing in municipal police services. We're also investing in RCMP policing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is a commitment of our government to improve public safety across Saskatchewan, and that's exactly what we're doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Nicole Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, this out-of-touch Sask Party government is way more focused on fashion than they are on fixing public safety. Campaign hats for this minister's police force cost \$587 each. We've talked to actual front-line police officers who cannot believe the waste. And for the record, they've got hats too, and they don't cost \$600.

Can the minister tell us how he can justify such high costs for hats for marshals that don't even exist?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

**Hon. Tim McLeod:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it is disappointing to see the disrespect being thrown at the public servants who are applying for these positions. Mr. Speaker, we've had over 129 applications for various positions within the Saskatchewan marshals, Mr. Speaker. These are hard-working public servants who, yes, they wear uniforms.

But I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that the equipment costs associated with the Saskatchewan marshals service are negotiated through a competitive process with SaskBuilds and Procurement. A standing offer for the supply of all equipment, Mr. Speaker, was made and the final costs have yet to be signed off on.

Mr. Speaker, we've got members opposite who are criticizing the equipment being used by our police officers. Would they stand and criticize the red serge being worn by our Saskatchewan RCMP, Mr. Speaker? That's just shameful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Sorry, I'll just mention that maybe it's not disrespect that they are showing towards the public service. But just caution the member. Sorry.

I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

**Nicole Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are very tired of this Sask Party government's waste and mismanagement. Maybe the minister doesn't know yet where the money spent on the marshals has gone. Let's talk about some of this equipment that's being purchased for these marshals. I'm going to make this question really simple for the minister. To the minister: how much money in total has been spent on the marshals to date? And along with these hats, what else has it been spent on?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Minister of Policing and Corrections.

**Hon. Tim McLeod:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are ahead of schedule with respect to the deployment of the marshals service. It's expected that those boots will be on the ground in the summer of 2025, Mr. Speaker. That is ahead of the original scheduled timeline.

And if the members opposite have questions about budget and finances, Mr. Speaker, we have legitimate processes through this Legislative Assembly through supplemental estimates and budget review. Mr. Speaker, they can certainly ask those questions at that time. Thank you.

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

### Funding for Education

**Matt Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last few months we've heard from parents, students, and teachers all across this province and they tell us the same thing — education in Saskatchewan is in crisis. Now under that Saskatchewan Party government, this province has gone from first in the country in per-student funding to last place. Our kids deserve better than last place.

Will that new minister commit to getting Saskatchewan children out of last place in education funding?

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

**Hon. Everett Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan spends the most per capita on primary and secondary schooling amongst all the provinces, Mr. Speaker.

This is a government that is going to be focused on getting back to basics, Mr. Speaker, as we talked about in the Throne Speech earlier this week, with a renewed focus on K to 3 [kindergarten to grade 3] reading in this province, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be focusing on improving those levels for students right across Saskatchewan.

We know that if children at those ages, if they are at a rating at the appropriate reading level by the time they're exiting grade 3, they are much better set up for success when it comes to their future academic success in school. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to focus on that to make sure that the students in this province do have the best ability to learn in the classroom. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Matt Love:** — Mr. Speaker, we've got a new minister and the same old, tired talking lines from this out-of-touch government. It's a shame his own caucus members don't even agree. The member for Batoche said herself in a letter from the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division that education funding just wasn't enough. "We have to find it in our budget." So what does that mean? Cuts somewhere.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister acknowledge that his government's underfunding of education has forced cuts in the classroom, or does he disagree with his own member from Batoche?

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

**Hon. Everett Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year's education budget received a substantial increase, nearly a 9 per cent increase in funding. \$2.2 billion in school operating funding for the '24-25 budget, Mr. Speaker, a \$180 million increase, which is a significant increase for our school divisions, supporting classrooms and teachers right across this province, Mr. Speaker. That \$180 million increase includes 35 million for supporting enrolment growth in this province, Mr. Speaker, \$8.6 million increase for classroom supports, over 66 million for the collective bargaining agreement, as well as additional funding for inflationary pressures, Mr. Speaker.

We're going through the budgeting process right now as we speak, and you'll see that this government will continue to make significant investments into education, supporting teachers, supporting students right across this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

[10:45]

**Matt Love:** — Mr. Speaker, we've heard all of this before, and lately we've heard a lot from the other side of the aisle about change. Now we kind of took it for granted that that change was going to be for the better. But the change that the Sask Party government continues to deliver is a change in education that's taken us from first in the country to dead last. That's bad for our kids, Mr. Speaker. Parents know it. Teachers know it. Some of their own members know it, Mr. Speaker.

When will that new minister commit to actually doing better and to getting per-student funding in Saskatchewan out of last place in the entire country?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Education minister.

**Hon. Everett Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated before, Saskatchewan does spend the most per capita on primary and secondary schooling amongst all the provinces in Canada, Mr. Speaker. I talked about the significant increase in the budget for education this year, Mr. Speaker.

As the new Minister of Education, I'm looking forward to engaging with those in the education sector right across this

province, whether it is the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, whether it is teachers, educational assistants.

And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, parents and families and students are those that we need to be focused on, Mr. Speaker, which is why in the Throne Speech you saw us talking about a return to back to basics, making sure that we are helping children in K to 3 with their reading skills and making sure that they do have the best ability to learn in our schools, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Regina Rochdale.

### Reduction of Interpersonal Violence

**Joan Pratchler:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the highest rate of intimate partner violence in Canada, and things are getting worse. Rates of intimate partner violence has increased 15 per cent last year, and family violence has increased 20 per cent.

Women and children in our province are the ones who are living and dying with this reality. When will we see a real plan from the Sask Party government to address intimate partner violence in Saskatchewan?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Minister of the Status of Women.

**Hon. Alana Ross:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no place for any form of violence in Saskatchewan, and we know that we have to take an all-of-the-above approach to address the high rates of interpersonal violence in this province.

We have worked alongside community stakeholders and advocates to partner and make investments towards reducing interpersonal and sexual violence. Our government takes violence and abuse very seriously, and we will continue to take action in this province through funding programs and legislation that will address all forms of interpersonal violence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Why is the member on his feet?

### MOTION UNDER RULE 61

#### Suspension of Provincial Sales Tax from Food in Grocery Stores

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — Prior to orders of the day, I seek leave to move a motion under rule 61.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Will the member briefly state the purpose of the motion and read the text of the motion?

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an important motion that I hope we can all be united on and support to deliver relief to people at a time when so many are just getting by and that are being hit so hard by that government's cost-and-tax hikes on so many fronts.

I would propose the following motion:

That this Assembly calls on the government to immediately suspend the collection of the provincial sales tax from food in grocery stores in order to help families struggling with the high cost of living.

**Speaker Goudy:** — The member for Regina Mount Royal has requested leave to move without notice a motion of urgent and pressing necessity under rule 61. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Leave has not been granted. Next item.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Kim Gartner, seconded by the Hon. Eric Schmalz, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Jared Clarke.]

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Betty Nippi-Albright:** — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. Just want to say that I'm really happy to be in this Legislative Chamber with 26 of my colleagues representing the citizens of Saskatchewan. Excited to work with each of them. Watching my colleagues win their seats on election night was exciting. It was very exciting, and I am eager to work with each of them.

And the diversity and growth of our team is absolutely amazing. And it is also with such pride to see that we have two additional Indigenous individuals representing two large rural ridings that make up half this province, Cumberland and Athabasca. Welcome to my First Nation brothers.

Some people probably are thinking this eagle feather that I wear on my hat is for show, but it's not. This was gifted to me by a sun dance lodge maker a few years back when I became an elected MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. And I was taken into that lodge and presented and gifted this eagle feather that I wear in my hair. And the community asked that I wear this each and every time I'm inside this Chamber to — a couple things — to represent our people, to be visible to our people when they watch on TV if they do, and also to remain true to who I am as a First Nation woman and individual. So that's why I wear what I wear in the House.

So you know, before I offer my response to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank a number of people. I would like to thank the citizens of Saskatoon Centre who took a chance on me in 2020 to be their representative here in the legislature. Thank you to the citizens for reaching out to me during the first four years and sharing your concerns about the challenges of making ends meet, whether it is paying rent, keeping up with

your mortgage payments, paying your increasing utility bills, paying for medication to keep you healthy, and putting food on the table.

Thank you for sharing your concerns also about the many social issues you see in our community on a daily basis. Like other areas across this province, there has been an increase in homelessness or individuals who have no place to place their head at night. There has been an increase regarding safety, and there are many, many people out there suffering with mental health and addictions. On the doorsteps across Saskatoon Centre I've heard how people are concerned with the lack of meaningful supports for education, cost of living, health, and especially mental health and addictions.

Thank you to the many folks from Saskatoon Centre who freely gave their time to join me in this last few months, joining me and my campaign team. Thank you to the citizens of Saskatoon Centre. Thank you for re-electing me on October 28th to serve another term as your MLA. And I was delighted to have won all the polls in Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give a special shout-out to my sweetheart, Ivan. Ivan, your love, support, respect for me and the work I do continues to inspire me to be a good servant to the constituency of Saskatoon Centre. Your commitment to take care of me and our family enables me to do the work I was elected to do. I could not have asked for a better partner to share this life with. I love you, sweetheart.

Thank you to my children and grandchildren and my family for standing with me. A special thank you to my siblings and traditional family for instilling our traditional Saulteaux and Cree ceremonies, customs, and practices that continue to guide me in the work I do.

To my campaign team: Shane, Carla, Cameron, Kim, Vanessa, Kirsten, Marty, Stephanie, Keli, and Kyle, thank you for your commitment and belief in me.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank three special individuals who always made me feel supported and stood with me in the last four years as an MLA. My brother, my Métis brother, Doyle Vermette, you have stood shoulder to shoulder with me. You have always been respectful and have always been a gentleman. You were truly my brother who looked out for me and made sure I felt safe. I could not have asked for a better colleague than you. You also stood with me when I felt alone in the fight to have this provincial government honour inherent and treaty rights.

And, Doyle, your passion for mental health and addictions was felt and seen in how hard you fought for your fellow citizens. My only wish is to continue with the passion and commitment in the role I now have as the shadow minister for mental health and addictions. Gichi-miigwech, my brother.

I also want to thank my Métis sister Jannet Shanks for always making me feel welcome and for graciously helping me when I needed help. You were my go-to person here at the caucus office. You made my office transition seamless. I already miss you.

Mr. Speaker, to my friend Cheryl Stecyk: Cheryl, I don't know what I would have done without you these past four years. You

have been a confidante when I needed one. You have provided guidance in how to navigate the huge bureaucratic system here at the legislature. You have dedicated over 45 years in serving the Saskatchewan New Democrats, and I want to say how I will miss you. You have been that continuity that was needed, and my friend, I wish you a happy retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I want to share a bit about Saskatoon Centre. It is where I worked for over 20 years before being elected as an MLA. That is where I moved with my baby after my husband's one-year anniversary of his tragic passing many years ago. It is where I feel most comfortable. That is where I see people who look like me and who are everyday people trying to live a good life raising their families and caring for their parents and loved ones. It is a place that offers me and others a sense of community and belonging.

On the other hand, Saskatoon Centre, Mr. Speaker, also faces challenges, many challenges. This government talks about a strong economy and vibrant community, yet many folks in this province, including Saskatoon Centre, are still being left behind. Mr. Speaker, we are losing a whole generation to drug overdose death and suicide. Family members and friends are in perpetual grief, especially Indigenous communities. Mr. Speaker, the government's commitment of over 500 recovery spaces and more mental health support treatment does little when people are dying because they can't access the support and help they need when they are ready.

[11:00]

Mr. Speaker, virtual recovery, online recovery, doesn't meet the needs of the people that need in-house treatment, to be in a facility to tackle their addictions. We need that in this province. The target measures, we don't have target measures. We say a commitment of 500. We've filled half of those spaces, over 200. We just talked about the 60 in-patient beds that are not even open. These are in-patient beds. People are wanting in-patient beds, Mr. Speaker.

People call the detox treatment centres. This past fall, this past summer, there was a three-digit waiting list to get into detox, and people were turned away. And I'm like, why, in such a rich province we have, that people are still waiting? And sadly, some of those people, crying for help when they needed it right now, died.

You know, we talk about here, Mr. Speaker, in this province, people are dying every day — every day — from drug overdose. Some are not even recorded or documented. And I think the people that are impacted often are Indigenous people. In the last term, my first term, the first session, every week I was going to a funeral in First Nation communities from drug overdose deaths. In one community alone, every single day there was a death. And we're losing that generation.

Saskatchewan has the highest rates of substance use disorder in Canada. I just hope for the people that we represent in this province, when it comes to mental health and addictions, that the treatment is there when they need it. And there are people that, when they want help and they are ready today, cannot access in-patient treatment. There's only a small window to get that help, especially when an individual wants to get that help. And if we

miss that, that person runs the risk of dying.

And what happens to the families? The families are the ones that have to pick up the pieces. Many of these people that pass away have children. Grandparents are having to pick up the parenting. So I know the government has talked about making changes and has made commitments when it comes to this mental health and addictions. How many of us have loved ones that have been, that are suffering from mental health and addictions? How many of us and our families and friends worry about getting that phone call at night that their loved one died from a drug overdose because there wasn't a place available for them when they wanted it?

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm just so grateful and honoured to be able to share this and hopefully reach people at their emotional level, because it impacts all of us — all of us.

So in closing I just want to say that thank you for this opportunity. And I will not be supporting the motion as presented by the Sask Party government, and I will be supporting the amendment that was presented by my colleague from Regina Walsh Acres. Gichi-miigwech.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Willowgrove.

**Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it is indeed a pleasure to rise in my place for the 22nd time replying to the Speech from the Throne. It is indeed an honour.

And I want to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on election to your Chair. The stately names of Hagel, Kowalsky, Toth, D'Autremont, Tochor, Docherty, and Weekes precede you, and I know that you will fill the job well. I know the skills that you will bring there will serve us all very well. And I want to thank you for accepting the position, and congratulations.

And also congratulations to my friend and caucus seatmate, the member for Lumsden-Morse, on becoming the Deputy Speaker.

I want to congratulate all the new members in the House — my goodness, 31 of 61 — new members and new friends on both sides of the House. To the returning members, friends, all of you on both sides of the House, it has been enriching to get to know you as friends. And I want to highlight those that didn't make it back here, those that did indeed make their province and their city and their community a better place.

And I'll name a few of them. I can't name everybody, but Laura Ross; Christine Tell; Muhammad Fiaz; Gary Grewal; Lisa Lambert; David Buckingham; Paul Merriman, minister of Health during the COVID crisis. My goodness, you know, the contributions. Bronwyn Eyre, minister of Justice; my friend Don Morgan, who was elected the same day, November 7th, 2003 as I was. People like Gord Wyant who went on to other ambitions, Doyle Vermette, and Jim Lemaigre. All people who made their province and this legislature a better place.

And there's others as well, some who had a chance to say their, you know, final words in the legislature, knowing that they wouldn't run again, and others who didn't. But I want to thank

each and every one of them for making this place a better place.

To the new members here: I so much enjoy hearing your maiden speeches. And the maiden speeches are so important. We get to learn a little bit more about you, and that continues on. And for members . . . Members that have been here for a while know you often refer back to those maiden speeches and talk about things.

You know, I had a chance to talk about John G. Diefenbaker being the MP [Member of Parliament] for the area that I grew up in, in Blaine Lake; Tommy Douglas, having an opportunity to meet with him one-on-one in the House of Commons when I was a Page on many, many occasions.

Having the opportunity to, you know . . . Premier Blakeney, when he came in his shiny bus to Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan I'd go and take that all in. I had the opportunity to be an assistant to Premier Devine. I consider Roy Romanow a friend. Lorne Calvert and I attended hockey games together and things like that. Brad Wall and I sat together in university courses and talking about, man, what if we had a chance to make our province a better place together, long before we were both sitting in this House. We had the opportunity.

So I had the opportunity to benefit from many members, past and present. And here we are in the thirtieth legislature and it is indeed an honour. And we all heard when we signed the roll — I had the opportunity to sign the roll, the MLA roll, for the sixth time — only 767 individuals, and now with all of us signing, still less than 800 members in 119 years had the privilege of calling themselves an MLA and sitting in this stately House. It is indeed a blessing.

Mr. Speaker, I have a new favourite number: 136. It's the number of votes, the plurality that I received in this election. So it's never lost on me how much of a privilege it is to be here. Those numbers, they were 288 on election night, and then they had some mail-in ballots and things like that, and that number kept getting less and less but it finalized at 136. And I had a plurality of 4,100 votes in 2020 and now 136, and you know that every vote counts. Every member in this legislature knows that every vote counts, and it sure does.

I want to thank my opponents in the election. There was a Green Party candidate, United Party, the NDP, and the Sask Party. I want to thank Alana Wakula and her team. The NDP did not have a long history in Saskatoon Willowgrove, but she ran a spirited campaign. And I congratulate her and her team for giving us all we could get and all we could take and making sure we worked hard right till the end.

Mr. Speaker, of course I want to thank my family, my wife, Trish. She's got her own career. She's, you know, a known television news anchor for 20-plus years in Saskatoon and now a major gifts officer at St. Paul's Hospital, working full-time, not always having time to door knock with me. But she did find some time to do that and to be part of our team, so for that I thank her very much.

And our children. Carter's a financial planner in Saskatoon and very much interested in politics, and he was very much a part of the sign crew. And I tell you, in our constituency that was a big, big job. He's recently asked his girlfriend to marry him, his now

fiancée, Meredith. And they're looking forward to getting married in 2026.

Our daughter Paige lives in Hamilton, but she followed the election very closely. She's going to school at McMaster University, doing a master's degree there and is quite interested in politics. But she enjoys living in that area. And certainly she's got a special guy in her life as well, so we'll see what happens. But she did attend the Taylor Swift concert last week. She was very excited to welcome Carter's fiancée and a couple of friends. And they all blew up air mattresses and stayed at her place and got to see the big concert, so that was great.

I also want to thank so many members of my family — uncles, aunts. My brother, they were playing the Maple Leafs at the time but he said he was watching the Saskatchewan election results more than the game. And they lost that game. That was their first loss of the year, so maybe he should have concentrated on other things. But thank you to my brother as well.

Of course I want to thank my campaign team. My goodness, a wonderful, wonderful team. Two Co-Chairs of the campaign: Brad Sylvester, somebody known to both sides of the House; and Curtis Kimpton. Again friends on both sides. Brad is a recipient of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal. He ran Canada Day in Saskatoon for over 30 years, recently volunteered on Optimist Hill. Curtis Kimpton, member of the Kinsmen, won national awards for Kinsmen, honorary colonel of the Canadian Armed Forces, and many, many other things too numerous to mention here. But they were my Co-Chairs and I thank them.

Rob Norris, distinguished member of this House, my constituency president, and a dedicated member of the campaign team as well. I want to thank him for all that he has done as well.

Another special member of my campaign team was Jacquie Klebeck, working 11 years here in the legislature, then going on to a career at SaskPower. And members opposite will know as well, when she worked in my office, when an MLA came to the office, no matter what party, they were a priority and their constituent was a priority and that the answer that they were looking for got back to them very quickly.

Jacquie was the person in the office, the first in the morning, the last to leave seven days a week, missed Thanksgiving with her family. She's also the author of *Provincial Point of View*, my newsletter that goes out to 10,000 people in Saskatchewan. Amongst all of those talents, she's also a great baker. And those of you who had a chance to stop by my office after the Speech from the Throne witnessed some of that. So I want to say a big thank you to Jacquie Klebeck.

Brianne Toupin was my CA [constituency assistant], the wonderful voice that you hear when you call my office and a very dedicated person. A new volunteer, Conni Larson, who also was a CA for another member in the House here and now volunteered.

[11:15]

Ken and Merle Sawatsky. Ken of course an entrepreneur extraordinaire, one of the creators of Crestline Coach in our province. Merle Sawatsky, former campaign manager, Eastern Star volunteer. Sign Chair Laurie Semenoff led a group of 30

people. Avery Sasakamoose was one of our best sign people and some 800 signs. We needed to do that because the member from Regina South Albert challenged me to who could put up more signs, so she owes me lunch and I'll be collecting on that soon.

Wade MacBain and his partner, Trish, and my financial agent, Darren Ulmer, and his wife, Jenn. White Owl Financial assisted in the finances as well. Janis, a teacher, door knocker extraordinaire as well. You know, it was great to be able to talk to teachers on their doorstep and say, I've got a teacher helping me right next door over here; Janice, do you want to come by and we can have a great conversation? And we did, so I thank Janice for that.

Many others: Megan M., Tamarha R., Tamara L., Thomas K., Ross G., Pamela H., Barry R., Jason Ritchie, who ran my get out the vote. And we all know how important that was, and with a plurality of 136 that was an important job.

Mitch, Jared, Jeff, Frank and Lynne, Mike E., Zac P., Vic, David, Brian, Mike, and many more — some 50-plus. And we're going to have a celebration at our house this weekend to thank those volunteers, as I'm sure all the members will be doing with their own volunteers. But we just owe them a debt of gratitude, people who put in so many hours to make sure that we are able to take our seat in the legislature. And they do with very little expectations of thank you. So for today I say to my team and to all teams across the province, thank you. Thank you very much.

We had another motivation though. What we had to do in ours, you know, we moved into our campaign office early and we got some new neighbours along the way, you know. The member from Saskatoon Eastview and the member from Saskatoon Southeast, they came and they took the office a few doors down. Well of course we always like a challenge, so our mantra in our office was to get there an hour earlier than the NDP team and to leave an hour later. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that we accomplished that. We accomplished that each and every day to no surprise whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

That election, there was so much to talk about in the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency though. Four new schools — two new high schools, two new elementary schools in one constituency. Mr. Speaker, if I don't know that is commitment to education in our province, I don't know what is. One constituency. Yes, it's one of the fastest growing constituencies in the province, but it deserves those new schools and they're announced in the budget. They're being designed and pretty soon we'll have shovels in the ground. And the people of Brighton are so, so thankful for that to happen. To that I have to thank the Premier and the Education minister and former Education ministers as well.

Brighton is also home to a family resource centre, those wonderful resource centres that are popping up all over the province that help new families with anything related to the provincial government, federal government, whatever their problem is. The people that work there are so talented that they're able to help those out.

We've got a new aquatic centre that's coming in northeast Saskatoon, you know. Many, many, many people are living there. A little overdue on the aquatic centre but that's going to be the basis for the two new high schools. And those two high schools

will be amongst the largest ever in the province of Saskatchewan.

Well the communities of Erindale, Arbor Creek, Willowgrove, Brighton, and East College Park, those are the communities that make up Saskatoon Willowgrove. Every community has got its own community association and wonderful volunteers and people that add so much to their community. So I want to thank those individuals and every individual in Saskatoon Willowgrove for believing in me, those that voted for me. And those that didn't, I'll work even harder to try to earn your support.

I will acknowledge the concerns on the doorsteps about the classrooms and about health care. So to the many teachers and parents that I talked to: there's no easy answers. There's so many special . . . You know, I go to a parent and talk to them and they say, my kid's special needs; the kid across the street is special needs; the one down the street is special needs. I know you can't have enough EAs in the classroom, but we have to do better. And indeed we have to do better.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk to you about when I was first elected in 2003. One of the first things that I had to do was attend a parent council meeting at Cardinal Leger School in East College Park in Saskatoon. And you know what the topic of that was? They were thinking of closing the school because there weren't enough students. Many of the parents of child-bearing age in the '90s moved to Alberta. They moved out of the province. There weren't enough students, if you can believe that, at the time. So they were actually thinking about closing Cardinal Leger School in 2003.

I fought against that. I worked hard with the school boards. They managed to decide to move French immersion into that school. They didn't have to close Cardinal Leger School. Well that school today, as the member opposite will know, is a thriving school and a great contribution to the community as well.

I want to single out the member there from Saskatoon University-Sutherland. He and I ran against each other in a previous election. And you know, he tried to get some of my door knockers over to his side. He tried to bribe them with samosas. And I'm a little hesitant to say that it almost worked with people. But we had a great competition and we certainly have a great friendship today.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you in education we have other challenges, the challenges of growth, but those are good challenges to have. And I am just so excited to work with the Minister of Education and the Premier and this team to ensure that those challenges are met, the challenges of growth, the challenges of infrastructure. I am so excited about what I heard in the Throne Speech here.

You know, on health care I acknowledge the concerns of health care workers but, Mr. Speaker, there isn't an ER [emergency room] in the country that isn't facing challenges right now. We have an aging population. We have higher expectations that are on our health care. But indeed, Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that there is more work to do.

You know, the NDP they talked about change. But when you talked about it to people on the doorsteps, what change are you hearing from them? They didn't know what change there was. There was no change really offered, but there was certainly . . .



They had a platform that wasn't even properly costed. So you know, when you talked about that, you know, no matter what change you want . . . And the opportunity I had was to say, whatever change you want, you need a government that's going to grow the economy. And I was fortunate in that people, you know, whether they were NDP or considering voting NDP or Sask Party or whatever, they knew it certainly wouldn't be the NDP that grew the economy, Mr. Speaker.

Something that we did different during the campaign, Mr. Speaker, something that I was very excited about — we celebrated the rich history of the Saskatchewan Party. And members on this side know of the rich history that we have. We asked each and every founding member of the Saskatchewan Party to come join our team. We recognized them with a special day.

And that team was led by June Draude. June Draude came to our constituency and helped three times and talked about, you know, to volunteers about the rich history and about what made the Sask Party come into being.

June Draude was followed by Ken Krawetz, and Ken came and gave one of his famous 30-minute financial tutorials to every door knocker. And everybody said that they learned a lot, but we had a lot of fun.

Dan D'Autremont, one of the longest serving members of the Legislative Assembly ever in Saskatchewan, came up and brought his rural voice to urban Saskatchewan and talked to many of my constituents. And I liked that.

But one of the most profound days was the Rod Gantefoer day. Rod wasn't able to join us. We all know that he's facing some health challenges, but we had an opportunity to thank him for announcing in this legislature the children's hospital. That was a special day that anybody that was there that day, you know. But it was even more special for me, because the day before Rod Gantefoer announced it in the legislature, he asked me to go to the board and let them know the good news that was coming. And it was a reflection of some of the work that myself and others have done to ensure that we . . . You know, at that time only Saskatchewan and PEI [Prince Edward Island] were provinces without a children's hospital. And Rod Gantefoer made sure that that happened.

I talked to Bob Bjornerud, Don Toth, Bill Boyd. We just ran out of time; we didn't have a chance to spend a day with them in the legislature. But the most important thing was that we highlighted those people that were so important to the formation of this party — 1997 and look where we've come to today. And much of that thank you has to go to those founding members, you know.

And of course, Ben Heppner is no longer with us but those that served with Ben, you never forget him — a wonderful, wonderful person — and his daughter Nancy helps us to be reminded of that as well.

So not only were we up for election in the last little while, so were our civic friends and colleagues. And I want to thank the people that put their name forward for mayor in Saskatoon. And all of them good friends of mine, and I wanted to thank them for doing that.

Of course, everyone here knows Gord Wyant and the contributions that he made to this legislature. And he took those talents and put them before the people of Saskatoon and ran a very spirited campaign. So, Gord, thank you for your friendship, for serving here, and for doing that.

Don Atchison — in my opinion one of the best mayors Saskatoon has ever had — tremendous accomplishments from bridges and buildings and growth and learning how to work well with other governments, Don Atchison as well. Cary Tarasoff, a friend as well. Great ideas and put forward a lot of challenges, and thank him as well.

And of course our new mayor, Her Worship Cynthia Block. A good friend of mine, Cynthia worked with my wife for 20 years at CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.], and I know of her many talents. And I had the opportunity to work with her on the committee for the downtown event and entertainment district in Saskatoon, something that's very important to our city and very important going forward.

I also want to thank Mayor Charlie Clark, you know, somebody who I worked very closely with and had an opportunity to talk frankly and freely about many things, and I want to thank him for his contribution and his onwards to other careers.

And you know, getting back to Mayor Block, I had an opportunity to already work with her in the legislature. We were accompanied by the two Health ministers to talk about homelessness in Saskatoon, and it was a very, very fruitful discussion. So I can guarantee members on both sides of the House that this government is addressing homelessness. This government is working with mayors like Mayor Block and Mayor Chad Bachynski here in Regina as well.

So I want to thank members of council in Saskatoon as well. Zach Jeffries, Ward 10, ran a campaign like we'd all like to run. You know, he wasn't challenged at all; he was acclaimed. And I want to thank Zach Jeffries for his contributions.

And Scott Ford, a new person on council representing Ward 8, a good friend, executive director of SaskTel Centre. And it was a spirited campaign in that ward. Eight candidates put their name forward for one city council seat. Dr. Kale, Henry Chan, Peggy Schmeiser, and others, so eight candidates. Democracy is in good hands in our province when you see something like that happening, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to my new responsibilities here and talk about being Minister of Advanced Education, you know, an honour that I don't take lightly. I thank the Premier and others in the government for having the confidence in me to allow me to take on this position.

Within cabinet this is a well-admired portfolio, not only because of the important and strategic role post-secondary education plays for the sustainability and long-term growth of our province, but also because it has some of the best people in government working there.

So I'd like to take in a moment to acknowledge the team in my minister's office: the chief of staff, Jill Stroeder; ministerial assistants, Dawn-Marie Cherkewich, Rushang Panchal; and my

admin team of Cindy Chamberlin and Jodi Holten. I also need to thank the amazing team of officials in the ministry. When you become a minister, you are confronted with many briefings and you have to get to know people very quickly, and I just want to thank them for that opportunity. Deputy Minister Louise Michaud from front-line staff. It's already evident to me that the people at Advanced Education are committed to ensuring our province has a world-class post-secondary sector.

I also want to thank the former minister for her guidance and help. And when you take on a new responsibility like that you look for advice from all over, and certainly the former minister probably has a perspective that's best suited to the new minister. So I wanted to thank her for that.

[11:30]

The ministry is made up of hard-working, dedicated professionals who are every day playing a key role in supporting the Saskatchewan Party growth plan by ensuring our province has an educated and skilled labour force that underpins Saskatchewan's strong economy and bright future, supporting tens of thousands, 53,000 — I'm a numbers guy; I had to ask how many students do we have exactly in the post-secondary sector in the province — 53,000 students from diverse backgrounds that successfully navigate their post-secondary journey in our province and providing new and unique programming that responds to the changing needs of our communities, including First Nations and Métis students.

I had the opportunity to be First Nations and Métis minister in this government, and I tell you, the things that you learn there you never forget. And you want to make sure that First Nations and Métis students are a priority, and they are.

It's an honour to be the Minister of Advanced Education and have the opportunity to work with them. The Speech from the Throne delivers on our government's election campaign commitments to make life more affordable. We hear some ideas from the NDP, some ideas that they tried in the election and didn't work, but certainly we are implementing those promises that we made.

This includes, and near the top of the list, increasing the graduate retention program by 20 per cent. The maximum benefit of a four-year university graduate will receive — and we heard about this on the doorsteps; we heard about this everywhere we went — from \$20,000 to \$24,000. Graduates of a one- to three-year program will also receive a 20 per cent increase in their maximum amount. One-year certificate, diploma, and journey person programs will see an increase in their GRP [graduate retention program] benefit from 3,000 to 3,600. Two- to three-year certificate or diploma programs will have a GRP benefit increase from 6,400 to \$7,680. Graduates from three-year undergraduate programs will see their benefit increase from 15,000 to 18,000. Mr. Speaker, a lot of numbers, granted, but such an important program.

This commitment by our government builds on the success of a unique youth retention program that we introduced in 2007. Again getting back to what the province was like, all of our students and all of our, you know . . . Having the threat of them leaving, grandparents, parents, brothers, and sisters worried

about their friends and family having to get an education outside our province. That changed in 2007 and a large part is because of this program.

And you know, over the last 17 years — now think about this — more than 85,000 graduates have benefited from it. You think about those graduates and their families now and their contributions that they're making to our province, it's with over \$800 million in benefits provided to our young people who have chosen to stay and work in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure some of you have noticed that, but I had to chuckle at the little Twitter argument that went back and forth between Brad Wall and Andrew Thomson, who was the minister at that time. And Andrew said, no, no, we created that; we created the graduate retention, not you guys, not you guys. Well I would say check the population statistics of our province and see what has happened since 2007 when we were 997,000 people and now enjoy over 1.25 million people. Yeah, that deserves a congratulations.

Our future is our young people and we are committed to giving them every opportunity to remain in our province after their studies are complete, to live, to work, to build their futures here, and to thrive — not only to live but to thrive — in our province. It's often said the greatest purpose of life is to live it for something that will last longer than you yourself. Mr. Speaker, I think this quote rings very true when I reflect on the Speech from the Throne and our government's commitment to making life more affordable for people in Saskatchewan.

We are focused on ensuring that sustainable funding programs and opportunities are in place in Saskatchewan's post-secondary students, students who want to pursue post-secondary education, whether it be at the University of Saskatchewan or the University of Regina here in the capital city or Sask Polytech or in one of our seven regional colleges or one of our vocational colleges.

And this is, you know, one of the areas that I'm excited about because I think people on both sides of the House agree that we have some of the finest education institutions in the country. We get right behind them. We had some fun when the University of Saskatchewan Huskies and the Rams football teams played each other. We had members on both sides of the House uniting and supporting. You know, I advised members opposite that it was time to get rid of their orange and don some green, whether it's Rams green or Huskies green or Rider green, and I think that message got through.

But in all seriousness, it's great to see members on both sides of the House supporting our great universities, whether it's sports or academia or any other way, and I look forward to their ideas as minister. As minister I look forward to their ideas. Not all the best ideas come from this side of the House. Most of them do, but you know, we're welcome to have your ideas certainly in the advanced education sector as well.

Students are our future, and my ministry and I are committed to supporting them from the first year of studies, to entering the workforce, to after they graduate and hopefully have a career in Saskatchewan. And we want them to be doing that here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We realize that some will move elsewhere and hopefully they . . . Whenever I meet somebody

that has moved on to somewhere else, I say, how long did we let you leave the province for? Because we want you to come back.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, this year we are investing \$793 million in post-secondary education in the '24-25 budget. That's an increase of \$28.2 million or 3.7 per cent over last year. And over the past 17 years, our government has invested approximately \$14.4 billion in post education and student supports. That has included funding for not only operating costs, which include things like faculty salaries and targeted programming, but also new campuses and new equipment for health care training labs and trade workshops, research and innovation investments made through Innovation Saskatchewan, skills training and basic education programming.

One of the most significant investments our government has announced recently, Mr. Speaker, is the investment of over \$200 million in funding for the new Saskatchewan Polytechnic Joseph A. Remai Saskatoon Campus. Now, Mr. Speaker, I know the Remai family well. I know the contributions that they have made. I know Joseph's son Barry is a constituent of mine, and his wife, Lori, and they have just done a wonderful job of contributing. And they were so excited at that groundbreaking back in Saskatoon a couple of months ago.

It is such a bright future that we can expect with Saskatchewan Polytechnic as they have their new campus at Innovation Place adjacent to the University of Saskatchewan campus. It will help shape that innovation corridor that is already taking place here in our province, that brings together entrepreneurs, students, and other institutions to create a centre of excellence in applied learning and research.

This new campus will attract more students, more talent, and more investment to our province. It will help prepare job-ready graduates who can support vital public services in our hospitals, in our urgent care facilities, and contribute to the ongoing growth and success of our province. As an MLA for Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, I cannot emphasize enough how important this new campus and the collaboration that it will inspire will not only be for the city of Saskatoon but for our great province as a whole.

Another significant investment Advanced Education has made, Mr. Speaker, that reflects the priorities of the Throne Speech is the over \$100 million already invested to create approximately 870 new training seats in 33 health care programs at post-secondary institutions across the province. And I must admit it was a surprise to me to see the numbers in my briefing books and to realize what a commitment there is to new training seats in our province. And again I thank former ministers for their efforts in that regard, and I look forward to a very, very bright future. We all know that those seats don't immediately create employees but over time they do, and now we are starting to reap the benefits of those decisions that were made three, four, five, six, seven, eight years ago.

Our government knows that a stronger, more responsive health care workforce depends on many factors, including higher quality education and effective recruitment and retention efforts. My ministry has been playing a significant role in supporting the health and human resources action plan since its inception, and I am very proud of the work that they have done in partnership with our institutions to operationalize this ambitious initiative.

You'll hear more of that from the Health minister, from the Premier, from ministers on this side of the House because the health human resources action plan is something to be heralded. We are doing all we can to ensure that individuals that have that education remain in our province and we attract those from outside the province as well.

Expanded seats are producing more graduates in critical health care fields such as nursing, mental health and addictions, medical diagnostic imaging, physicians, the new area of physician assistants, and many other professions. New programs not previously offered in the province such as occupational therapy, speech language pathology, respiratory therapy, and physician assistants are now being made available across both universities in Regina and Saskatoon; the Saskatchewan Polytech campuses in Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert; as well as expanding seat programs that are offered at various regional colleges across the province including psychiatric nursing at our North West College in North Battleford, sonography at Suncrest College in Yorkton, mental health and wellness in Northlands College in La Ronge, and continuing care assistants at Southeast College in Weyburn.

Saskatchewan students now have more opportunities than ever before to train for a career in health care right here in their home province, which is pivotal for the sector and the people and the communities that they will serve.

[Applause]

**Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you. I bring it up, Mr. Speaker, because what is important to note is that our government has a vision. We've had a vision, and now we have a continuing vision to make sure that these kinds of investments and initiatives are there to benefit now and in the future, all in support of our overarching goal to empower students to pursue their dreams to learn here at home. It not always was possible in our province, but it sure is today. Almost all fields that you want to go into, you're able to do here in Saskatchewan. Meaningful employment, build their careers here in Saskatchewan, and again I use that word "thrive" here in our province.

And while we want to support and encourage as many students as possible from Saskatchewan to pursue higher learning here, Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge the importance of international students and their contribution to this sector of our province. Now international students are facing some challenges. The federal government has come up with a plan to cap things. There was very little consultation on that, and I want to be clear that we support international students in our province. International education continues to be a priority for my ministry, particularly in light of the federal government's cap on study permits that were implemented this year.

Working with our post-secondary institutions, we will continue to support their efforts to make Saskatchewan a destination of choice for international students. We want people from around the world to choose Saskatchewan because they enrich our education and the education experience here.

This includes such initiatives as proclaiming International Education Week and working with the ministry to advance provincial international education strategy. This strategy is in

support of our government's growth plan, goals like building our international profile and reputation. I know I'll be working with the Minister of Trade to ensure that we attract and support students and researchers here to come.

Mr. Speaker, international students benefit our post-secondary institutions by bringing global knowledge and cultural diversity to our classrooms and filling seats in programs where there are not enough domestic students enrolled. Their tuition fees — let's face it — they help support programming and research in our province, and quite frankly they're vital to ongoing provincial economic growth and bringing global knowledge, cultural diversity to our classrooms and communities.

This is a province where it's always been welcoming for newcomers, and nothing has changed. I've said as we've seen over the last 17 years with this government, we welcome newcomers from all over the world, whether they be students, entrepreneurs bringing their skills, bringing their rich culture to our province. And I want to ensure that everyone knows that Saskatchewan remains a place where we welcome international students and researchers to study, work, play, and live in Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the Throne Speech has highlighted an important component of our government's mandate: to keep our economy strong and our future bright while also delivering change. This will come from advanced education continuing to attract and retain post-secondary graduates who can acquire a world-class education here and then stay to work, to live, to thrive — to work in health care, to work in the trades, manufacturing, education, agriculture, biotech, retail, hospitality, and so many other sectors important to this province. Our government has been committed to supporting post-secondary education since we were elected.

[11:45]

I look forward to working with the Premier, my cabinet and caucus colleagues, and members on the other side of the House. And you know, I know your job is to oppose, but I think the very best members of the opposition not only opposed, but proposed — proposed ideas. And I can tell you, from this minister, this will be very well received and very well accepted. And if you have an idea, bring it forward. Again I say, not all the great ideas come from this side of the House. Maybe the majority, but not all of them.

But no, in all seriousness, you know, we take our role seriously and we respect the job that you have to do. But also our main job is to make sure advanced education, our advanced learning institutions are the best they can be, and the only way we can do that is to work together.

It is a pleasure and an honour to be here in my 21st year as an elected member in the Saskatchewan legislature and part of this government. I will endeavour to continue to serve the people of my constituency, those that voted for me and those that haven't, and the entire province with a whole heart.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, colleagues on both sides of the House, thank you for this opportunity. Thank you. I will be supporting the budget, of course, and — I mean the Speech from the Throne

— and not the amendment. I'll be supporting the budget too when it comes, but I'll be supporting the Speech from the Throne today. Thank you very much.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

**Jordan McPhail:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a deep honour to be able to stand in this Legislative Building and be afforded the opportunity by my constituents, the good people of Cumberland, to serve them on the floor of this Assembly.

As I stand here on Treaty 4 territory, the territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Lakota, Nakoda, and the homeland of the Métis, I am proud to be a First Nations man, father, and husband from Treaty 6, and even more specifically the adhesion to Treaty 6 which created my home nation, the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, signed by one of my ancestors, Chief James Roberts, who, 135 years after signing of that treaty, one of his own family members, his nation's band member now stands in this, our provincial legislature.

I am proud of the blood that runs through my veins. It comes from traplines to farm lands right here in Saskatchewan. And I can't wait to get to work to serve the people of my constituency and this province to the best of my ability.

The path to this floor, for me, was paved by the hard work of so many, who I will thank not only here today but also through hard work on this floor and across the province to ensure that the belief that the voters have instilled in me is respected, honoured, and not taken for granted.

I'd like to start off by thanking my family. To my mother, Wendy McPhail: thank you for believing in me, for guiding me to be the man I am today, a man who believes in the power of people; that your power is based on your passion, not your position; and that I must always remember where I have come from. I was taught that we earn our respect through serving others, not by having people serve us; that we don't demand or expect anything from anyone that we wouldn't be willing to do ourselves. You have been my lighthouse, keeping the beacon of hope alive when the waters have seemed rough and treacherous. Thank you.

To my wife, Marlette: I have been given a gift from the Creator to have a beautiful, intelligent, and caring person like you to come home to, to share this wild ride we call life with, and to raise our beautiful daughters. The strength you have shown in your career to be one of the most dedicated, passionate, and loving nurses at our local hospital has given me great pride in calling you my wife.

You have shown me that I must never demand respect from anyone, but always demand respect from myself. I have spent many a night staring at the moon, full of anxiety. You are the rock in stormy waters that has kept me grounded, that has taught me to never give up but learn when it is time to take a break. You have had to sacrifice movie nights, slow dances in the living room, the odd night of games, popcorn, and a good glass of wine together, not only over the last few weeks but in my years as a local alderman as well. Thank you for always being in our family's corner and always having my back.

To my girls, Lily and Penelope, you have taught your daddy so

much for being so little, and it will be you two that I hope I will make the most proud of me. I know the phrase “daddy has a meeting” will be heard frequently over the years, but please know that the meeting that I will always look forward to is nights with you and your mom, a bowl of popcorn, and a good comedy movie that we can share some laughs with. I know I may miss some of your firsts, but know that when your triumphs and tribulations of life come around that your daddy is close by and I will be there for you two.

To my brothers, Mitchell and Chase, thanks for all the crazy stories we get to tell folks, from mini sticks in hotel lobbies, to pushing golf carts up hills because we ran out of gas, to jumping off cliffs in cold lakes. You two have been my greatest friends life can offer. And as friends and family can do, you have given me some of the greatest memories and have been there through some of life’s greatest challenges. I hope that you know that your big brother will also always have you under his wing to help guide you through life’s storms. Your individual achievements from golf pro to world traveller, your titles, ambitions, and dedication to your passion has always been an inspiration to me.

To my local executive, thank you for providing many years of service to myself, our membership, our party, our constituency, and the people of this province. A special shout-out to Norma-Jean for her incredible muffins that always fuelled an hour or two of door knocking.

To my team. Cathy Sapergia and her family to have lent her to me for the campaign. My financial agent, Trevor Putz, who kept a strong eye on the finances as we travelled many kilometres across the largest constituency in Saskatchewan — or as I like to call it, the land of lakes, rivers, trees, and mosquitoes the size of helicopters. To my sign crew, door knocker, campaign dad Don Young, thank you for the countless hours of conversation, your wisdom, and your camaraderie. To my team on the ground, Aman, Jena, Abby, and countless others, I thank you.

To my union, my co-workers, former colleagues, you have taught me many great lessons in life. You have shown me what brothers and sisters that may not share the same blood feels like. And the north-of-the-55th-parallel lockout crew would know, there is nothing like the brothers and sisters that I know from home.

To the membership of our party, you have given me thousands of hours of guidance, of deep debate, and great laughs. I honour your advice, your passion for progress in this province, and I hope that I am one of the team members that will do you proud.

To the many chiefs, mayors, councillors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Métis local presidents, and keepers of the drum, your spirit, dedication to community, its health, and the well-being of the people will always inspire me to ensure that this place honours your work, our culture, and our language and rights. I thank you for your stories, your prayers, and your sacrifices that you have made to serve your home communities as well.

Last and certainly not least, to the voters. You have bestowed upon me one of the greatest honours of my life: to serve you. I am deeply humbled to have your vote, your voice, and your trust to serve you in this House for this term. I will forever be grateful for the many hours spent chatting over a piece of bannock, a warm cup of tea, and always the great stories told of times gone

by.

As one of the youngest members of this House — and I will say, I think I’m speaker 32 on the list, and I will be turning 32 in just a few weeks — I recognize that I stand here on the shoulders of giants of many years past.

Our province is an amazing one, one that has brought in Crown corporations like the one that I used to work for, SaskTel. It is the birthplace of medicare, the breadbasket of the world, and the home of some of the most beautiful sights to see. I will work in this place to honour the work of those members past.

And while I’m talking about members past, I want to thank the members who have held my seat before me. MLAs Doyle Vermette, Joan Beatty, Keith Goulet are some of the names among many great northern voices to have held this chair before me.

I want to single out Doyle for a moment. Over the past 17 years, your work, guidance, mentorship, and thoughtful debates have made the transition into this life manageable. And I thank you for your time serving the constituency of Cumberland. I hope that you are proud of the work that I will do in this place, as I know I will have huge shoes to fill.

To these members and many other members who have sacrificed time from their families, their friends, and many nights spent in these halls to serve my parents, my grandparents, and the many people of our province’s history, I will respect all members of this House. As we may have differences in policy, we all want what is best for the province. We may just have very different ideas on how we get there.

And I am glad to live in a nation where those differences are settled here, on this floor, over great hours of debate and hard work from each of us, our respective staff members, and the Legislative Building’s employees. Each one of us plays a role in the province’s future, and I am proud to be one of the people who will work in this building, one of the 61 elected to do the work on this floor, and even more proud to be a part of a team of 27 working on this side of the House so that we can earn the support needed to take that side of the House.

If I can for a few moments, I want to tell my story. I had a grandfather and grandmother who grew up on a farm near Wiseton, a small tight-knit community that knew you had to rely on one another to survive; a family that knows that work that puts dirt under your nails and bruises on your body is work worth celebrating, not work that should be looked down upon. My father, a small-business owner, or as I better knew him, coach. You taught me that the name on the front of the jersey is more important than the name on the back. He has also taught me the importance of being an involved father.

On my mother’s side, my grandmother was born on a trapline in Sucker River, Saskatchewan. She learned her language, her culture, and knew the life as our ancestors did. She had that stolen from her in residential schools in this province. She fought with the demons inherited from those halls to survive in what was her new world. She never gave up. She worked to get herself educated, to provide her children — my uncles and mother — with the best life that she could.

My mother was a girl born on the reserves in La Ronge, knew some of the struggles of poverty, hearing stories of hauling water from the lake for the house. I've also heard the stories of the violence endured, and I know that it must have taken a great deal of resiliency to continue her education so that she too could provide a better life for her boys. I am gifted with the resiliency of many great matriarchs in my family. And I know that I will forever honour their sacrifices to make a better life and believe in the promise of tomorrow.

My wife, born in the Philippines, raised there in her early years. Her parents came to Canada with a dream to make a better life for their families, their daughters, and their grandchildren. As I often joke, my wife moved to La Ronge to start her career, but soon she met a cute guy and settled down — and then she met me. We have two beautiful daughters, Lily Rose and Penelope Rue, the pride of our home and the reason we both work to build a better future.

[12:00]

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I am so proud of the many people who have brought me to this place. From hard work and sacrifices of the last seven generations, I hope that the work done in this House that we respect and honour that work, and that we work to serve the next seven generations with honour, respect, and dedication. I often said as a municipal councillor, and hope that these words resonate with everyone that serves in this place, that we must plant the seeds to grow the trees that we may never sit under the shade of.

The campaign that we ran in Cumberland heard from many of the people that I've stated above. I know the struggles that they have faced. I know what measures they would have liked to have seen from this government in their Speech from the Throne, and that is not what they heard from this speech from the government. They didn't see themselves or their priorities from this government reflected in the Throne Speech.

And therefore I will be supporting the amendment as moved, Mr. Speaker, and I will not be supporting the motion. tēniki. marsi chogh. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Swift Current.

[Applause]

**Hon. Everett Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rousing applause to start the speech at noon here.

Thanks, Mr. Speaker. And I want to begin my speech as members on both sides of the House have done here today and in previous days by extending some thank yous to a number of people that are important to each and every one of us, and that includes myself here as well.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the great people of Swift Current for their support in this most recent election. And this is, you know, it's truly an honour for me to be re-elected as the MLA for the constituency of Swift Current. For me, one of the first — I think, and you might agree with me on this one, Mr. Speaker — but a regular election for us. Of course running in a by-election in 2018, as you did as well that year in the constituency of

Melfort, and our friend from Kindersley. So that was always a little bit different when you're running in a by-election.

And then of course in 2020, the provincial election, which was at the start of the pandemic, and that was a different election campaign. I was reminded of that as myself and our campaign team got into the storage lockers — we were getting ready for this past fall's election campaign — some of the remnants of that election and how it was a little bit different for us in 2020 and how we conducted ourselves as candidates right across this province.

So this one was a more routine election campaign, how we conducted our door-to-door campaigns, and so it was good to kind of get back to that. And some beautiful weather this past fall for the most part, the occasional wind storm here and there to kind of blow things around, but it was a great time to be out on the doorsteps.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to extend some thanks to my campaign team that helped me and have helped me not just during the election campaign but have helped me for quite some time, people who have dedicated their time and effort and of course money as well and everything else towards my re-election, and not just in this most recent election but in previous ones as well, Mr. Speaker.

My campaign team: Glen; and Nola who also serves as my constituency assistant, has done so since 2009; Don who helped out in the office; Denis and Lyle on the sign team, the folks that put up the signs but also help to take them down the day after the election; Ralph who joined me on the doorsteps along with Glen doing some door knocking.

And you know, you go out door to door sometimes by yourself when you can, but it's always a lot more fun and entertaining when you're able to go and do so with some friends and members of your campaign team. So thanks to Ralph and Glen for that. Jeremy who was my campaign, my business manager, making sure that the dollars and cents of it all made some sense and kept us on the straight and narrow. So thanks to them.

And thanks to everyone again in Swift Current who voted in support of, you know, not just me personally as their MLA once again but in support of our party and our government and the things that we have done in the past during our time that we've been fortunate to serve as government but also the things that we campaigned on in this most recent provincial election and things that we have committed to and will be following through on.

Some other brief thank yous here, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to my partner, Erin, for her love and support through all of this. She joined me here on Throne Speech day earlier this week as well as at the cabinet swearing-in ceremony as well. And I want to thank her, Mr. Speaker.

My mom and dad back in the great community of Melfort-ish, just outside of Melfort on the farm there. I'm reminded, by the way, it was my mom's birthday on Monday. I did remember to give her a phone call that night after she was taken out for supper in Melfort. I think they went to the Venice House as I recall, Mr. Speaker, which you'd be well aware of. I'll have to check and see if my dad paid actually, Mr. Premier, but I'm not sure who

paid the bill.

But I did give my mom a phone call. I did actually send her a . . . We sent her a gift in the mail. Pretty sure it hasn't arrived yet for obvious reasons, but hopefully it gets there by the 25th of December. I was hoping it would be there by the 25th of November, but I don't think that's happened yet. If she's watching this then she might know there's a gift coming. I didn't tell her that part. So thanks to my mom and dad who have been just wonderful to me throughout my entire life.

I do want to extend a congratulations as well, Mr. Speaker — and I'm sure I'm forgetting people to thank — but I do want to congratulate you on the role that you have taken sitting in that Chair. And I have gotten to know you pretty well, I think, over the past number of years, and I want to thank you for your support, your friendship, and what it is that you do as the MLA for the constituency of Melfort.

You know, I've said to you before — I think we've probably argued a little bit about this — about who is the best MLA to come from Melfort. And I've always said that there's some pretty big shoes to fill there with having the likes of Rod Gantfoer, Kevin Phillips, and others there. But you yourself, Mr. Speaker, are doing a fantastic job as well, and you just might be that individual.

A little story about the Speaker. Sorry to do this to you. I had a bit of an unfortunate incident in my family during this election campaign. My uncle had passed away unexpectedly in St. Brieux. And it was the member for Melfort, the Speaker, who offered to go out to my mom and dad's farm and take some flowers and just have a nice chat with my family. And for that, sir, thank you. You are a gentleman and a scholar and just a decent and good and honest individual, so thank you for that, Mr. Speaker.

All right, enough of the sentimental stuff and on to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. "A New Beginning" is the title of the Throne Speech as we have heard a number of MLAs that have spoken to the Throne Speech here today and previously in this Chamber. And on that front, Mr. Speaker, welcome to . . . Well first of all, welcome back to a number of MLAs, but welcome to so many new MLAs on both sides of this Chamber — 31 new MLAs in this Assembly, including 16 on our side here.

And I admit, I still haven't figured out all your names and where you're from. That's why we have the seating chart. And I'm going to be referring to that quite regularly because it is great to see on both sides some renewed energy, I would say, some fresh faces, some fresh ideas. And that goes for both the opposition side but also here on the government side as well.

I still remember, as you probably do, Mr. Speaker, being first elected and sitting in these chairs and in this hallowed Chamber and recognizing the significance of this place and the importance of what it is that we do here honourably on behalf of the people that we are elected to serve. So welcome to all of the newly elected members. And as well welcome back to those who, much like the Minister for Advanced Education who I think he said has given now 22 Throne Speech responses, and some of us here are first or second or perhaps sixth Throne Speech responses.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, at the start I wanted to start by thanking

the people of Swift Current, and also to talk about what the Throne Speech, "A New Beginning," means for my constituency. Sometimes I'll talk to my constituents and they'll ask, you know, what does this actually mean to me living on 3rd Avenue Northeast in Swift Current? And some of this is, you know, is big picture stuff, and I'll talk about that and touch on it in my remarks here today. And some of it is a bit more specific. And I am going to start on, well focus on a few areas here, but I am going to start in an area that I did spend some time in over the past four years, and that is the area of health care.

I want to thank everyone in health care that I was fortunate to meet during my time, first as the minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Seniors and Rural and Remote Health for the first three-ish years, and then most recently for the past year and a bit as the minister of Health.

And I just want to extend my gratitude to everyone in health care for the time you spent with me answering some of the dumb questions that I had, but accepting me as I tried my very best to get around to hospitals, long-term facilities, meeting with front-line providers — whether they were nurses, whether they were care aides, whether they were doctors and specialists — and being able to try and get a better understanding of what it is that's happening in the health care system in Saskatchewan: what's working very well, things that we need to continue to measure and evaluate and then continue to invest further into, but also areas where there are challenges. And we know that there are those.

There are those challenges in our health care system, but I would say that we as a government and our ministry officials and the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] are committed to trying to find solutions to that, working very closely with front-line health care providers and others to make sure that we can find a pathway through some of these challenges. And to those teams, thank you for what you are doing and know that this government has your back. And we'll be continuing to make record investments into the area of health care and looking for ways to make improvements and to make substantial changes.

By the way and speaking of which, I do need to thank the staff that I have been so fortunate to have supporting me in a number of roles. You know who you are. You're in rooms 204 and 208. And some of the faces and names have changed. There's been some constants there too. But thank you to my chiefs of staff, my administrative assistants, those that have been working in communications and casework. You know who you are. And I simply could not have done the job that I did without those people. Some of them have moved on to other responsibilities within the Legislative Building, and frankly some right outside the building too. Thank you to them.

As well thanks to — speaking of a new beginning — my new team in the ministry, in the minister's office of Education, room 361. They are putting up with me and helping to kind of help me fit into my role and cram my brain full of things and help me in this new role as well. So thank you to the team in Education. Thanks to the officials in the ministry, the deputy ministers, ADMs [assistant deputy minister], those in senior leadership roles that are, again, all trying to do their very best to make this province a better place.

Now in the Throne Speech there is of course a significant reference to a number of key areas, health care being one of them. And one of those areas is around surgeries and surgical wait times and the investments that we are going to make and the targets we are going to set and achieve in that area.

Thanks to the surgical teams for what they've been doing over the past number of years, hitting the record numbers of surgeries that we have been able to accomplish over the past several years here most recently. If you go back a bit — and you've heard us talk about this a little bit before in the past — in 2007 Saskatchewan had the longest surgical wait times in Canada, completing around 74,000 surgeries per year around that point in time. By 2014 after some really targeted investments and setting some targets, we were able to reduce that down to the shortest wait times in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Now last year we had over 95,000 surgeries completed in this province. That was a record number building on a record number of surgeries done the year before that, an increase of more than 28 per cent in terms of the number of surgeries done in Saskatchewan. In this Throne Speech we have set a target of 450,000 surgeries over the next four years, increasing capacity so that we can reduce surgical wait times as well to no more than three months. Now the way that we're going to be achieving that, Mr. Speaker, is by of course continuing to train and hire more of those people that we need to be able to perform these surgeries.

And by the way, thanks to the surgical teams for the work that they do: the head of surgery for the province of Saskatchewan, Dr. Mike Kelly, the heads of anesthesia and other areas in health care that are all part of this health care team. We cannot achieve these sorts of numbers without not only their leadership and guidance as we develop these targets, but also being able to implement them, trying to make sure that we as a government are really doing everything that we can to help provide timely access to surgeries, timely surgeries for people right across Saskatchewan regardless of where they live when they need it.

So again a very aggressive target when it comes to the surgical wait-list here in Saskatchewan, but one that I am very confident that as we had set a target previously that we in conjunction with those in health care will be able to achieve.

You'll see more investments into health care infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. More than \$2.6 billion will be invested into health care infrastructure, as outlined in the Throne Speech, over the next four years. So we're going to continue to see significant investments.

Some of that is happening right now as we speak: a new hospital being built in the city of Weyburn; of course the major project in Prince Albert, the new tower next to the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital which I had a chance to visit in September and not only walk through P.A. Vic but also see the construction site right next door and actually, you know, talk to the front-line health care providers who are pretty excited about what they're seeing next door, excited and looking forward to what that is going to bring to not just Prince Albert but to people of northern Saskatchewan who will be served by health care in the city of P.A.

[12:15]

Mr. Speaker, we've heard some of the other members on this side of the House talk about achievements in other areas of health care. The HHR [health human resources] action plan that was launched a couple of years ago to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain health care workers in this province and where we've had and seen some significant investments and improvements already, whether it's through some of the rural and remote recruitment incentive programs that we've initiated to try and attract people to positions, to vacancies and working in health care facilities in rural areas. And that has been very well received.

The creation of more permanent full-time positions in health care. That was something that, you know, when I was the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, that I heard on the doorsteps and that I heard at . . . well frankly not the doorsteps but in health care facilities on the front lines, I should say, Mr. Speaker. As I was talking to health care workers who would say, you know, we have this vacancy and part of the reason we have a temporary service disruption is because we haven't been able to fill this vacancy, but it's because we haven't had any interested applicants because it's not a permanent full-time position.

We took that back, Mr. Speaker, to the ministry and the SHA and said, you know, look, what would it take if we were able to make that position a permanent full-time position, to annualize it that way and thereby make it more attractive for someone to apply for that position? We've seen that work very successfully across this province, Mr. Speaker. I think we created 250 new permanent full-time positions in health care and the last I heard just prior to the election, nearly all of those — I think 245 of those 250 new permanent full-time positions — have been filled, many of them in rural communities right across this province.

And continued work that needs to be done in the HHR space, not just in rural communities but also in northern communities that are served by health care teams, and of course in our major cities, in Regina and in Saskatoon regional health care sites as well.

New compensation agreement for family physicians, Mr. Speaker, that we worked very closely with the SMA, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, on. That was a significant achievement for us in this past spring's budget. More investments into women's health, Mr. Speaker — the new breast health centre here in Regina. Of course we talked about some additional investments in the election campaign that are part of this Throne Speech to address and provide more options for women when it comes for screening of cervical cancer, Mr. Speaker. That will be conducted and carried through as part of the Throne Speech.

More research funding for ovarian cancer research as well, Mr. Speaker. More urgent care centres that have been talked about, building on the initial success of the urgent care centre in Regina and soon to be the urgent care centre in Saskatoon. Continuing to train and hire more doctors and nurses and care aides and you name it, paramedics, those who work as lab techs.

The Minister of Advanced Education talked about the huge number of new training seats that have been created right across this province to provide Saskatchewan residents with the opportunity to seek careers in health care right in their own backyard. And that has meant establishing some new programs here in our province that is now under way.



The establishment of an occupational therapy program, a speech language pathology program, Mr. Speaker, physician assistants as well. These are all very much needed, not just in our province. It's very competitive out there in health care right now, but adding more of these training seats, that's going to bode well for us in this province in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, engaging with health care providers, with registered nurses, with licensed practical nurses, with continuing care aides, all those that are involved in the nursing area — engaging them as part of the nursing task force that we talked about earlier this fall as we try to find some solutions and work collaboratively with our nursing partners, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, in the health care section in the Throne Speech, we talked a lot about making sure that everyone in Saskatchewan has access to a primary health care provider, either a doctor or a nurse practitioner, but a primary health care provider by the end of 2028. And you know, we're doing some of that work already. We created more positions in this year's budget for nurse practitioners in the province. There's been also scope-of-practice expansion as well, Mr. Speaker, utilizing nurse practitioners more, utilizing pharmacists more, utilizing paramedics more as part of our health care teams. Family physician-led primary health care teams, that's an important part of it as well.

In the city of Swift Current one of the pilots that we've managed to launch there a couple years back is what's known as the patient's medical home pilot, where at one of the clinics in Swift Current we've provided them with some additional funding so that to support the family physicians there. They've been able to hire some other health care providers — nurses for example; you name it — so that they have a team of medical professionals within that clinic.

And it might be that you call that clinic if you happen to be a patient there looking for an appointment with your family doctor, but you might be better served by somebody else on the team. Perhaps it's a nurse practitioner or somebody else that can perhaps provide that health service you need that day. And what that does is that allows us to be able to free up some medical appointments for the family doctor for other patients, so essentially shortening their waiting list and eventually — and we're starting to see that happen already, I think — allowing them to be able to onboard new patients onto the clinic as they free up physicians' time. So I think that's an important innovative model that's happening in Swift Current, and we're very much looking forward to expanding that to other parts of the province.

In the area of pharmacy I talked a little bit about expanding scope of practice for pharmacists, and we've done some of that with a pilot in Swift Current where pharmacists there at the one pharmacy can treat and diagnose and manage COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease] and heart medication for patients. That is working very, very well in collaboration with local family doctors.

And also this fall we announced the start of a program, again under the scope expansion area of pharmacy, to allow pharmacists to be able to diagnose and treat for strep throat and be able to do that with point-of-care testing on site at a pharmacy, giving people another option so that . . . Perhaps at 8 o'clock at night that's the only health care type of facility that might

actually be open in their community, or it's a better place for them to be, as opposed to being in the ER at the local hospital at 8 o'clock at night when you could be better perhaps treated by a pharmacist who is simply practising to their full scope. We want to be able to continue to do that, to broaden the health care teams that we have, Mr. Speaker, so that they have the ability to serve more people in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I'll move on to a couple other sections in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, under the area of affordability. And we've had a lot of discussion and talk and debate in this Chamber already thus far in the limited sittings that we've had, but around affordability measures. And as the Minister of Finance and other ministers and MLAs have spoken to you from this side of the House, this Throne Speech we'll be delivering, as we campaigned on this past fall, the government's election campaign commitments to make life more affordable for everybody across Saskatchewan.

That includes the largest personal income tax reduction that people in this province will have seen since 2008. It means increasing the low-income tax credit by 20 per cent; removing the carbon tax as we've heard, Mr. Speaker, on home heating for another year; doubling the active families benefit; creating a home renovation tax credit. I heard about that by the way, Mr. Speaker, not just during the election campaign but even when I was doing some door to door a year prior to the campaign about that particular initiative. So bringing that back and making that to be a permanent tax credit.

Increasing the personal care home benefit by \$1,000 a month. Mr. Speaker, when I was the Minister Responsible for Seniors, that was something that I heard about from seniors and the advocacy groups, in addition to advocating to have seniors be able to stay at home as long as possible, but allowing them to be able to afford and be able to pay so that they can be in a personal care home. And that benefit, you know, that was lobbied to us as a government as something that would be of benefit, and so we're looking forward to implementing that.

Mr. Speaker, increasing the disability tax credits, the tax credit supplement, and the caregiver tax credit by 25 per cent, and as well increasing the graduate retention plan benefit by 20 per cent to a maximum of \$24,000.

Education and child care, Mr. Speaker, the area that I am now responsible for and very much looking forward to this new role, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Education. As the MLA for Swift Current I've had the opportunity, over the past number of years since 2018, to be engaged with those in the education system in my neck of the woods through the Chinook School Division and Holy Trinity School Division. Meeting with teachers directly, meeting with EAs, meeting with school divisions, directors of education, board members, and most importantly as I said, teachers, EAs, staff, but most importantly parents and children.

Mr. Speaker, we've been fortunate in Swift Current. We've been able to benefit from some of the previous investments made in the education system, such as the All Saints and École Centennial joint-use school project, a \$51 million project, joint-use schools that opened in Swift Current back in 2014, part of the 69 new or replacement schools in our community — sorry, across this province — since 2008.

In the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, there's reference to funding for major renovation projects in education right across Saskatchewan. And I'm proud to say, that includes a major one in Swift Current, the comprehensive high school where the needs of some significant dollars invested into the HVAC [heating, ventilating, and air conditioning] system and some other things at our local comp high school. And that is part of continuing investments into education, is part of the Throne Speech.

Funding for the Ministry of Education for family resource centres, right across this province. There's 21 of these across Saskatchewan right now, Mr. Speaker. That includes one in Swift Current that recently, in the past year or two, became a beneficiary of some provincial funding; some annualized stable funding for our family resource centre in Swift Current, which does some amazing work supporting families right in this community. And I'm just very grateful that we're going to continue that work in education, talking about those sorts of investments on the capital side.

Child care spaces, Mr. Speaker. There are nearly 25,000 regulated child care spaces already in operation in this province, with more than another 5,100 currently under development so we can build capacity in that integral sector of our province. And in the Throne Speech we indicated we will be providing funding for 12,000 additional new child care space developments by the end of the next fiscal year. And we're going to continue our significant investment and commitments in this area.

Back to basics, Mr. Speaker, and hear us talk a lot about that. And you will see this government with a renewed focus on getting back to basics in our schools, ensuring that our teachers and our EAs and support staff are resourced, that they're properly resourced so that they have the funds that they need and have the resources they need to help our students succeed in the classroom. And we're going to include a focus on improving reading levels, Mr. Speaker, specifically kindergarten to grade 3.

We know, and experts know, that a child's ability to read at grade level by the time they're exiting grade 3 is the single greatest predictor of future academic success. And they know this — they've said this — that grade 3 reading levels are considered to be a key indicator in how students are going to perform and how they're going to be able to move forward in middle years, in junior high, in high school, of course at a post-secondary education — whatever it is that they choose to do in their career going forward.

So those building blocks that we need to be able to support our teachers and our education system to help build that for our students at the youngest years, that is crucial. That really is critical, Mr. Speaker, so we're going to continue that focus on K to 3 reading to make sure that kids have every opportunity to succeed in the classroom.

As part of that, we also announced in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, we'll be expanding the specialized support classroom pilot from the current 8 schools to 200 more schools throughout the province over the next four years. As people may know, these specialized classrooms help our teachers and support staff address challenges in the classroom. And they provide students with complex behaviours a learning space that is supported to specifically address their needs while at the same time working

to reintegrate them back into their classrooms, so giving them that opportunity to succeed.

The early reports, Mr. Speaker, is that we are seeing positive responses from teachers, from staff, from parents. A reduction in classroom disruptions are being reported by teachers. And most importantly, it's helping these kids with behavioural challenges and providing them with some of the extra assistance they need in order to be able to be reintegrated into their classroom so that they can succeed in their academic studies, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very much looking forward to engaging with those involved in the education system right across this province, those on the front lines — teachers, EAs, the newly elected school boards and school board Chairs. Congratulations to them as well, Mr. Speaker, for deciding to seek a place on the school board and to run and to put their name forward so that they can make a better education system for all of us.

I'm going to get close to wrapping up here, Mr. Speaker, with just a couple of stories here. One is an education-based story where during the campaign I was invited to shoot a short little, kind of, two-minute video for one of the schools in Swift Current. I'd just talk a bit about the election and politics. And I shot that video, and actually there was one day I was campaigning and I was going door to door at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, so kids are kind of getting home. And I'd hit a few doors where a parent would answer the door but the kid would be there too, and they'd go, oh yeah, you had a video at the start of the thing there. And I said, was it terrible? They said no, it was okay. So that was not too bad.

I also got invited to École Centennial to speak to a number of different classrooms as well. Mainly grade 3 students, but there was some other grades too. And I tell you, kids ask some of the best questions and the toughest questions, including, you know, why do we have taxes and why are they high? And can we operate without taxes? And so I try to explain that a little bit. And you know, what happens in this place, the legislature and the House? What's a vote, and you know, why are votes important? How does this all work?

Really hard questions, like who's your favourite hockey team, Mr. Speaker. And the Premier will be happy to know this, that in that particular classroom when I answered the Edmonton Oilers, it was pretty popular. A lot of fist-pumping going on there. So I guessed correctly in that particular classroom, Mr. Speaker.

The other question I had . . . By the way, this one caused me to pause for a second. The one student asked. He said — this is a grade 3 student — he said, do you have a backup plan if you don't win? And I said, well, I haven't thought too much about that, but I probably should think about that, and here's what I did before I got into politics and . . . But I thought that was a pretty keen question coming from a grade 3 student.

[12:30]

And that, you know . . . Those are some of the stories that we all kind of look back on, a story or two we had from our election campaign, something that maybe brightened our day a little bit, gave us a laugh, or perhaps gave us a moment to pause and to reflect back on why it is that we ran — why we ran, most of us,

often in a contested nomination and then from there ran in an election campaign.

And in many respects I think you can look at all 61 of us in this Chamber. We all had different paths to getting here, and perhaps some slightly different reasons for being here. But in the end we want to be here because we want to make our province a better place, that we want to serve our communities, whether it's our friends and our neighbours, or perhaps, you know, people that we run into and say hi to at the hockey game or when you're shopping downtown. And it might even be just people you haven't met yet, strangers in your community. You want to be able to serve them.

This past weekend we had a pretty wicked snowstorm across most of the province, including Swift Current. We didn't escape it there. Sometimes we do. I met three people who I hadn't met before on Sunday morning because they managed to get stuck in the snow on the street kind of close to where I live. And I managed to help them out, including the one fellow; met him at about, well, 7:30. I'm sitting in bed having coffee and I could hear tires spinning, and that's not a good sign. So I grabbed my jacket, my toque, and mitts and headed outside.

And a fellow there was . . . He was stuck pretty good in the street, lots of snow; had recently moved here from Nepal, and he's an employee at a newly opened restaurant in Swift Current. He was driving his wife to the morning shift at a local health care facility, and he was in a bit of a bind. She managed to get a taxi to get to work on time and eventually — probably half an hour, 45 minutes later — he and I managed to rock his vehicle out of the snow and get him back . . . well, at least get him back home. And he asked me a question. He said . . . Because he'd only moved to Swift Current five months ago, and he said, does it always snow like this? And I said, well last year, you know, we didn't have snow till January, but yeah, pretty much it does.

And so then we went through the merits of knowing the phone number for the tow truck company and the importance of winter tires, which he hadn't heard about yet. But we did manage to get him out, and I've actually been texting back and forth with him. He did manage to get into a local tire shop on Tuesday and get some winter tires, so he says he's feeling much more confident now. But a newcomer to Swift Current who had only moved here five months ago with his wife and his child, and that's someone that I'd never met before that I'm elected to represent.

Secondly, the other person I think of — and he didn't get stuck that day — but he's an amazing man, John Watson. And I have talked about John before, I think, here in a member's statement. John joined the . . . He's a World War II vet. He joined the Royal Regina Rifles in 1944, at the age of 18 years old. He was a private in the Canadian Armed Forces. He travelled across Europe in World War II, the British Isles to France to Germany and all across Europe as part of the armed forces.

John was born and raised in the Swift Current area. He was nominated for not only the Queen's Platinum Jubilee medal but also the King's Coronation Medal, so he was here in Regina earlier this fall for a ceremony for that. John will be celebrating his 99th birthday next month, and you know, last December they had a 98th birthday party for him at the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

And John, he's sharp as a tack and he is spry. He's probably, I think, frankly a bit more spry than I am these days. And he's an amazing man, and you can't stop the guy. John phoned me the day after the election, and he left a voice mail at my MLA office congratulating me on my re-election. And I had a lot of those types of phone calls and emails, but that was one that really stuck with me, Mr. Speaker, because I phoned him back and I said, John, I can't say thank you enough. I should be thanking and congratulating you for your service that you have done, for your time in the armed forces. But also, he'll be 99 years old and he still tells stories about the importance of service to his province, to his community, and to his country.

Two individuals in Swift Current, Mr. Speaker, one whose life began nearly a century ago, and the other who moved here with his family five months ago for a new beginning in the great city of Swift Current, Mr. Speaker. Two different paths, two different gentlemen, but both part of the city of Swift Current and both that I am very, very proud to represent as the MLA for the city of Swift Current and the great community that I am elected to serve and who I think will be benefiting from this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I will not be supporting the amendment made by the members opposite, but I will be voting in favour of the Throne Speech moved by the member for Kindersley-Biggar and seconded by the member for Saskatchewan Rivers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis.

**Don McBean:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, my light is on. Good afternoon. We are into the afternoon.

Three and a half years ago, June 2021, I was entering the next and highly anticipated phase of my life — retirement. I had a very astute vice-principal who wrote a speech that she delivered to the peers of my admin council at Saskatoon Public Schools. Very well received. They said she was accurate, spot on when she exposed all my foibles and eccentricities, how no one ever got an email or entered into a conversation with me without some caveats of tardiness, explanation of a few acronyms, a song, a poem, a cartoon, a book. Laurel, you're my first thank you because you've exposed me and have led me to now double down on these. So this isn't even my preamble. This is my pre-preamble.

Good afternoon. With great humility meshed and mashed with a good deal of excitement, more than a bit of tricky, nervous energy, I stand up this afternoon to speak to the honoured members, legislative administrative staff, and guests assembled here. I'd like to specifically target that, so much more importantly than the undoubtedly esteemed ensemble in the Chamber with me, these words are directed to the sprawling and disparate community of the life of Don McBean: my family, the old friends, and exponentially quickly growing gathering of new friends, with the ultimate focus on the constituents of Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis.

"Humility" was a word in that first sentence. It is impressively improbable that I am occupying this time and space, shouldering the incredible responsibility. And over the next few or more

minutes, you'll hear some of the threads of my story, and you'll wonder yourselves how on earth this has happened.

But as is so often the case in life, it's not how I got here that's important; it's what do I do now? The essence of every action, every moment of every day, everything we experience, we have the ultimate power of our response — to be hurt or to be strong, to be broken or not, and to follow up with whether to help or hurt, to bring up or to bring down the situation, to make the world around us in the immediate or fully expanded a better place to be. And that's why I'm here, to make this a better place.

There are a few big rocks in life. I hope we know the story of big rocks. You want to put a bunch of big rocks and smaller pebbles and sand into a jar. You better put the big rocks first.

My big rock is an acronym and a song and the licence plate of my car and what I say every morning. It's GBATT — G-B-A-T-T — getting better all the time. Yeah, it's from The Beatles, you know. But my humility, which I do cloak, I admit I cloak with some self-deprecation, is real. I shake my head when I find myself in this surreal new reality of being an MLA, the origin story of which you'll hear a bit of. But I've written way too long a speech so I'm going to be editing a lot as I go through this.

I've never felt particularly worthy of any of the successes I've achieved in life, whether it's because of a lack of love from my mother — which isn't true; she loved me dearly; I was her favourite actually — or being frighteningly aware of my privilege as an old white cis male living in middle-class North America.

It's not how or why I'm here but rather what I do with it. And what I've tried to do with it every day, every morning that I get up, is to gauge how I am able to make things better and not just make my situation better. I'm far less interested in my situation than I am in the situation of those outside my immediate life. Whether it's the environment, whether it's the person I'm having a conversation with, whether it's the fellow standing in front of Safeway asking for two bucks, it's about making things better.

And in order to do that we need to have empathy — empathy, true empathy. And I'm not cutting out this part because there's a fabulous book, "Seven Essential Virtues," Michele Borba. Everyone in Saskatoon Public Schools got this book. Empathy . . . Though she said all seven were important, empathy was the foundation of it. And it's empathy that has me sitting on this side of the House. It's an old vintage poster that I have in my office at home that I'm looking forward to getting in my office here: Tommy Douglas, "People before profits."

Empathy is why I'm sitting here, and humility is why I find myself in the skin of an MLA — so incredibly improbable. But no matter. I won't say that I'm proud to be here. I'm not a career politician. I've never aspired to be here, honestly. It's a bit of an accident, a fortuitous accident, a happy accident.

But on top of the classroom that I worked in for 11 years in a little tiny two-room country school in Quebec — a reverse-image Vonda, little English enclave — after being in the classroom enough years, I started to put the important things up on the ceiling so that they wouldn't have to change with the seasons and the years. And in the very centre was, on an old dot matrix fan-

fold paper like we used to have that the students coloured for me, "The best you can." Because that's what we're here for: to do the best we can.

I'm skipping the paragraph and the first three of six stories about how my name is Don McBean and not Don McBean. Most of you have started to hear a lot of those, and I'll be very happy to tell them to you in the hallway.

I mentioned excitement in the first sentence of my preamble. I am so excited to be standing here because, as near as I can understand, I don't get interrupted. I don't get told to stop. Because if you want to know something about me, I like to talk. My students know I like to talk. My children know I like to talk. My wife cringes at how much I like to talk.

When I told my wife, the love of my life, Valérie Labé, that I was going to have to make a speech that was going to be 10 minutes — and I'm thinking, whoa, 10 minutes, that's pretty long — Manon, her daughter, my stepdaughter, my daughter except for a bit of DNA [deoxyribonucleic acid], truly my daughter, she laughed out loud. "Ten minutes? You'll never be able to keep it under 10 minutes."

And guess what, Manon? You were right. This text, if I was actually reading from it, would be well over. And I was so happy to hear that well it's not 10 minutes, 10 to 15, 15 to 20. And I think I just got the nod from the Whip that if I go over 20 and take us right up to the hour, that'll be okay. I got a thumbs up from the Speaker too. So today is my time, apparently one of the few times I'll be free from interruption through heckling, though I know better than to think that they're listening.

[12:45]

**An Hon. Member:** — Oh, we're listening.

**Don McBean:** — The hon. member from Willowgrove, thank you very much.

We've heard a number of speeches. There's some very common threads in those speeches and of course I need to include them. Mr. Speaker, congratulations. Newbies, congratulations. All of us, congratulations. I had little to no understanding of what a political campaign entails because I've never participated in anything in this world of politics and campaigning. But I learned that, like in so many areas, but especially, this is a team effort. And what an incredible team.

When it happened on the evening of October 28th that it looked pretty clear that I was going to become the MLA for Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis, everyone was coming up to me and saying, you won; you won. And I stopped them and said, no, we won.

So there are, like all of us, an impossibly long list of thank yous. But I'm going to start with those directly responsible for getting me here — 4,721 eligible voters from Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis who thought that this party, this leader, this imperative for change, and this guy were worthy of an X beside the name. There are just about as many, about 700 less, who put their X beside Parminder Singh and the Sask Party, others voting for Green, an incredibly, majority number of people who didn't vote. These are all issues for us to follow up with.

But to everyone, those that voted for me, those that voted for others, those that didn't vote: I will serve you with honesty, passion, and determination in whatever I can. I don't use the word "promise" lightly or very often, but I do not hesitate today to promise that I will not let you down in the confidence you've delivered.

And all the residents of our expansive riding straddling both sides of the river, northern edge of Saskatoon — I have a relatively long paragraph about Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis, but it could also fit into a member's statement at some point — I just want to point out that quite uniquely we now straddle the river. We're the Northwest, the riding from Gord Wyant over the last great many years. We have picked up the Northeast.

And we are named after the bridge. The bridge is a wonderful metaphor for what we're doing. But the name of the bridge comes from Chief Mistawasis. And I want to point out that the Chief Mistawasis First Nation, located in the riding of the Premier, is the perfect bridge I believe for an urban-rural attachment. And I definitely am looking forward to creating that bridge.

How did I get here? Wow, I got about four pages. Really quickly, I paid \$10 to join the NDP so I can vote for a leader sometimes. I get a call. I get a call. Do you want to renew your membership? Of course. Do you want to come to a meeting? I'm in the second year of my retirement. Sure, I'll come to the meeting. They tricked me.

So then I'm on the executive, and then I'm getting involved. But I was retired. I was away for most of that spring. And in fact I was in London, Ontario, visiting my daughter Katie and the first three of our grandchildren: Ellis, Bennett, and Oakley. And I get a call from the member from Regina Mount Royal. Hey, he just walked in. And he says, "I get your name. Maybe a lot of people in Chief Mistawasis think that you should put your name on the ballot." It was followed by several, many months of anguish and angst and craziness.

But there are three important markers that I want to point out in getting through that angst and anxiety. The first one was calling back Gillian Strange, who had been the candidate and is a close, fairly close personal friend and colleague. And I said to her, if I do this, how much do I get to be Don McBean, and how much do I have to be that NDP guy? And she didn't give me a very good answer. She really should still be in politics. It's an important question to me, and one that I now have four years to research. Today is kind of a little trial.

The second marker happened during innumerable conversations with Valérie. So many considerations, so many pros and cons, the less-than-obvious path of a retiree and his retired spouse with all sorts of plans that line up with a traditional retirement. It was a bit of a long shot that I would become an MLA; I was going to be running against Gord Wyant. But I knew that I couldn't put my name on the ballot unless I was prepared to win. So it was anxious and anxiety-causing.

Valérie, one day says, you always talk about the importance of making a difference, of making things better. Maybe this is one of those opportunities.

And the bubble kind of burst, but it didn't stop me from about

100 more times checking in with her and saying, are you sure, are you sure. Because I knew she didn't want her life turned upside down, that we were fine, we were well in retirement. But she stuck with making me make the decision and she knew that her arrow had pierced deeply.

The third one is all about Jessica Brown. Some of you know the name Jessica Brown. Jess, I've got a great big long story here about you. She's now the president of the Saskatoon Teachers' Association. That summer before I made the decision, she was campaigning like it was a provincial election. I think she's going to be campaigning in a provincial election someday, this woman. She was campaigning to become the president of the STA [Saskatoon Teachers' Association]. She reached out to us, didn't know us full very well, to see how we could help her because she knew that as a retired principal I was relatively well connected within the public system at least.

During this long, great afternoon of conversation I sort of floated the idea that maybe I'd been asked, and I was wondering about this. And her response basically was, "Of course you should do this. You're perfect." As if.

But as I helped her, we helped her, through the rest of her campaign, she was relentlessly saying to me, have you made the decision? Why haven't you decided? You're going to do it, right? And I said, if I do it and if I win — which was a medium possibility and a huge impossibility — I'm going to talk about you, Jess. And so I am.

Oh, there are some very specific names that need to be delivered here. The original six that made a Chief Mistawasis — Northwest at the time — NDP executive. They reached out about six years ago, and there was no NDP presence, thanks to Gord Wyant. And they created it. They ran Gillian as a candidate in that year. They increased the vote to a very respectable 37 per cent. And I'm not going to try and find their names to make sure I'm not missing one. You know who you are. We call them the original six.

This campaign I was supported even more by a campaign manager coming in from Calgary to help out the member from Meewasin and myself. Dhuha Nader — insight, experience, inspiring effort. She had to be my boss, which isn't always an easy thing. And she was lots bossy and became my boss. And I guess that's just what campaign managers do, but we made it through together. She is hugely responsible for the win that we experienced, and at the end of it I consider her just another one of my new BFFs [best friend forever].

Paras Kumar, our get-out-the-vote. Angie Kells. Angie had been a parent at a school that I was principal at, and she had been a force to be reckoned with back then. And she's a force to be reckoned with still. Gary Stevenson, another one of the original six, took on financial responsibilities for us all.

There is the amazing team. I have to squeeze in a few more. Looking at the clock. Did . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I get to come back Monday? Oh, then I should slow down. Then I should slow down.

Je veux inclure Denise Hamon. La première fois que je l'ai rencontrée, on a cliqué, et de la manière qu'elle s'est dédiée pendant la campagne était sans pareille.

[Translation: I want to include Denise Hamon. The first time I met her we clicked, and the way she dedicated herself during the campaign was second to none.]

Another woman working for women, Denise carried a picture of the Sask NDP's female caucus with her, and she talked woman, women at every door. And she tried to make me fit into that, and oh.

Pam Woodsworth, Marilyn Barlow, Hugh and Lori Kurz. Hugh Kurz is going to write the manual for sign management, and it's going to be to every NDP at least.

Dennis Wills. I meet this man; he's a walking machine. The numbers of his steps in a year averages out to something like 13,000 a day. Is that crazy? Yeah, he's a walking machine. Seventeen times he's engaged himself with campaigns.

Deirdra Ness, another person who volunteered, signed up: "Oh I'm not very comfortable. I'll do mail drops." But I took her door knocking with me, and I started pumping her with questions and find out that, yeah, she's a communications expert for the last 25 years and brought amazing organization and vision to the campaign.

Dave Dupuis joined in, became a regular. Corwyn Shomachuk, another guy: "Oh, I'll help out." After the first evening of door knocking together, he sends me a . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Is that it? It's that quick? Not even finishing Corwyn? I'll start with Corwyn next time. Thank you.

**Speaker Goudy:** — It now being 1 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30. Travel safe. Thanks.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]



# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

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