



Speech from the Throne 2014

Delivered on the Occasion of the Opening of

The Fourth Session of
the Twenty Seventh Legislature
Province of Saskatchewan

Wednesday, October 22

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Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

*KEEPING
SASKATCHEWAN STRONG*

MR. SPEAKER, MEMBERS OF
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
HONOURED GUESTS, PEOPLE OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Welcome to the opening of the Fourth Session of the Twenty-Seventh Legislature.

We gather today during the season of Thanksgiving.

Today in Saskatchewan, there is much to be thankful for.

Saskatchewan is strong.

Our province is growing.

There are more people living here than ever before.

More people are choosing to stay in Saskatchewan.

More people are coming from other provinces and other countries.

More people are working in Saskatchewan than ever before.

In June, employment hit a record high of 577,000 people working in our province.

In July, unemployment hit a record low of 3.2 per cent – the lowest unemployment rate ever recorded.

In September, Saskatchewan had the lowest unemployment rate and the fastest rate of job creation anywhere in Canada.

Saskatchewan people are earning more than ever before and they are keeping more of what they earn, thanks to lower taxes.

Our province has a balanced budget.

During this session, my government will again demonstrate its commitment to sound financial management by delivering its eighth consecutive balanced budget.

Because of my government's commitment to sound financial management, Moody's recently upgraded Saskatchewan's credit rating to triple-A – their highest possible rating.

In providing the upgrade, Moody's said: "Saskatchewan's triple-A rating reflects the province's fiscal discipline and sustained low debt levels, which underscore prudent financial management practices."

The numbers demonstrate that Saskatchewan is strong.

But while these numbers are impressive, the true strength of our province is found in the compassion and generosity of its people.

This was never more apparent than during the flooding earlier this year, when friends, neighbours and family members rallied to help one another as the waters rose.

On the Henderson farm north of Carievale in southeast Saskatchewan, the call went out for sandbaggers.

Within 20 minutes, 200 people responded and laid down close to 3,000 sandbags around the Hendersons' home, sparing it from the flood.

Jennifer Henderson said she couldn't believe her eyes when she saw how many people came to her family's aid.

"It was amazing," she said.

"And the spirit has not stopped. I'm an American who married a Canadian. And I'm so darned happy to be a Canadian today."

That quick action near Carievale was mirrored in dozens of other locations across the province, affirming once again that Saskatchewan is strong because our sense of community is strong.

A PROVINCE ASCENDING

Saskatchewan's economic star continues to rise.

Since 2007, Saskatchewan's exports have increased by 63 per cent, while manufacturing shipments have climbed by more than 50 per cent.

Surging demand for our products has created unprecedented opportunity for workers and businesses, and attracted people from across the country and around the world.

Saskatchewan's population is now at an all-time high of over 1,125,000 people.

That represents an increase of more than 123,000 people in the past seven years – a far cry from the previous seven years when Saskatchewan’s population actually declined.

Our province remains on track to reach the population target set by my government of 1.2 million people by 2020, while Statistics Canada has predicted Saskatchewan’s population could surpass 1.5 million by 2038.

Newcomers are enriching our province through the work they do and the cultures they share.

They give life to Saskatchewan’s motto: “From Many Peoples Strength.”

SUSTAINING THE MOMENTUM

In this session, my government will continue working hard to keep Saskatchewan strong.

A strong economy is the foundation of a strong province with an excellent quality of life for all its people.

A strong economy means we are better able to meet the challenges of growth in health care, housing, education and infrastructure.

My government will continue taking the right steps to encourage economic growth.

Saskatchewan’s resource sector is strong.

The first new potash mine to be built in the province in 40 years, the K + S Legacy project near Bethune, is under construction while multi-billion dollar expansions of existing mines are coming on stream.

Uranium production is also increasing, with the opening of Cameco’s Cigar Lake mine - the first new uranium mine to be built in Saskatchewan in over a decade.

Saskatchewan is setting new records in oil production and the province’s forestry industry is making a comeback, with seven mills now operating and two more mills expected to re-open in 2015.

Saskatchewan manufacturers are on track to ship a record amount of product this year.

To help meet my government's goal of doubling exports by 2020, it will introduce a new growth tax incentive tied to the creation of new jobs by manufacturers and processors as they expand their sales outside Saskatchewan.

This measure will also include a new growth tax incentive for the creation of new corporate and head office jobs in Saskatchewan.

To further support our exporters, my government will maintain its emphasis on international engagement, particularly in Asia, the fastest growing region in the world.

In the months ahead, my government will undertake trade missions to key international markets while continuing to support the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP), which carried out 42 trade missions to 27 countries in 2013.

Recently, my government received the recommendations of the Saskatchewan-Asia Advisory Council, which was appointed to provide advice on trade, innovation and investment attraction.

Our efforts to strengthen trade ties in Asia will be guided by these recommendations.

In order to continue the strong growth in exports, we must ship our products to market.

We have seen how limited rail capacity can impact our economy.

That's why my government is making rail capacity a priority by encouraging railways to increase shipping volumes, by strengthening the short line network and by working to enhance rail linkages to Canada's coastlines and our biggest trading partner, the United States.

PROMOTING FREE TRADE

My government supports free trade.

The Comprehensive European Trade Agreement (CETA) will open many new markets for Saskatchewan exports.

The Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA) will give Saskatchewan exporters equal footing with their European and American counterparts in South Korea's \$1.3 trillion economy.

My government will continue working to reduce international trade barriers, such as Country of Origin Labelling regulations in the United States.

While international trade barriers are coming down, some barriers remain in place between provinces.

This must change.

My government has taken a leadership role in enhancing the dispute resolution mechanism within Canada's Agreement on Internal Trade.

More can be done to open up trade between provinces.

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

New West Partnership members are urging other provinces to review their regulations in these areas.

My government will look for other opportunities to expand free trade, such as Saskatchewan's agreement with British Columbia to offer consumers in both provinces greater access to locally produced wine and craft spirits.

We will also continue to advocate on behalf of industries that are subject to unfair trade practices within Canada, as we did in a successful challenge of the Quebec government's restrictions on the production, sale and marketing of oil-based dairy products.

My government is working to ensure opportunities for local businesses are maximized within existing trade agreements.

Priority Saskatchewan, a new agency, is leading a cross-government review of current tendering practices.

To provide further support to local businesses, the Ministry of Central Services has launched the new SaskTenders website.

The website will serve as the primary gateway to public sector procurement opportunities in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia - the member provinces of the New West Partnership.

BUILDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

A strong workforce means a strong Saskatchewan.

But our province continues to face a shortage of skilled labour.

In some cases, people are unable to compete for jobs because they lack the skills required to secure employment.

To address this situation, my government has invested heavily in Adult Basic Education (ABE) services and is working to eliminate the waitlist for ABE.

In the upcoming fiscal year, we will increase the number of ABE training seats by 775, eliminating the 2012 wait list and bringing the total number of seats to 9,355, an increase of nearly 60 per cent since 2007.

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

Saskatchewan took a lead role in national negotiations on the design of the new Canada Job Grant, which provides employers with up to \$10,000 per worker to cover the cost of training.

A few months ago, we were pleased to sign a Canada Job Grant agreement with the federal government.

My government is investing \$15.7 million in the program, which will link training directly to the needs of employers.

INFRASTRUCTURE

My government has made significant progress tackling the province's infrastructure deficit.

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

This year alone, nearly \$3 billion has been committed to renew and expand the province's infrastructure.

But there is more to be done.

To meet those challenges, my government is leveraging the forces of innovation and competition through public private partnerships (P3s)

SaskBuilds, created two years ago to help deal with the province's infrastructure demands, has initiated a number of P3 projects.

These include:

- Nine joint-use elementary schools located in Regina, Saskatoon, Martensville and Warman - communities experiencing extraordinary growth;
- The Regina Bypass project, the largest transportation project in Saskatchewan's history; and
- The Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford – Integrated Correctional Facility.

The 225-bed Swift Current Long-Term Care Centre is now under construction and is expected to save taxpayers \$13 million by using the P3 approach.

My government will save hundreds of millions of dollars on P3 capital projects - money that can be used for other priorities.

Municipalities should also consider P3s to access funding offered by the federal government.

My government has partnered with the City of Saskatoon and the federal government on a P3 project to build the North Commuter Parkway Bridge and we have offered to enter into a similar partnership for a second bridge in Prince Albert.

In March, the federal government announced the new \$53 billion Building Canada Fund (BCF) to support the construction of roads, bridges, public transit and other infrastructure projects.

To help municipalities take advantage of the new BCF program, my government will reintroduce and expand the popular Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative (SIGI).

This program provides interest rate subsidies for up to five years on municipal borrowing for infrastructure development.

Under the first iteration of SIGI, nearly \$200 million in borrowing was approved and 82 communities benefitted from interest rate subsidies.

My government believes Saskatchewan First Nations would also benefit from SIGI so the program will be opened to those First Nations in a position to participate, like Whitecap Dakota under the progressive leadership of Chief Darcy Bear.

PRIVATE LIQUOR STORES

With so many infrastructure priorities in Saskatchewan, my government must make choices, including the choice of what not to fund.

Here's one.

My government will not spend one more taxpayers' dollar building liquor stores.

Instead, those capital dollars will be used for highways, hospitals, schools and bridges.

New liquor stores in the province will be built and operated by the private sector.

Today, there are two new private liquor stores operating in Saskatoon and one in Regina, with another in Regina opening soon.

This change has been well received and many people are asking my government to go further.

This fall, my government will release an options paper and gather feedback from the public regarding the future of liquor retailing in Saskatchewan.

HIGHWAYS

As Saskatchewan grows, so does the number of vehicles on our roads.

Increased traffic and unprecedented flooding have taken a toll on our highways.

My government is responding with record investments in highway construction and maintenance.

On Highway 16, work has begun on a new twinning project from Saskatoon to Clavet.

On Highway 7, new passing lanes between Delisle and Rosetown are under construction.

Meanwhile, preconstruction work continues on the twinning of Highway 7 from Vanscoy to Delisle and Highways 6 and 39 from Regina south to Estevan.

My government is also evaluating an innovative proposal from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities that would use federal, provincial and municipal funding to leverage private sector investment in rural roads.

EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT

My government recognizes Saskatchewan citizens expect services that are accessible, effective, efficient and sustainable.

Across government, the Lean process is used to improve services for people and businesses.

For example, by using Lean, the Ministry of Economy has reduced the time it takes to issue routine permits for oil companies from ten days to one day, while the Ministry of Highways now processes 13,700 more bridge permits annually, double the previous volume.

HEALTH CARE

The purpose of a strong and growing economy is to ensure the best possible quality of life for all Saskatchewan people.

Six years ago, my government proceeded with the first ever review of the Saskatchewan health care system from the perspective of patients.

The Patient First Review has guided our efforts to make the health care system more responsive, efficient and effective.

In this session, my government will release an update on the Patient First Review that will highlight areas where progress has been made and areas where improvement is required.

My government recognizes that we need to do more to help people dealing with mental health and addiction problems.

In the coming months, the commissioner appointed to lead a review of mental health services in the province will release a 10-year Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan.

The plan will inform our efforts to improve services and supports for patients and their families.

Last year, my government announced the creation of the Urgent Action Fund to improve the quality of care for residents of long-term care homes.

We have provided \$10 million to health regions for specific initiatives and an additional \$3.7 million for ongoing programs.

This funding will be used to purchase 700 pieces of equipment, hire additional staff and support staff training.

In 2009, my government established the Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative and set a bold objective of ensuring no patient would wait more than three months for surgery.

Thanks to a significant effort within the health care system, the number of patients waiting more than three months for surgery is down 81 per cent.

While the Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative has concluded, we will continue working to improve the system and reduce surgical wait times.

Patients in our health care system need to be assured their privacy is protected.

This session, my government will amend *The Health Information Protection Act* to strengthen provisions protecting patient privacy.

This includes stronger measures to prevent the unauthorized viewing of patient records and a provision authorizing the Minister of Health to appoint a person or body to take control of abandoned patient records.

My government will amend *The Human Tissue Gift Act* to modernize Saskatchewan's organ donation and transplantation processes to reduce wait times for people who need organ transplants.

Among those who will benefit are 100 people who have waited up to two years for a cornea transplant.

My government will amend *The Pharmacy Act* to enhance the scope of practice for pharmacists by giving them the authority to administer vaccinations and other drugs as well as ordering, accessing and using lab tests.

My government will continue to focus on retaining and attracting health care professionals.

Much progress has been made in the last few years.

Since 2007, the number of doctors practicing in the province has increased by over 400 while the number of nurses in all designations has increased by more than 2,600.

EDUCATION

Our province's schools are a vital part of a strong Saskatchewan.

My government recently received the results of its historic Student First consultation.

More than 120 engagement sessions were held involving nearly 1,000 students, parents, caregivers and teachers from across the province and more than 1,500 submissions were received online.

The information gathered will be considered as my government works with its partners to develop an education system that truly puts the student first.

In this session, my government will introduce legislation to make the regulatory process for teachers similar to that in other jurisdictions and other professional bodies within our province.

Over the last seven years, my government has spent more than \$700 million on education infrastructure - a 268 per cent increase.

Forty new schools have been built or are in the planning stage.

This year, new schools have opened or will open soon in Swift Current, Lloydminster, White City, Regina and Saskatoon.

Schools in La Ronge and Lumsden have undergone major renovations.

My government will continue to invest in the province's school system to meet the challenges of growth.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Our universities, technical institutions and regional colleges play a vital role providing the leaders of tomorrow with the skills and training needed to succeed.

That is why my government continues to make post-secondary education a priority by providing record support for students and institutions.

Programs such as the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, the Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings and the Graduate Retention Program have made post-secondary education more accessible and affordable.

Since 2008, the Graduate Retention Program has provided \$130 million in rebates to more than 50,000 students who have chosen to stay in Saskatchewan after graduation.

Aboriginal enrolment in post-secondary institutions is increasing.

My government will continue to support the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology, the First Nations University of Canada, Gabriel Dumont Institute and all post-secondary institutions to ensure First Nations and Métis students have the support they require to complete their studies.

Recent legislation has enabled more institutions to offer degree programs.

During the last few months, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology has officially become known as Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

This will create more opportunities for students and will help meet the needs of employers.

Many regional colleges in Saskatchewan have insufficient internet bandwidth to accommodate the needs of their students.

The Ministry of Advanced Education will work with SaskTel to upgrade internet access and speed at regional colleges to ensure students and teachers have sufficient bandwidth to accommodate their current requirements and growth in future years.

INNOVATION

Earlier this month, people from around the world gathered at Boundary Dam Power Station near Estevan as SaskPower opened the first commercial power plant in the world with a fully integrated post-combustion carbon capture system.

More than 90 per cent of the carbon dioxide emitted at Boundary Dam 3 will be captured and stored for use in enhanced oil recovery operations in mature oil fields.

This is the equivalent of taking more than 250,000 vehicles off Saskatchewan roads each year.

Boundary Dam 3 strengthens Saskatchewan's reputation as a global leader in carbon capture and storage research.

SaskPower has established a global CCS consortium to share knowledge and best practices with other utilities and researchers.

Construction of Saskatchewan's cyclotron and radioisotope facility at the University of Saskatchewan is in the final stages.

The \$25.5 million laboratory is a partnership between the federal government, the province and the university.

The laboratory will provide Saskatchewan researchers with the resources they require to develop radiopharmaceuticals – drugs containing radioactive materials.

These drugs can be used to detect, diagnose and treat diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and multiple sclerosis.

The laboratory will be managed and operated by the Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

My government is working closely with our municipal partners to address the challenges of growth.

As a result of the province's predictable and sustainable revenue sharing program, municipalities already know they will receive record revenue sharing of \$265 million in next year's budget – more than double what it was when my government took office.

Earlier this year, Saskatchewan was once again hit hard by flooding.

My government responded by establishing 11 recovery centres, including three in First Nations communities.

These were one-stop points of access staffed by representatives from ministries, Crown corporations, the Canadian Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse Canada and other organizations to help individuals and families affected by flooding.

So far this year, the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP) has determined more than 325 municipalities and First Nations, and individuals living in those communities who were affected by flooding, are eligible for assistance under the program.

PDAP has completed or is in the process of completing well over 3,000 claims from this year's flooding.

AGRICULTURE

Saskatchewan's agriculture sector is strong, contributing \$4.5 billion to Saskatchewan's gross domestic product and sustaining 50,000 direct and indirect jobs.

My government is committed to serving as a strong advocate for agriculture.

Last year, when the Canadian rail system was failing to move a record crop to market, we urged the federal government to bring forward legislation compelling the railways to move more grain.

In the coming weeks, Saskatchewan will host a New West Partnership transportation and market access summit to discuss long term improvements to Western Canada's transportation system.

We need an efficient transportation system because the success of our agriculture industry depends on our ability to export.

In 2013, Saskatchewan set a record for agriculture exports for a third consecutive year with sales of \$11.7 billion, and we are on track to meet our goal of increasing agriculture exports to \$15 billion by 2020.

Today's agricultural sector also requires more improved internet and cell phone service.

SaskTel's rural strategy will see the expansion of high speed internet into another 54 communities by the end of the year.

SaskTel is also doubling the available internet speed in 220 rural communities and improving cell phone service in 111 rural communities by adding more capacity to its 4G network.

This is in addition to the 318 rural communities that have already received improved internet service and upgrades to cellular service in more than 500 locations since 2007.

SAFE COMMUNITIES

My government is mindful of its responsibility to protect the most vulnerable in society.

That is why, during the summer, we established the new Counsel for Children Office.

The Office will ensure all children in protection proceedings can have access to legal counsel when decisions are being made about their future, such as where and with whom they are going to live.

This fall, the Ministry of Justice announced enhancements to the Victims Compensation Program.

The Ministry will also be introducing amendments to *The Victims of Domestic Violence Act* to expand the ability of police and the justice system to protect victims of violence and abuse.

Following a trial or hearing, court judgments ordering one party to pay money to another are not always obeyed.

My government will amend *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Act* to improve enforcement mechanisms.

Improving access to the justice system for all makes Saskatchewan a fairer, safer place to live.

This fall, my government will introduce legislation to expand fee waivers to all three levels of Saskatchewan's courts, making the justice system more accessible to low-income people.

By the end of the year, my government will expand the HUB model of crime prevention to Meadow Lake and Melfort, bringing the number of communities operating the program to 13, including Prince Albert, Yorkton, La Ronge, North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Estevan, Weyburn, Nipawin, Swift Current, Saskatoon and Lloydminster.

Two more communities will be added to the list in the first quarter of 2015.

The HUB brings together police, government ministries and community agencies to share information and identify situations that could lead to criminal behavior.

Communities in Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba and Nova Scotia are following Saskatchewan's lead by implementing this successful crime prevention program.

SOCIAL SERVICES

My government is aware there is a close relationship between the availability of safe, affordable housing and quality of life.

In the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth, we committed \$344 million to boost the supply of housing in the province, particularly for low and moderate-income families.

In 2013, the number of rental housing units started was nearly 34 times higher than in 2006.

Today, the vacancy rate in Saskatchewan is 3.3 per cent, which is higher than the national average.

My government has decreased waiting lists for families needing housing and has increased supports for the homeless.

At the same time, we are increasing opportunities for low-income families to own homes, in cooperation with organizations like Habitat for Humanity.

Since 2009, my government has committed \$7.85 million to assist Habitat for Humanity build 134 houses in 12 communities.

My government has pledged to make Saskatchewan the best place to live for persons with disabilities.

The Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program is an important part of our effort to fulfill that promise.

There are now close to 13,000 households in the province enrolled in SAID, a 250 per cent increase since the program was introduced in 2009.

My government wants to ensure all children in the province can live with their families in safety.

To help meet this goal, my government is conducting a comprehensive review of its child welfare legislation.

The review began this spring with an online discussion guide and meetings with stakeholders.

The objective of the review is to strengthen *The Child and Family Services Act* and *The Adoption Act*.

Earlier this year, my government was pleased to announce the opening of the Sweet Dreams home in Saskatoon.

Sweet Dreams will provide at-risk single mothers with affordable housing and support while they complete their education and learn life and parenting skills.

This project was made possible through a Social Impact Bond funding model - the first of its kind in Canada.

My government will continue to explore other opportunities for Social Impact Bonds to make a positive difference in Saskatchewan communities.

Saskatchewan has the second lowest poverty rate in Canada.

However, we know there is still more work to do.

My government is pleased to announce the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy and thank the organization Poverty Costs for its work on this important issue under the leadership of individuals like Alison Robertson, Dr. Ryan Meili and Dr. Cory Neudorf.

PARKS, CULTURE AND SPORT

Saskatchewan's unprecedented growth has allowed my government to invest in the province's extensive provincial park system.

Since 2007, my government has committed \$71 million to improve the camping experience in our parks, including adding 1,400 new electrified camping sites.

Saskatchewan's lottery system supports 12,000 non-profit sport, culture and recreational organizations.

Recently, Sask Sport, SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association signed a five-year lottery agreement to provide funding stability and allow these organizations to maintain quality programs and services.

Last year alone, \$52 million was distributed to these organizations.

Hockey and curling rinks are vital to community life in rural Saskatchewan.

To assist with the cost of operating rinks, my government introduced the Community Rink Affordability Grant program in 2012.

More than \$3.2 million has been invested in the program during the last two years, with more than 380 communities benefiting.

This year, my government has committed another \$1.7 million to the program.

The Main Street Saskatchewan program offers a community-driven approach to revitalizing historic downtown and commercial areas.

Since its introduction, Main Street Saskatchewan has leveraged 10 dollars in private sector investment for every dollar invested by the government.

The results can be seen in communities like Maple Creek, where a group of new residents from the Philippines invested in Maple Creek's historic Commercial Hotel, which was damaged by flooding in 2010.

The owners of the hotel received \$32,000 from the Main Street Saskatchewan program and the hotel is now a thriving business.

My government is pleased Creative Saskatchewan is now fully operational.

To date, \$7.7 million has been provided to support the marketing and development of all creative industries in Saskatchewan.

This includes \$3.4 million distributed to the film industry, \$2 million to the music industry, \$1.1 million to the visual arts sector and \$800,000 to the publishing industry.

ENVIRONMENT

My government believes economic growth and environmental protection are compatible objectives.

A clear example of this is the Boundary Dam 3 project, which will demonstrate to the world it is possible to significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions while generating the electricity needed to sustain growth.

In the coming months, we will adopt a new results-based regulatory model that will improve protection of the environment and promote innovative management tools, including the Saskatchewan Environmental Code.

This approach will allow industry and communities to develop innovative solutions to meet environmental protection objectives while allowing the Ministry of Environment to dedicate more resources to activities that pose the greatest environmental risk.

This session, my government will amend *The Wildlife Act* to increase penalties for illegal hunting.

The amendments include:

- Increasing the hunting suspension for serious violations from one to two years;
- Prohibiting those who have not paid a hunting fine from buying a licence; and
- Prohibiting any Canadian resident suspended from hunting or fishing in another jurisdiction from purchasing a licence in Saskatchewan.

In addition, those convicted of three serious wildlife offences will be banned for life from hunting in Saskatchewan.

My government has undertaken an online drainage consultation that received nearly 500 submissions and will carry out further consultations with stakeholders in the coming months.

These consultations will lead to the development of new regulations governing drainage as part of the province's 25 Year Saskatchewan Water Security Plan.

This is a priority issue for the Water Security Agency.

HONOURING THOSE WHO SERVE

My government recognizes the sacrifices made by the men and women who choose to serve our country in the Canadian Armed Forces and the sacrifices made by their families.

In 2009, my government introduced the Saskatchewan Scholarship of Honour – a \$5,000 scholarship available to returning military personnel and to the spouses and children of Canadian Armed Forces members killed or permanently disabled in the service of their country.

We are forever indebted to those who have paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

Since 1919, the Government of Canada has awarded the Memorial Cross, sometimes called the Silver Cross, to the loved ones of Canadian Armed Forces personnel who died in service.

This fall, my government will make a commemorative licence plate available to recipients of the Memorial Cross.

CONCLUSION

Saskatchewan is strong.

This strength comes from our people – their hard work, their determination, their ingenuity and their generosity.

These Saskatchewan values will keep Saskatchewan strong.

I now leave you to the business of the session, knowing that you will favourably discharge your duties and responsibilities.

May divine providence continue to bless our province and guide this Assembly in all its deliberations.

God bless Saskatchewan.

God bless Canada.

And God save the Queen.

