



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

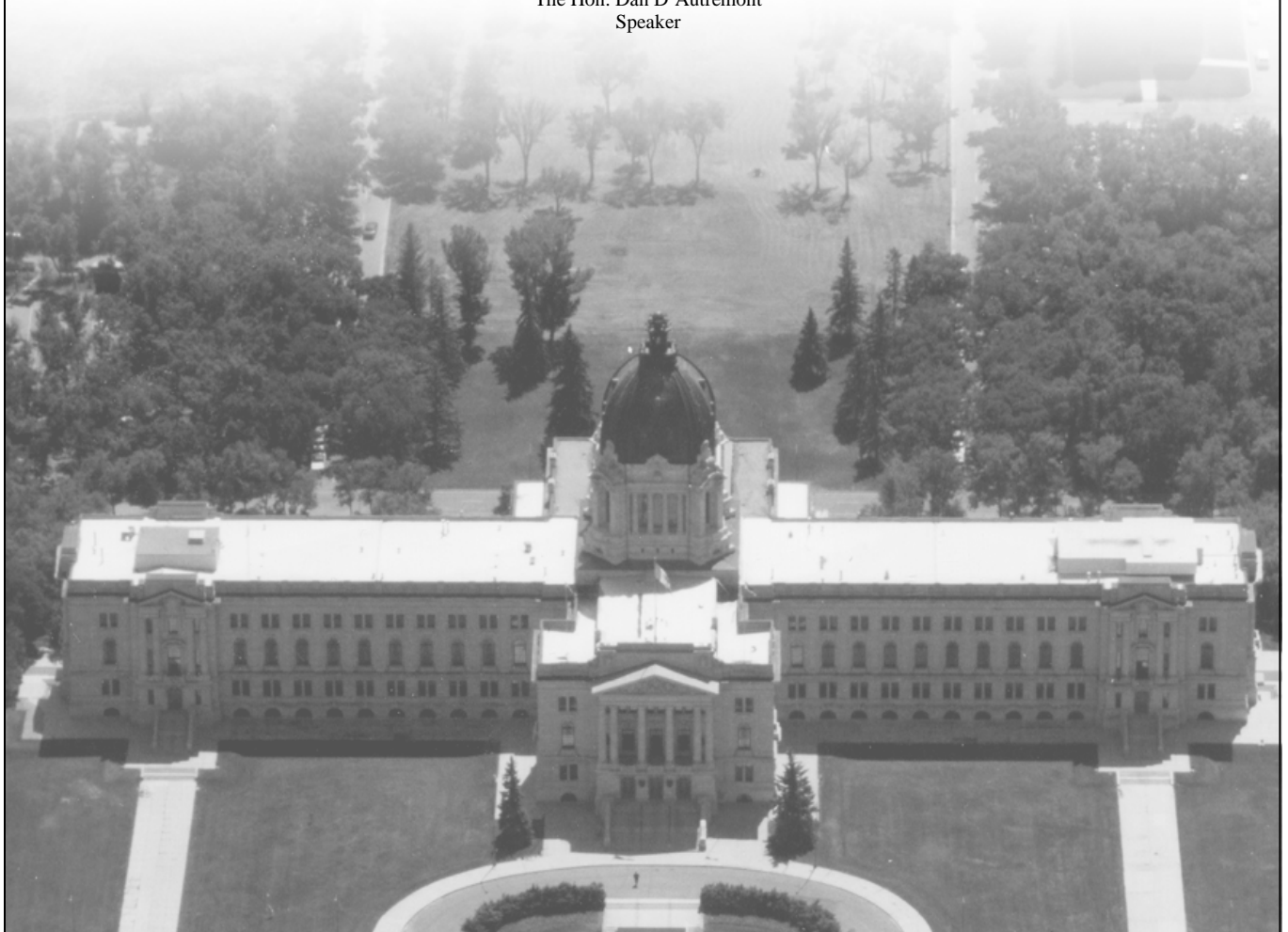
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Hon. Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Hon. Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Young, Colleen	SP	Lloydminster
Vacant		Prince Albert Carlton

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the legislature, it's a great pleasure for me today to introduce a friend to many of us. Don Meikle is the executive director of Egadz. He's had a huge impact on children, on young moms, on babies in the city of Saskatoon for a number of years.

He joined us in the legislature today to talk about social impact bonds, Sweet Dreams, that he's been working with for over a year now or just about a year. We have 20 mothers and 14 children whose lives are different because of the impact that Don has had. He's making a difference in our province and we're so proud to have him. So welcome to your legislature, Don.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the member opposite in welcoming Mr. Meikle to his legislature. And of course he and Egadz do phenomenal work in Saskatoon and go back many, many years through countless projects to help young people who are facing challenges on the street. So welcome, Don, to your legislature. I ask all members to join in welcoming you to your legislature. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of this Assembly I would like to introduce my CA [constituency assistant], Matt Donlevy, sitting in your gallery.

We never get a chance really to thank our CAs for all the work they do taking care of the constituents that come in and finding the answers through our ministries who provide them with the answers. But I'd like to thank Matt for all his work and taking care of the cat situation we ran into one time. It was a pleasure to work with him on that one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce Kendra May Johnson, my constituency assistant. A very tough job keeping me on track certainly with my schedule and everything else, Mr. Speaker. It takes a lot of work to keep me in line, Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues will attest, but Kendra is very fabulous at doing it. And I appreciate everything that she does. Welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Corrections and Policing.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I rise today to introduce 24 grades 4 and 5 students from W.S. Hawrylak, which is situated in Regina Wascana Plains here in Regina. Hi, guys. With them today are their teachers Shelly Mainprize, Kaylene Bawden, and Kelly Chambers, and accompanying them are the parent chaperones, Donica Smart and Karen Oblinski. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to join the member from Kelvington-Wadena in welcoming Mr. Meikle to his legislature. Don Meikle and I had spent probably well over a decade working together and trying to figure out housing options for young people. I'd like to say that I unabashedly borrowed his housing model and brought it to Regina. And I'd like to thank him for his generosity, not only in sharing, but for everything he's done in relation to young people in Saskatoon, Regina, and this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, sitting in the west gallery is Marc Casavant who up until about a year ago was the director of education for the South East Cornerstone School Division. Mr. Speaker, I think it's about a year ago he announced his resignation which then took effect at the end of the school year. I believe he's now with Prairie Valley School Division, Mr. Speaker.

I know members on this side of the House very much enjoyed, certainly those in the southeast part of the province, certainly enjoyed our working relationship with Marc, and all that he did in moving education forward for our students. And so I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming Marc Casavant to the legislature.

The Speaker: — I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce to the legislature Mark and his daughters, Eva and Zoe, from Brisbane, Australia. Mark is originally from Regina but has lost his Saskatchewan accent and picked up another. I'd ask members to welcome him to the Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of education. And we know that education is one of the most vital services this government provides to its citizens, but yet this government has failed to deliver a long-term plan and vision and the necessary resources to prioritize the delivery of educational excellence. And we know that this government has failed to deliver a real plan to close the Aboriginal education gap, support English as an additional language students, and to support community schools and their

communities and students. I'd like to read the prayer.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to immediately prioritize education by laying out a long-term vision and plan with the necessary resources that provides the best quality of education for Saskatchewan, that reflects Saskatchewan's demographic and population changes, that is based on proven educational best practices, that is developed through consultation with the education sector, and that builds strong educational infrastructure to serve students and communities long into the future.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition are from Esterhazy, Saskatoon, Edam, and Moose Jaw. I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens as it relates to the unsafe conditions created by this government on Dewdney Avenue and their failure to properly and safely plan for heavy-haul truck traffic. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting the heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions are signed again by concerned residents. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition again today in support of safe staffing levels in long-term care. The petitioners point out, Mr. Speaker, that many aspects of long-term care are deteriorating under this government; that this Government of Saskatchewan needs to recognize the need for safe staffing levels to provide hands-on care to residents; that the reality is that this government has removed the regulations requiring a minimum standard of care for seniors resulting in neglect; and that they point out that chronic understaffing in long-term care facilities results in unacceptable conditions, including unanswered calls for help, infrequent bathing, and a rise in physical violence amongst residents. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request

that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the government to commit to the creation of safe staffing levels for all valued members of the health care team and to reintroduce actual numbers of staff to match the level of care needs and the number of residents under their care in long-term care facilities.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by folks in Saskatoon, Plenty, and Dodsland. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Red Cross Day of Pink

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that April 1st has been proclaimed Red Cross Day of Pink. This day raises awareness around bullying issues and encourages everyone to speak out against bullying and discrimination.

In 2007 a high school student in Nova Scotia was bullied because he wore a pink shirt. The next day two other students, David Shepherd and Travis Price, brought 50 pink shirts to school and gave them to their classmates to wear as a way to unite against bullying. As a result of the students' act of kindness, wearing pink has become a symbol of standing up for victims of bullying and speaking out against bullying behaviour. These brave students exemplify the importance of standing up to bullying, and today Saskatchewan commends them for their brave action.

Mr. Speaker, the Red Cross has promoted this day for a number of years, and last year 135 communities and 259 schools in Saskatchewan participated in the Day of Pink. Today we have a school group in the west gallery that are wearing pink. This year we hope to continue that trend by encouraging everyone to wear pink to stand together against bullying.

I would ask all members to please join me in recognizing the Red Cross Day of Pink. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in the House as well in solidarity with all the children and youth, recognizing that today is Red Cross Day of Pink, the international day to take a stand against bullying.

Day of Pink, as was said, started in 2007 in Nova Scotia after a student was bullied for wearing a pink T-shirt to school. Two others asked all students at their school to wear pink T-shirts to show their opposition to bullying.

For many the Day of Pink is an important day to remember that homophobic and transphobic bullying is still a reality in our schools and communities, and that devastates young lives. This year Day of Pink coincides with Trans Awareness Week, and I think that's a wonderful thing, Mr. Speaker. We know that trans

youth are among the most marginalized in our society and I am proud to have been a member of this Assembly when the gender identity was enshrined in Saskatchewan's Human Rights Code. I hope that continued conversations about trans issues and bullying will help us pave a way to a future free of transphobia and all other forms of bullying and discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the importance of Red Cross Day of Pink and to show solidarity and to take a stand against bullying, violence, and intolerance in our schools and communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Canadian Cancer Society Daffodil Month

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Each April the Canadian Cancer Society's annual daffodil campaign raises money for cancer prevention, research, and supports for people living with cancer. It is also an opportunity to raise awareness of the impact cancer has on the lives of Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, we have all been affected by cancer, which is the leading cause of death in this country. It is a small gesture, but buying a bouquet or wearing a daffodil lapel pin to mark Daffodil Month is a good way to show support for those living with cancer in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, the number of newly diagnosed cases of cancer continues to rise in Canada but fortunately so does the survival rate. As a government, we also continue to support improvements in cancer prevention, research, and treatment. Significant funding increases have allowed the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to strengthen and broaden its prevention activities, early detection, and treatment for patients. This year, recognizing increased demand for services and rising drug costs, the Cancer Agency's budget increased by \$1.58 million to \$157.3 million in total.

This government believes that investing in the Cancer Agency is an investment in our people and our future. I ask members to join me in acknowledging the good work the Cancer Agency does, pushing for small and large changes that improve an individual's chances of living to tell their survival tale. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to recognize Daffodil Month. Every April the Canadian Cancer Society holds its annual Daffodil Month fundraising and awareness campaign. It's a time to remember those who have died from the disease and a time to show our support for those battling cancer, and their families. Mr. Speaker, I'm certain that every member of this Assembly, every person in this gallery, and every person watching at home on their TV or computer has lost someone they love to cancer.

Nearly 500 Canadians are diagnosed with cancer each and every day, and statistics show a quarter of us will eventually die from cancer. Fortunately, and in part because of the fundraising done by the Cancer Society during Daffodil Month, researchers and doctors are constantly developing new treatments and

screening techniques that have dramatically improved the prospects facing patients diagnosed with cancer.

And so I call on all members to join me in recognizing Daffodil Month and in thanking all of the staff and volunteers at the Cancer Society for their important work making life better for patients and families battling cancer. Hopefully someday soon, as a result of all their hard work, we will be able to live in a world free from the pain and hardship caused by cancer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Funding for Diefenbaker Bridge

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the gateway to the North and a place people have gathered for centuries, Prince Albert is more than just a city in our province. I am proud today to announce that our government has contributed \$1.225 million for significant repairs to the Diefenbaker bridge in Prince Albert. This includes repairs to the concrete barriers, splash guards, and rail guards for the northbound and southbound driving lanes. There will also be pedestrian walkways installed.

With over \$5.2 billion spent on infrastructure throughout our province since 2008, some \$5 million of this funding has been dedicated to the P.A. [Prince Albert] bridge. The Diefenbaker bridge will be 100 per cent funded through the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure. The city of Prince Albert will be responsible for the management of these repairs.

Mr. Speaker, this is just one more example of our government partnering with communities to make sure that their needs are met. As Mayor Greg Dionne notes, "The Diefenbaker bridge is critical to city residents, rural municipalities, First Nations, the natural resource sector, and tourism traffic for all of northern Saskatchewan."

Mr. Speaker, we couldn't agree more. We understand this importance and want to make sure that this bridge is usable and can carry traffic safely for years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

More Money in the Pockets of Families

Mr. Doke: — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that it is a great time for families to be living and working in Saskatchewan. Compared to the rest of Canada, our province has the highest percentage year-over-year wage growth in January 2015. Wage growth is up 4.9 per cent compared to January of last year, well over the 3 per cent national growth. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's average weekly earnings were \$987.51, which is above the national average of \$947.68. The three industries with the highest year-over-year percentage growth in earnings are the arts and entertainment and recreation, information and cultural industries, and transportation and warehousing.

Mr. Speaker, not only are people in the province making more; they are paying less in tax. Since 2007 income tax paid for a family of four with a \$50,000 income has gone from \$2,300 to just \$64 in 2015. And, Mr. Speaker, total provincial tax paid for that same family has gone from almost \$6,400 in 2007 to \$4,080 in 2015. That means by the end of 2015, that family will have saved \$19,000 over eight years.

Mr. Speaker, higher wage growth and low taxes mean more money in the pockets of Saskatchewan families. If the members opposite are finished fearmongering working families, they are welcome to put forward some constructive policy ideas and join us in the new Saskatchewan and keep Saskatchewan strong. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Investment Supported by Tax Incentive

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Evraz North America announced yesterday that it's investing \$200 million in expanding its Regina steel factory. Evraz company president and CEO [chief executive officer], Conrad Winkler, stated yesterday, and I quote, "Our largest single investment in North America." Furthermore, Mr. Winkler had his own comments about the budget and this government's new tax growth incentive, and I quote, "Without those incentives, we would not be here today."

Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Rosemont stood in his spot yesterday and commended the \$200 million expansion of Evraz, but not even a week ago that very member voted against our budget that included a tax incentive that made this expansion possible. The member from Rosemont voted against expansion at Evraz and therefore voted against 1,100 new construction jobs and against 400 new permanent jobs. Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words, and the member from Rosemont sold out the hard-working people of Regina by voting against our budget.

Our government has worked with and will continue to invite companies like Evraz North America to invest in this great province. Investments like this show the strength of our province's economy.

But, Mr. Speaker, maybe it's time the member from Regina Rosemont represents the people of his constituency instead of blindly following his leader in faulty Brotenomics. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Provision of Seniors' Care

Mr. Broten: — Eunice Blanchard has been a care aid at Providence Place in Moose Jaw for 34 years. She's speaking out today, Mr. Speaker, because she's frustrated, frustrated at this Premier and this government who keep pretending that short-staffing is not a widespread problem in seniors' care facilities in Saskatchewan.

Eunice raises many of the same concerns that Peter Bowden raised when he came here from Saskatoon just on Monday. She talks about nurses and care aids being run off their feet, working double shifts, and burning out. And she talks about a quality of care for seniors, Mr. Speaker, that is not even close to adequate.

My question to the Premier: is he going to argue that this is yet again an isolated incident, or is he ready to admit that there is a widespread crisis in seniors' care in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. I know that with specific regard to this institution, the Minister of Health will want to comment a little bit later on. I can share with members of the House that the staffing complement at the facility that he has just referenced is actually up 9 per cent since the days of the New Democratic government in Saskatchewan. Arguably there is always more work to be done, but my understanding is that's the case at this particular facility.

And that would be consistent with what we've seen across the province where, as a result of what we've done in government, when we identified the huge deficit in health care human resources left behind by that hon. member's party, we sought to increase it, Mr. Speaker, over the last seven years to the point where there are now almost 800 more care aids, front-line staff working in long-term care and integrated care in the province of Saskatchewan. There are more nurses and doctors. And we know that there's more work to be done; that's why we've engaged in continuous improvement in the system, Mr. Speaker, right across the system.

But I hope it's an indication that this government takes seriously the right complement of staffing resources in health care by our past actions of increasing those complements. Hiring more nurses. Hiring more care aids. Hiring more LPNs [licensed practical nurse]. Hiring more doctors and, Mr. Speaker, actually training more nurses in the province and training more doctors. And that too is a situation that was left behind by members opposite in government where they had reduced training capacity in the province. We've come a long way from those days. We know there's more work to be done.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government and this Premier needs to start looking at the reality on the shifts, the reality on the front lines for those caring for patients and for residents. With this government it's always a communications exercise, Mr. Speaker. You know, when Peter came forward on Monday this government said, oh well, they doubled the staff in the facility. Well they forgot to mention, Mr. Speaker, that they tripled the residents in that facility, leaving those working even more and more stretched thin.

You know, it's always about the communications. It's always about discrediting the good, hard-working people who come forward with their stories, Mr. Speaker. And this government also left out the fact that they have a deliberate strategy of short-staffing by not filling the shifts, Mr. Speaker, when

individuals are sick. Eunice says in this facility in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, that the number of care aids has been cut in half over the last two years. And like the care aid from Saskatoon, Eunice says, Mr. Speaker, that just one care aid is responsible for 32 residents with dementia at night. My question to the Premier: is he ready to admit that this is not acceptable and that it is not safe?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And there he goes again, Mr. Speaker. At Oliver Lodge, the number of residents, because of the expansion that this government approved and funded, the number of residents is up 53 per cent. That's because of 63 additional beds that have been added, so 53 per cent residents increased. Total staff has increased 104 per cent during that time, Mr. Speaker. And the expenditures provided by the government, the revenue provided by the government to operate that facility is up 126 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to long-term care, as I've said before, as the Premier has said, we are absolutely committed to working on long-term care and seniors' care in this province. Mr. Speaker, at Providence Place, the staffing complement is up 9 per cent, Mr. Speaker, while the number of residents has not changed in that facility. We have committed to ensuring that we are providing the resources to our health regions. That's why our regions have over a 50 per cent increase in their budgets in just the last seven years, Mr. Speaker; why the increase in staff level, as the Premier has indicated, in full-time equivalents in long-term and integrated care is up nearly 800 full-time equivalents for roughly the same number of residents in this province, a far cry from what we saw from the members opposite.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it's no wonder that care aids and front-line workers are becoming increasingly frustrated, Mr. Speaker, increasingly frustrated by this government who will not listen and will not admit that there is a major problem and crisis when it comes to seniors' care on the front lines.

Mr. Speaker, Eunice talks about the horrible effects of short-staffing. She talks about a resident who died recently. He should have been in the dementia ward, but he wasn't, and the facility did not have enough staff to properly monitor and care for him. He was wandering and he came across Tide laundry detergent pods. He ate some and he died. It is absolutely heartbreaking, and it should never, ever happen in a facility tasked with caring for our most vulnerable seniors.

There should be an investigation into this shocking case and every other premature death that happens because of short-staffing. Does the Premier recognize that people with dementia require extra attention and care, and does he recognize that the consequences of short-staffing in care facilities can be deadly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of the incident

that is currently under investigation by the Five Hills Health Region patient safety unit. Mr. Speaker, certainly my heart goes out to the family of the individual in this incident. Mr. Speaker, our officials will be working with the health region regarding any recommendations that come forward. Mr. Speaker, in this facility it's my understanding that there are washer-dryer units that are available in resident rooms, which is a bit unique compared to a lot of different facilities. This will be reviewed as a part of this process.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to dementia care, absolutely this government takes this very seriously. That's why this government increased funding for the First Link program for the Alzheimer's Society to operate from \$50,000 to \$400,000 a year, Mr. Speaker, to expand that program. And that's why this budget, despite having to make difficult choices, Mr. Speaker, that's why this budget does include for new dementia units in Regina and Saskatoon to care for those individuals of the most complex cases, Mr. Speaker. And we look forward to making announcements of where exactly those facilities will be located, those beds will be located in these two cities.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, there should be a recognition in the minister's response about the lack of staff and the lack of supervision of someone, Mr. Speaker, who was identified by staff as susceptible and vulnerable to this type of accident, this type of incident happening, Mr. Speaker.

Now Eunice says that the residents of Providence Place and their families have been told by managers not to talk about short-staffing any more or they will lose their resident council meetings. So now, Mr. Speaker, we have seniors who are not being properly cared for because of short-staffing. We have vulnerable seniors dying because of short-staffing, and yet these residents are being threatened and told not to talk about short-staffing any more.

Government doesn't like this, and none of us should like this, Mr. Speaker, because it is absolutely unacceptable and it absolutely must stop. Just imagine if this was your mom, your dad, your grandma, or your grandpa in a vulnerable position watching other people die because of the lack of staffing and then being told not to speak up about it, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Premier: what is he going to do about this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can say with all assurity that nobody will be losing their resident family council meetings, Mr. Speaker, because it was this government that ensured that every single facility in this province has a resident family council. Because up until about a year and a half ago, Mr. Speaker, we had facilities that didn't have councils, didn't have council meetings, didn't have up-to-date updates with families and residents. We now have that in place in every single facility in this province, Mr. Speaker, and those meetings will continue despite what the Leader of the Opposition suggests here today.

Mr. Speaker, obviously this government has been serious about the issue of long-term care and seniors' care in this province

right from the beginning. We inherited, Mr. Speaker, roughly the same number of beds in this province. We've added to the number of new facilities, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatoon we've added a number of beds but, relatively speaking, the number of beds haven't changed since when the members opposite were the government.

But what has changed, Mr. Speaker, is the funding provided to regional health authorities so that 800 additional full-time equivalents can be hired, could be hired in long-term care, Mr. Speaker, and in our integrated facilities. Mr. Speaker, obviously this government is committed to that, that we want to ensure that we have the right complement of staff.

What we haven't heard from the Leader of the Opposition is, what is the right number? How many people would he hire? What would he commit to, Mr. Speaker? I think it's important that the people in this province know what the Leader of the Opposition has in mind.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely disgusting, the responses that we are seeing from this minister. It is unbelievable. We have care aids come . . . The member from Estevan is heckling, Mr. Speaker. Unbelievable.

Mr. Speaker, we have care aids coming from Saskatoon on Monday. We have Eunice speaking up, Mr. Speaker, today from the situation in Moose Jaw. We have residents, because they're not being supervised, wandering with dementia and Alzheimer's, eating laundry detergent pods and dying. Now if the minister wants to say that the residents, the families coming forward are lying, he can do that. If he wants to say that the front-line workers, Mr. Speaker, are making up . . .

The Speaker: — I would call on the Leader of the Opposition to stand in his place and to withdraw that remark and apologize.

Mr. Broten: — I apologize and withdraw that remark, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, these care aids that are coming forward are coming because they see the truth. They see the reality on a daily basis. They can cut through the spin from that front bench, and they know that seniors in this province are suffering because of the decisions of this government to have short-staffing through our facilities.

My question to the Premier: when will he have the courage to admit a mistake, admit that they have gone down the wrong path when it comes to seniors' care? When will he recognize that seniors in this province deserve dignity, deserve respect, and deserve to have safe staffing levels?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what this government has done is taken a different approach when it

comes to long-term care, and that's actually ensuring that we are adding additional staff into long-term care, Mr. Speaker. I can't, I can't stress this enough to the Leader of the Opposition or the people of this province. The number of beds in this province in long-term care have relatively remained the same, despite what we've done on this side of the House in renewing old facilities, building new facilities, and adding capacity in some of our locations. But the number of beds have roughly not changed in seven years. What has changed dramatically is the government funding from this side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to front-line staff in long-term care in our integrated facilities, nearly 800 full-time equivalent positions.

And I can run through the list in the Leader of the Opposition's hometown. In Central Haven Special Care Home, the number of residents is actually down 3 per cent but staff has increased 16 per cent. In Circle Drive Special Care Home, residents are down 13 per cent, staff is up 6.2 per cent. Mr. Speaker, I've talked about Oliver Lodge. The number of residents is up 53 per cent, but staff is up 104 per cent. Mr. Speaker, Parkridge Centre, residents are down 7 per cent, staff is up 8 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That's the record on this side of the House compared to the members opposite.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government, this Premier, this Health minister need to listen to what Eunice is saying. She says that the workers, Mr. Speaker, on the shifts have been cut. She has been working for decades, Mr. Speaker. She knows the reality, as do the other care aids who have come forward. Eunice challenges the Premier and the two other Health ministers to go to a facility unannounced without the aids, without the ministry officials, without the managers and see the reality that care aids face every day when it comes to being run off their feet, and when it comes to the type of suffering that many seniors experience. She challenges them to actually track overtime and the number of care aids, the number of times they are working short because the rhetoric of this government does not match the reality of those on the front lines.

Our most vulnerable seniors are being let down. Some are dying needlessly and some are dying horribly, Mr. Speaker. Residents, Mr. Speaker, like the one with dementia who ate a laundry detergent pod and died because of it, Mr. Speaker, these residents deserve better, as do every single senior in this province.

My question to the Premier: when will this government stop being so stubborn? And the member from Wood River can heckle if he wants, but this is no laughing matter, Mr. Speaker. Their approach is disgusting. When will this government stop being so stubborn? When will it recognize we need minimum regulated care standards and safe staffing levels?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the incident at Providence Place, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to do what the Leader of the Opposition has done and jump to conclusions in terms of what has happened because there's an investigation under way, Mr. Speaker, and I think that that process should be allowed to play out. But what I can

say, Mr. Speaker, is that we're going to take part in that as the Ministry of Health, working with the health region.

Mr. Speaker, that particular facility, the number of residents have not changed. The level of funding from this government is up 46 per cent. Staffing levels are up 9 per cent at that facility.

What we've said all along, Mr. Speaker, each and every year, is that we need to make continuous improvement when it comes to not just long-term care but the care that we're providing to seniors, whether they live in long-term care or whether they live on their own and want to stay independent, Mr. Speaker. And that's what this budget does. It provides funding for long-term care. It provides funding for purposeful rounding, Mr. Speaker, which I think will be an important initiative. It also speaks to providing care for residents that aren't in long-term care, may never be in long-term care, so individualized funding.

We're going to get rid of that wait-list, Mr. Speaker, that we've had. We're going to ensure that we have a program like HomeFirst/Quick Response that can be meeting the needs of the people that want to be in their own home, Mr. Speaker. That's the balance that we've chosen. We don't know yet what the Leader of the Opposition, what his plan is.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Availability of Child Care Spaces

Ms. Chartier: — Tara Hobbins is a single mother of two five-year-old daughters. She works hard and picks up as many hours as she can, but the lack of child care spaces, the lack of full-day kindergarten, the cuts to before and afterschool programs, and the lack of busing make it very difficult for her to get by. She says this kind of system is “. . . unrealistic for a single mom working as much as possible, trying to keep a roof over our heads.”

To the Education minister: what does he have to say to Tara today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we have come a long way in the area of child care. We would like to go further, but I can tell the members opposite what we've done.

Since 2007 child care spaces have increased by 53 per cent or 4,935. There are now 14,200 spaces operating in or in development in the province, compared to 8,850 in 2007. Of these spaces that are province-wide or since . . . We've allocated about 800 spaces to Saskatoon; 600 of those spaces are operational with the remaining coming on in various stages of development.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we want to do more things for child care. We know it's important for young families, for working families, and we're going to continue to do that.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — When it comes to child care, Saskatchewan is the worst in Canada. Less than 8 per cent of children in our province have a licensed child care space available to them. The national average is almost triple that number.

Tara says she looked on Kijiji and literally drove up and down streets in Saskatoon looking for a sign in someone's home advertising child care. This year's budget doesn't contain a single new child care spot, and this government is still refusing to establish an online child care registry like Manitoba and Prince Edward Island. Why? Because it doesn't want to know the true demand for child care. It doesn't want to know how many Taras are out there desperately trying to get by and desperately in need of proper child care.

To the minister: how can he justify no new spaces and no online registry?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I spent some time discussing this with the member opposite recently when we were going through budget estimates. She's well aware that we have nine new joint-use schools under construction in the province. Each one of those, each one of those will have a 90-space daycare which will add 810 new spaces. Construction is expected to begin on those later this year. So for Saskatoon, that means 360 new spaces, four joint-use schools in Rosewood, Evergreen, Hampton Village, and Stonebridge.

Mr. Speaker, we have more work to do. We are going to continue doing that . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — There is an opportunity still to rise if you want to ask questions or answer them. I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have to look at the deficit that they left us in child care. Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue adding child care spaces. We're going to continue doing it in each and every year. We've indicated that the nine joint-use schools will each have a daycare centre, a 90-child space in them. We opened one yesterday. They're just doing the sod-turning for one adjacent to the University of Saskatchewan. We will look for partners, and we will continue to proceed in that fashion, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, this minister has no idea what child care looks like on the ground. Parents can't find child care; when they do find it, they can't afford it. And child cares can't staff these facilities. That's what this government's record is on child care, with record revenues. This government has had record revenues year after year. It's blown through every penny, drained the rainy day fund, and has racked up billions of dollars in debt. It has had eight long years to get serious about child care, but it's got nothing but weak excuses.

Tara deserves better. Other families in our province deserve

better, and frankly our economy deserves better. Access to quality child care lets parents work and contribute to our economy. To the minister: when will this government shelve the pathetic excuses and get serious about child care.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I have a quote I'd like to read:

Saskatchewan has the poorest record when it comes to child daycare. And, Mr. Speaker, I take [part in] some responsibility for that because I was part of a government that did not put a lot of new resources into child daycare.

Pat Atkinson, March 29th, 2011.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to set the record straight as to what the numbers were. From 1992 to 2007, the overall number of licensed child care spaces in the province increased by only 2,800, an average of 175 spaces per year. From 2007 to 2015, the overall number of licensed child care spaces in the province increased by almost 5,000, an average of 616 spaces per year. So yes, we're going to do different things than the members opposite did. We're going to continue to expand child care. We're going to look after a growing economy. We're going to look after families, and we're going to look after children in this province.

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

Affordable Housing

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, Tara Hobbins also struggled to obtain affordable housing. Here's a quote from a recent letter she wrote:

I'm on the verge of homelessness. This upsets me due to the fact that I'm a hard-working, responsible employee and strive to maintain a good life. I don't think that, working \$14 an hour, I should have this problem.

Tara sought help from Sask Housing, and do you know what they offered this single mom and two young daughters, Mr. Speaker? This government offered her an apartment with a possibility of cockroaches and bedbugs infestation. Tara says, and I quote, "I was revolted. I was revolted. How can a government property have such low standards?"

I want to know what the minister says about that.

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, it wasn't many years ago when we had vacancy rates of less than 1 per cent across our province in every major centre. Mr. Speaker, our government took immediate action to address the housing shortage, and in fact we've invested now over \$581 million in housing within our province to develop over 8,800 units, Mr. Speaker. Our wait-list for social housing has gone down, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to continue to have our housing programs and to look at this issue. We understand that now we should look more

closely at affordability because we have addressed the availability. The vacancy rates now across the province on average are over 4 per cent, so the programs are working, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sure with this particular mom . . . I don't know what housing unit he is referencing, but we are always looking for better housing, and we're renewing a lot of our housing portfolio.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, this is such cold comfort for Tara. And we know this government has cut \$5.4 million from the Sask Housing budget this year, \$5.4 million. But thankfully Tara ended up finding an apartment to rent, one that didn't have cockroaches or bedbugs like the Sask Housing one that was offered to her and her young daughters. But she's still struggling because the cost of rent is sky-high and she only makes 14 bucks an hour, picking up every shift she can.

Tara is the kind of person who should be supported by Sask Housing. She's the kind of person who has a real chance to get ahead, to give her daughters the best chance and start in life. But Tara was horribly let down by Sask Housing, and she says, I quote, "I just felt like they didn't care or they couldn't care less." To the minister: what does she have to say about that?

[14:15]

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, in my last answer I said how aggressively this government has been working on housing programs to increase the amount of housing available to those most vulnerable.

But, Mr. Speaker, I don't think Tara wants to go back to the taxes that she had to pay under the NDP [New Democratic Party] because, quite frankly, we have given record tax cuts on this side. I don't think that Tara wants to give up the children's drug program that this government introduced, and I don't think Tara wants to give up the active families benefit that this government introduced. Mr. Speaker, Tara no longer has to pay PST [provincial sales tax] on children's clothing.

We will always continue to work on programs and incentives for our families, our most vulnerable families, but we don't want to go back to the taxes of the NDP because Tara would be struggling even worse if they were in government again.

The Speaker: — Why is the Opposition House Leader on his feet?

Mr. McCall: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Please proceed with your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much. In members' statements, what seems like a lifetime ago, Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Walsh Acres used language that was

clearly unparliamentary, contravening rule 51(c). He ought to know better, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask you to make a ruling on the expression that the member used. If you have to review the tape, fair enough. But if you could rule on that, we'd appreciate it very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to respond to the member opposite's point of order. 51(c) says "refer to another Member by name, but rather by title, position or constituency name." I don't recall hearing any of that, so I'd encourage the Speaker to rule that the point of order is not well taken. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Since the Opposition House Leader has not indicated any terminologies that was used, I will review the tape to determine if there is any improper use of language in that statement and return to the legislature with a decision.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 807 to 816.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered responses to questions 807 to 816.

I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with leave I'd like to revert back to introductions and make an introduction if I could, please.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Crown Investments has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Crown Investments.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That wasn't too smooth, was it? Anyway just before they leave the gallery, I see the member from Carrot River is up there, but I also wanted to join with the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Not introducing him. The member from Weyburn, who introduced Marc Casavant, I know Marc Casavant fairly well, not from the education system. But Marc Casavant was one heck of a hockey player, for those that don't know. In fact he played for the Weyburn Red Wings when they won a Centennial Cup, one of the two or three that they've won in the history of that organization. And I know Marc was an instrumental player in that championship year.

I don't believe I ever had the chance to play with him on a team, but I know I certainly played a lot of senior hockey. He

used to play up in Tisdale with the Ramblers, and I'm going to leave the introduction at that, Mr. Speaker. We'll say no more about those days of senior hockey up in Tisdale. But I certainly wanted to welcome him, and I think probably his children here. And we won't go any further about the Tisdale days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To facilitate the work of committees this afternoon, I'd like to move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:20.]

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