



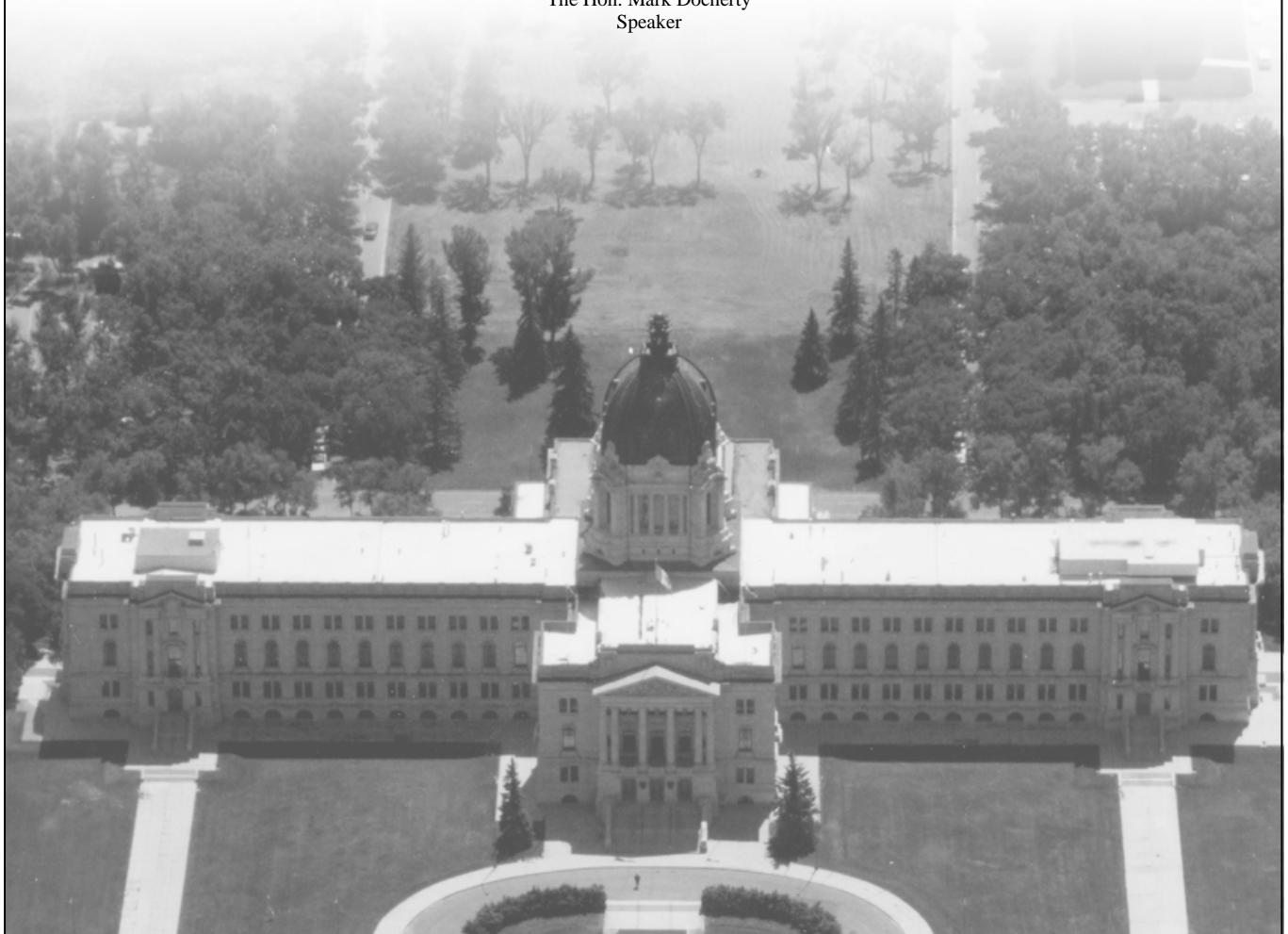
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Mark Docherty
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 28th Legislature

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Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Northeast

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Vacant — 1

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I would like to introduce to all members a group of 48 very good-looking students from the Willowgrove School in the Willowgrove constituency. Yes, let's give them a wave.

They were up early this morning and are looking forward to an exciting day. I had a chance to have a picture taken with them earlier, and I look forward to meeting with them right after question period. They're accompanied by their teachers David Pratte and Stephanie Fernandez, and chaperones Renee Back, Cody Rakai, Cindy Suski, Sarah Buck, Sherry Sargent, and Lisa Bolton. Now in talking to the chaperones, I understand that many of them were up late last night watching the hockey game and then up early to make their way here. And I thank them for their good wishes.

Mr. Speaker, Willowgrove School is one of four new schools in the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency. It's a beautiful school. So I ask all members to help me welcome all the students and teachers and chaperones to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's a tremendous honour to welcome a constituent and friend and guest to the Saskatchewan legislature here today. Seated in your gallery, I have Michael Eluwa. Give us a wave there, Michael. Michael's an incredible caregiver over at Pioneer Village, providing care to those that certainly deserve security. And he's a real leader within the community as well and someone I'm lucky to count as a friend.

He's joined by family here today. He's joined by two people, his cousins, that have chosen to build . . . or actually his niece and her husband, who have chosen to build their life here in Saskatchewan. They're from Nigeria. They're doing what so many have done before, coming to Canada looking for opportunity, and building and bettering our province in the process. So I welcome Ebele and Anozie Nwagbara from Nigeria and now . . . to Saskatchewan and to Canada. And I thank them for what they'll do in building their lives here within our province.

It's also an honour to welcome from Raleigh, North Carolina, Michael's cousins that are here today: John and Gail Eluwa here today. They're looking forward to observing the British parliamentary process. They watch the UK [United Kingdom] question period. They're looking forward to ours here today. John is a criminal defence lawyer, Mr. Speaker, and Gail is a director for the Secretary of State, working directly with

charitable organizations throughout North Carolina. I ask all members to welcome these guests to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the Assembly, it's my great pleasure to introduce my favourite daughter, Mandy, in the west gallery along with my first, my only, and my favourite granddaughter, Lilianna Heather, otherwise known as Lily. They're visiting from Toronto. I noticed she was playing with the kids in front of her or maybe that was pulling their hair. I think she's going to be a troublemaker like her grandfather. So I would ask everyone to welcome them here to this Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in the west gallery, is a constituent of mine from Garden River Road in Saskatchewan Rivers, Jill Rowden. And with her accompanying is her daughter, Alexi Rowden, a U of R [University of Regina] Cougar basketball player. But she is also the summer student for the member from Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland. So I would like the Assembly to give them a warm welcome to their Assembly. Thank you.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to once again introduce to this Assembly my constituency assistant and good friend, Twyla Harris, who's seated in the east gallery today. Twyla, despite only working for about six months in the constituency office, is completely running the show there, and I feel very confident every time I come here to Regina that she's keeping the home fires burning there. So I do appreciate all the work that she does in helping out the good people of Saskatoon Fairview and would like to welcome her again to her Assembly today.

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to join with my colleague in welcoming Jill Rowden to her Legislative Chamber here. I got to know Jill when I was on the Prince Albert police board commission and with her work with the police department in Prince Albert, and her husband is the acting police chief.

But most importantly is she's here visiting Alexi, who I was trying to get to work in my office as a summer student, but unfortunately she's across the hall. Anyway Alexi is a great basketball player, and I think she gets it from her mother, not from her father for sure. So anyway, Mr. Speaker, I'd like the members to join me in welcoming Jill to her Legislative Chamber.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition from the citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decisions to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan.

I do 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 of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Swift Current.

Regina Hosts the 100th Memorial Cup

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The May long weekend is almost here and some people are heading out to the lake to catch some sun. But there's also going to be thousands of people heading indoors, Mr. Speaker, trying to get close to the ice as they head to the Brandt Centre here in Regina to take in some junior hockey, as the 100th Memorial Cup gets under way starting on Friday night.

Mr. Speaker, the tournament will feature the host Regina Pats, the Hamilton Bulldogs from the OHL [Ontario Hockey League], the Acadie-Bathurst Titan from the QMJHL [Quebec Major Junior Hockey League], and of course the Swift Current Broncos. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Broncos claimed the WHL [Western Hockey League] crown on Sunday night against a city with which I share the same name but not the same affinity for their hockey club, the Everett Silvertips, and with a big win on Sunday night in Swift Current.

Mr. Speaker, the tournament organizers in Regina have done a fantastic job getting ready for the Memorial Cup. Countless hours of preparation, all the volunteers who are needed to make this event a success. There will be 19 concerts taking place during the week-long tournament and thousands of people filling the hotels and restaurants. I'm sure the city of Regina and indeed the whole province will shine in hosting the best junior hockey teams in the nation and their fans as well.

Our province has done it before, whether it's hosting the Grey Cup or the World Junior Hockey Championship or the Brier or the Tournament of Hearts, just to name a few major events that we've hosted here in Saskatchewan.

But I hope, Mr. Speaker, that they are prepared — prepared for the sea of green and blue that is headed this way from southwest Saskatchewan. The Swift Current Broncos and their fans, they're coming this way to Regina. Congratulations to the organizers of the 100th Memorial Cup. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's an exciting day in the heartland of Canadian hockey. Today the puck drops on the festivities for the historic 100th Memorial Cup which is being hosted right here in the Queen City. Not only is Saskatchewan hosting the Cup, but we also have two teams in the big dance: the WHL champions, Swift Current Broncos; and our host team, the Regina Pats.

Now I'll congratulate the Broncos for their championship win and wish them well but, Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. I'll be rooting for Sam Steel and my hometown Pats.

We know that the action on the ice will be intense as these young players battle for junior hockey supremacy but, Mr. Speaker, hockey isn't the only entertainment on display. There's an impressive 19 concerts during the tournament, including Saskatchewan's Dead South, The Sheepdogs, and tonight I'm looking forward to attending the Eagles following the Cup's opening ceremonies.

I want to take this time to welcome all the players, the coaches, the teams, the fans, and families from across Canada to Regina, and I wish them all well. And I want to congratulate the incredible tournament organizing committees and the hundreds of volunteers who are going to make this 100th edition of the Memorial Cup an incredible success. Thank you so much. Go, Pats, go!

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

Prince Albert Resident Donates to Children's Hospital

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise today and acknowledge Malcolm Jenkins, a resident and more importantly a friend of mine from Prince Albert. On Tuesday of this week Malcolm and his family generously donated \$1 million to the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation. Malcolm made the donation in honour of his mother, Lilian Jenkins, who he describes as the best mom in the world. These funds will go to support the family room in the neonatal care, and fittingly the room will also be named after Lilian Jenkins.

Over the years Malcolm and his family have been instrumental in the development of many projects and initiatives in Prince Albert, including the Broadway North Theatre Company, the Performing Arts Warehouse, the Kinsmen Skateboard Park, the Alfred Jenkins Field House, and that's just to name a few, Mr. Speaker.

He has served as honorary Chair for the Prince Albert Relay for Life, and in 2010 matched all the funds raised, personally donating over 300,000 to the event. His dedication to the improvement of the lives of the citizens in this province is remarkable. He has led the way by supporting numerous events and activities for the Victoria Hospital Foundation, which has allowed for the purchase of much-needed medical equipment.

His latest donation to the children's hospital is another example of his continued devotion to this province. His personal motto is "Let's build it for the kids," and we thank Malcolm and his family for doing just that. His contribution to the children's

hospital will help families and children for years to come. Thank you, Malcolm.

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

Community Garden Spots Available for New Canadians

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the efforts of a special group of Regina residents who are making newcomers feel welcome in a unique way: through gardening. With a \$7,000 grant, Regina's South Zone Community Gardens has expanded to include 24 new plots for Syrian refugee families and one family from Tanzania. Zahid Sheikh, the organizer credited with this idea, said providing these gardens will give these families an opportunity to reconnect with the earth.

The garden has already created some excitement with the families, especially those who gardened back home. Anestory Mhozya and his family are from Tanzania, and he used to farm. In a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] story released May 15th, he said he was happy to hear about this garden project because buying fresh produce can be costly.

Fawzi Almazalma, who is from Syria, used to grow olive trees. Although olive trees may not prosper here, he told CBC that he is still looking forward to working in the garden. He said, "This is my dream in my country — big farm and stay beside the vegetables."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members to congratulate the South Zone Community Garden and organizers, including Zahid Sheikh and Robert Guthrie, for their hard work. We wish the families all the best this gardening season.

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

Jeans and Jewels Gala

Mr. Olauson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last month I had the opportunity to attend the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation's Jeans and Jewels Gala at TCU Place in Saskatoon. The event was presented by Mosaic, with all funds raised supporting urgent pediatric and maternal equipment needed for the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, which is now 84 per cent complete.

[10:15]

The gala included a delicious dinner, live and silent auction packages, live entertainment, as well as a photo booth, which provided for some funny pictures to commemorate the event. The Saskatchewan Blue Cross showed support for the event, donating \$5 for every tweet using the hashtag #SaskBlueCrossforKids throughout the gala.

Our government has provided over \$235 million to help make the dream of a Saskatchewan children's hospital a reality. With the help of the hard-working folks at the Children's Hospital Foundation as well as generous community donors, the hospital will open its doors in the fall of 2019. Our children deserve the

best care possible while staying close to home to alleviate some of the stress to them and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the attendees, sponsors, and volunteers for ensuring the Jeans and Jewels Gala was a success. Thanks to their hard work, the gala raised over \$220,000, which will be used to care for our children and grandchildren.

Our government looks forward to continuing to work with the children's hospital as well as the foundation to ensure children in this province have high-quality and timely care. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Fire and Rescue Surf and Turf Fundraiser

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was pleased to attend the ninth annual Buckland Fire and Rescue Surf and Turf. This annual fundraiser raises money for the Buckland Fire and Rescue unit, helping to raise awareness and purchase useful equipment for their firefighting and rescue operations. Over 500 lobsters were brought in for this dinner. The event also featured live music and auctions, with proceeds going towards the fire hall. It's always an enjoyable evening, presented wonderfully by this group of proud volunteers.

Buckland Co-operative Volunteer Firefighters have served the RM [rural municipality] of Buckland and greater area for more than 45 years. Starting in 1969, Buckland Fire and Rescue was started by forward-thinking individuals who worked tirelessly for many years to guide and help develop the department into what it is today.

Each decade the department has introduced new technologies and have been acquiring and maintaining the proper equipment to better serve their community and area. Events like the Surf and Turf help the department raise funds for those important services. Their services provided include firefighting, vehicle rescue, trench rescue, confined space, water rescue, and search and rescue.

Mr. Speaker, and colleagues, please join me in honouring and thanking Buckland Fire and Rescue for volunteering and keeping us safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Physician Recruitment in Rural Saskatchewan

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's good to see the Leader of the Opposition finally getting out to rural Saskatchewan. In May 3rd's Tisdale *Recorder* where the leader states that his party is interested in the Northeast, he finally spoke about doctor recruitment. Mr. Speaker, the leader stated that the recruitment of doctors is a long-term health human resources issue. He also states that he would work with the College of Medicine to broaden their approach, to having more recruitment of people from rural areas, and provide more training in rural areas.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report that our government has been taking action on all these fronts. Since 2007 we've increased the number of doctors by 900, the number of Canadian-trained physicians by 36 per cent. We've added 40 more seats to the College of Medicine, doubled the number of residency positions to 120, and today there are 159 more graduates practising in the province.

Through SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment], we have recruited and developed over 200 internationally trained physicians, with 77 per cent of them practising in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the people of rural Saskatchewan still remember the NDP's [New Democratic Party] record of health care: 52 hospitals closed, two in my constituency. If history has taught us anything, Mr. Speaker, it's that the prescription for increasing the number of doctors in rural Saskatchewan is keeping the members opposite in opposition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Donations to Political Parties

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's election finance laws are broken. We're one of the last places where corporate donations, union donations, and out-of-province donations aren't just allowed, they're unlimited. Fixing these outdated rules, it's not just common sense; it's something that people across the province support. A clear majority of Saskatchewan people believe the corporate, union, and out-of-province donations should be banned. Mr. Speaker, that's because these donations open the door to questions, legitimate questions about whose interests are truly being served in our democratic process. As New Democrats, we believe it's time. It's time to close that door once and for all. Our bill will cap individual donations, eliminate out-of-province donations, and ban corporate and union donations for good.

What is it that the Premier doesn't like about this very sensible idea, Mr. Speaker? Why doesn't he think Saskatchewan democracy should belong to Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, in this province under *The Election Act*, all registered parties, Mr. Speaker, must publicly report any donations over \$250, Mr. Speaker. Any time there's a general election, all parties involved must report the expenses that are incurred during that general election, Mr. Speaker. The same holds true for any by-election that may occur, Mr. Speaker. As I said, all donations over \$250 are publicly reported, Mr. Speaker. They're communicated to anyone who should choose to explore them, Mr. Speaker, on the Internet, on the Elections Saskatchewan site.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, here in the province, we had last year 26,000 donors — personal donors — to this party, on average about \$65 per donation, Mr. Speaker. We have

donors from across the party, across the province, Mr. Speaker. We also had about 1,000 corporations that donated to our party, Mr. Speaker, across Canada, and their average donation was about \$1,000, Mr. Speaker, all publicly disclosed on the Internet, all publicly disclosed to Elections Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, as are all the expenses in any election.

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

Treatment of Former Member Regarding Irrigation Project

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is truly disappointing that the Premier doesn't understand the importance of restoring trust in our democratic system. Mr. Speaker, the other day, the Premier also failed to answer some pretty basic questions about his meetings with Mr. Boyd and the irrigation project that he was trying to get approved at the time.

Who was at that meeting? Where did it happen? Was it before or after Mr. Boyd's now infamous trip to China? Were there any records or notes taken at that meeting? You know, the Premier's had another day or two to look back at his calendar and get his facts straight. Has he checked his notes? Does he have the answer to these basic questions today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, those questions were answered on the floor of this Assembly. They were answered in the rotunda. They were answered honestly, Mr. Speaker. I don't recall the date that I met with that individual.

I don't recall the date, Mr. Speaker, that I met on multiple occasions with the member from Athabasca on constituency work throughout northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I don't recall who was at those meetings, whether they were scheduled meetings or whether they were meetings in this House, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is we engage with people across the floor, and across the province as ministers do, as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] do on both sides of this House, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we are properly representing people from across this great province, Mr. Speaker.

But in the case, in the case of this individual, the advice that was provided to him was precisely the same as the advice that was provided to people across the province and in the case across the floor, Mr. Speaker, to the member of Athabasca and others that I have met with is, you need to approach the relevant agencies, Mr. Speaker, in this case the Water Security Agency, the Ministry of Environment for aquatic habitat protection permits, Mr. Speaker. That advice is the same, Mr. Speaker, no matter who we meet with. But we'll continue to engage with people across the province.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, it's again disappointing that the Premier has not or has chosen not to track that information down. And I do have another question about that meeting that

has not been answered. When the Premier sat down with Mr. Boyd and looked at the plans to discuss that irrigation project, did he meet with Mr. Boyd on his own or were there other people accompanying Mr. Boyd?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Again, Mr. Speaker, those questions have been asked on this floor. They've been answered. They've been asked in the rotunda, and again they've been answered. They've been answered honestly, Mr. Speaker.

I don't recall who was in the meetings with myself and the member from Athabasca and other members. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't recall who was in that meeting with Mr. Boyd at that time. But I do recall that he did, he did show me an irrigation plan, Mr. Speaker. And the advice to that individual, as it is the same to any individual that we meet with, Mr. Speaker, is to get in touch with the appropriate agencies, Mr. Speaker. Get in touch with them; they will give you advice on the appropriate permits that are required.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite keep putting this forward as, as there was something untoward that happened here. In this case, Mr. Speaker, the regulations of the province were not followed. Mr. Speaker, in this case, the individual was charged. He pled guilty, Mr. Speaker, to two counts. He was assessed one of the highest fines ever handed out under these regulations, Mr. Speaker, as well as ordered to rehabilitate the riverbank, Mr. Speaker. I think that is proof in this case, Mr. Speaker, that no matter who you are in the province of Saskatchewan, you'll be treated equally through all of the processes that we have.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is quite strange to not remember who was in that meeting. That's quite an unusual thing. Certainly I think people would be very surprised that someone couldn't recall whether there was just one person across from them or multiple people. It's quite unusual, Mr. Speaker, and does continue to raise questions of why the Premier doesn't feel he needs to answer these very direct questions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, whether it's a one-on-one meeting, or with a small group with the minister at an undisclosed location, or the high-level meeting that brought in multiple DMs [deputy minister] including Alanna Koch — which we've heard was because this was a high-profile individual — or whether it's the approval of a project for which the member under discussion was being charged at the time, Mr. Speaker, does the Premier still expect, with this list of irregularities and uncertainties, does he still expect people to believe that Mr. Boyd got the same treatment that anyone in the province would get?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's surprising that the Leader of the Opposition continues on these lines of questioning, particularly, as I pointed out yesterday, he had four hours that he personally could have attended estimates just a couple of nights ago and put these very questions to the officials . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Member for Saskatoon Centre, please come to order. Thank you. I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I will acknowledge that the member from Saskatoon Centre, as well as the member from Saskatoon Nutana, asked a couple of questions in terms of the process that an individual such as . . . I think the member asked how many times WHPA [*The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*] charges had been laid in the past.

But, Mr. Speaker, specific questions about why the deputy minister to the Premier was involved in these types of discussions, the members had four hours to ask those two officials these very questions. And what the Leader of the Opposition does, Mr. Speaker, is he asks the questions on the floor of the Assembly where there is no deputy minister to answer the question, Mr. Speaker. But when he has four hours, he doesn't take the time to ask the question.

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

Global Transportation Hub and Land Transactions

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister tried to minimize the revelation that taxpayers are now on the hook for an additional \$2.9 million because they have decided not to use the east parcels at the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] for borrow land. Now remember, these are the infamous parcels that should have been expropriated by Highways in the first place instead of leaving taxpayers on the hook for the inflated price the GTH paid.

But, Mr. Speaker, on top of that \$3 million paid to the GTH for the Marquart land that was never used, the ministry appears to have also paid the GTH millions to haul, strip, and borrow land on the GTH footprint, even Brightenview's land — very, very expensive commercial land.

According to the contract, GTH was given a down payment of \$2.1 million for these services. Even though this hauling appears to never even happened, why would we pay a Global Transportation Authority to haul dirt?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, you build roads. You build interchanges. It requires the movement of earth. I don't know what they build roads on, but we build them on earth. We have asphalt and we have concrete on top of them. That's how roads are built in this province. And as you go ahead and do it, you move it from one place to another. You have borrow pits. I didn't know about the term "borrow pit" until earlier this week.

So they decided they wanted to acquire the land for that purpose. They didn't need it, so it's still outstanding. And you know what's still there? The earth is still there. They still have the land ready for sale. They still have the cash that was paid. To the members opposite, I say, it's a zero-sum game. There's nothing taken place.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the more we dig, the more dirt we find. It appears that Anthony Marquart's really expensive land and GTH's hauling services aren't good enough for Vinci and the bypass conglomerate. Now the minister often says he would like the opposition's help in supporting this project, so I have an idea for him. Take that borrow land that we paid six and a half million dollars for to the corner of Vic and Albert and give Capital Pointe a hand in filling their hole. That might be all it's good for, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

At the time the 2016 auditor's report was written, she said it was unclear what this land was going to be used for and she couldn't determine the costs and benefits at the time. Mr. Speaker, we know there's a lot of dirt here, and it's clear the auditor was not able to fully canvass this issue in her report. There are still so many questions needing answering and witnesses who have been blocked from testifying.

Will the minister now do his part, or perhaps the Minister for Highways, and commit today to scheduling a committee to get to the bottom of this hole?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that at this point in the session we're focusing on what kind of dirt it is, where dirt's being moved, how the dirt process takes place. Yesterday I go out to do the scrum, and because the members opposite are talking to the media, I'm asking . . . I'm being asked questions about what type of dirt is there. I don't know. I'm not in the dirt business. I'm a lawyer and I'm a politician. I am not an expert in dirt. Now the people over there want to fling dirt, throw dirt, but that's not the business that I'm in, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will say this to the member opposite. She is a member of the law society, has been a member of the law society. She knows that we are not going to get involved in having witnesses or doing a process while the matter is still under investigation, while the matter's been referred to Manitoba prosecutions. Those are things that are not going to happen. Mr. Speaker, some point in time in the future we expect to get an answer from the province of Manitoba. But until then, we're not doing anything else.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, a recent national report on reading, math, and science skills shows lower scores in Saskatchewan compared to other provinces. The report, prepared by the Council of Ministers of Education, points to a system that is under stress.

Mr. Speaker, we know that underfunding and cuts to education are having negative impacts. We have more kids in classrooms with fewer teachers with fewer supports. Provinces that have

maintained their investments in education, like BC [British Columbia], Alberta, and Ontario are showing scores significantly above the national average. By contrast, provinces that have seen cuts to education funding, like Saskatchewan and Manitoba, are seeing their scores significantly below that national average.

Does the minister really not see the connection between his government's poor treatment of education and the consequences of these choices?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we know our teachers are doing a good job with our students, Mr. Speaker. And those latest PCAP [Pan-Canadian assessment program] scores reflect the Saskatchewan students' continuing increase, Mr. Speaker, with respect to performance across those sectors, Mr. Speaker. Certainly other provinces are performing a little bit better, Mr. Speaker. But relative to other provinces, Mr. Speaker, but we are increasing our scores, Mr. Speaker, and that's clear from the evidence that's been put forward, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd also like to point on the funding piece, Mr. Speaker. In May 9th of 2018, the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] said in their news release, Mr. Speaker, that per-pupil funding in Saskatchewan is among the highest in the country. And, Mr. Speaker, we've shown our commitment to public education in this budget with a \$30 million increase, which followed on the seven and a half million dollar in-year funding that we provided prior to the budget, Mr. Speaker.

That shows our continuing commitment, our continuing commitment to have conversations with our partners in education, our partners in education, Mr. Speaker, to advance the interests of kids in the classroom. Is there more work to do? You bet there is, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue that work.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt of the good work that teachers and boards all across this province do every day for kids. But there's also no doubt that this government has cut, and cut deeply, the funding to education.

The consequences of those cuts to education are even more obvious when we talk about graduation rates. As highlighted by the independent Children's Advocate, indigenous youth are graduating at an appalling 43 per cent as compared to non-indigenous youth who are graduating at a rate of 85 per cent. But, Mr. Speaker, this Education minister and Premier, who relied on educators in their leadership bids, refuse to acknowledge their backfilling of education dollars is barely half of what they took.

Will the minister do the right thing and at least restore the \$24 million that this government cut from our kids' classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I've stood in this House time and time again and advised the House on the \$30 million which has been

restored to education funding, Mr. Speaker. And I had mentioned in this House too the fact that school boards across this province have found some significant efficiencies with respect to their operations, Mr. Speaker. And that all benefits, well, Mr. Speaker, that all benefits children in the classroom.

We're going to continue to have our conversations, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we are providing the right supports to the classroom. That's an ongoing conversation that we're having, Mr. Speaker. But for the member opposite or the members opposite to suggest that this government isn't committed to education, committed to supporting children in the classroom, is just wrong, Mr. Speaker. You see that through our budget. You see that through the ongoing dialogue and conversations that we're having with our partners in education, Mr. Speaker. Well they don't want to hear the answer, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, I've been out talking to teachers, Mr. Speaker. I've been talking to trustees. We've been meeting with school boards, Mr. Speaker, and things are well in the sector, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to work with them, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we advance the proper interests of children.

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

Measures to Address Sexual Assault

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the second-highest per capita rate of sexual assaults of all the provinces. And stories like the one that broke yesterday demonstrate all too well the gravity of the situation. As a province, we must all do better. We need strategies for prevention, policies that support survivors, and movement away from this dangerous and heartbreaking culture that disempowers survivors.

Mr. Speaker, even though our rates are high, Saskatchewan is the only province that doesn't have a sexual assault strategy. So today, my ask is very simple but very important: can the government commit today to a province-wide sexual assault strategy?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, there's lots of things in this House that I don't agree with the opposition on, but this is not one of them. This is something that we all take seriously, and all members in this Assembly can and should do more.

Mr. Speaker, we do a lot of things in this area and we certainly have to do more. We're going to have a report released in the next few days, and hopefully that's going to be a starting point of more things that we can and should do.

Mr. Speaker, I can say that we spend \$11.4 million a year towards interpersonal violence and abuse services. Of that, \$1.2 million goes to sexual assault service programs across the province. We've introduced the Listen Project, which is two hours of free legal advice for survivors of sexual violence. In 2015, we opened the first new transition house in Saskatchewan

since 1989. We've active consultations under way on Clare's Law. We have legislation in place for 10 unpaid days for victims and family members of victims of interpersonal violence. We certainly have more to do, Mr. Speaker, but we all recognize it.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I believe the minister is mentioning the quick-to-be-released report I believe on domestic violence. We need that. But we need a sexual assault strategy as well.

Sexual violence often occurs on university campuses, and there has been continued calls for action to change the culture of our campuses. Mr. Speaker, comments in the media yesterday from a U of S [University of Saskatchewan] coach are completely unacceptable and show that attitudes and perceptions are very slow to change. Mr. Speaker, athletics is never more important than the safety of young women and other students.

We've heard from survivors that the steps taken so far to implement sexual assault strategies do not go far enough, that students still do not feel safe, and that survivors are still not supported. A recent report graded the U of R's plan to end campus sexual violence at a D-plus.

Can the minister tell us how she will ensure the safety and support of students when it comes to sexual violence?

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Mr. Speaker, I am angry. And this is not okay. The young man in question here was charged with a sexual assault on an unconscious woman and took 147 photos of her. Now due process is important, but the coach's comments bear repeating in this House, Mr. Speaker. He said, and I quote:

No where along the lines did we take anything that had happened in the past into account with his involvement with our team. From my perspective as a coach and as a father, I thought being involved with our team and our program would be best at this particular stage of his life. [And then goes on to say that the individual] . . . made a very bad choice and decision with his actions and what he did for one night. And it's cost him dearly.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, what about the young woman?

In October of 2017, Kevin Doherty, the then minister of Advanced Education, wrote to every one of our post-secondary institutions and said, and I quote:

I expect you and your board will take a strong leadership role to ensure that all members of your campus community take their responsibilities on the issue of sexual violence seriously.

Mr. Speaker, as mentors to not just young athletes but young people, we expect more from our varsity coaches. And I expect

the university to treat this issue with the severity that it deserves.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for her comments. I think we can all agree this is not a partisan issue.

Mr. Speaker, it's Sexual Assault Awareness Week, and organizations across the province are working to prevent sexual violence and support survivors. But due to funding restrictions, some organizations like the Battlefords & Area Sexual Assault Centre are struggling to provide the services that their communities need. The centre said, and I quote:

Cutting programs and services to areas that desperately need it is not what we want to do . . . However we are left with no other choice if the province doesn't increase funding to our organization.

Mr. Speaker, the organization has not seen a funding increase for six years. And the Ministry of Justice knows that Meadow Lake and Ile-a-la-Crosse will lose services on June 30th if nothing changes. Can the minister commit today to providing this funding and ensuring these services continue?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we are in a process of finalizing budget, dealing with a number of issues on this. We recognize the challenges that exist. We know that the assault centres are working very hard. A lot of them are using and expending reserves that should be used for later or for other projects. We'll continue to work with them, Mr. Speaker.

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

Apology Regarding Sixties Scoop

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's long past due that this government take real action and take responsibility for the Sixties Scoop. Manitoba has already made a formal apology to the survivors of the Sixties Scoop. The federal government has reached a settlement and is taking real action toward reconciliation for that community, and now Alberta has set a date for an apology in their legislature on the 28th of May.

When elected leader of his party, the Premier said he would find out what an apology would mean. Mr. Speaker, it means acknowledging past wrongs and working to prevent the need for future apologies.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government show accountability and issue its long-awaited apology for the Sixties Scoop and take real action to close gaps in health, in justice, in income, and education between First Nations and Métis people and the rest of Saskatchewan that persist today?

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

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, we certainly take all the concerns of our First Nations community to heart, and we've had extensive consultations, in fact even meeting with our federal minister yesterday. Minister Wyant and I . . . or the minister was . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you. Had spent some time in a very engaged conversation.

At the same time, we've been in extensive consultations with a very formalized group that involves the Sixties Scoop survivors and have been spending significant time with them and other ministry officials in putting together a plan, a moving forward plan as to what we're going to do, how we're going to formulate our apology, as well as the process that we're going to undergo.

We've looked at the Alberta model, certainly looking at different aspects of it and think theirs . . . Our Sixties Scoop survivors are saying that that's a very worthwhile model that they'd like us to pursue. So we're certainly very engaged with our Sixties Scoop survivors and we're letting them kind of lead the process and lead the discussion as how they would like to see us put forward a very worthwhile and erstwhile apology to them.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, again the question was to the Premier. This is a commitment that he has made and we really would like to hear what the timeline is, some more clarity on what that timeline is. But also I think the delay on this is really indicative of a failure to engage on what is the most pressing social issue in our province today, the great inequalities that exist between First Nations and Métis people and the rest of the province, whether it's in health and health outcomes, whether it's in education, in justice, or in income.

What is this government going to do? What is this Premier's government going to do to close that gap and make a real difference in people's lives?

[10:45]

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

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, this government and this Premier has indicated that they need to have input from our survivors, from those that are directly involved in the Sixties Scoop event. So we're not going to put a fixed date on this. We're going to let them provide us with all the background information, discussion, negotiations, whatever they need us to do. We're not going to fix a date because this is a very extensive and a lengthy process I believe we're going to need to go through.

But we will come forward with this. We've made that promise, and we've certainly talked to our survivors and we've made that commitment to them that this will happen.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing

Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 127, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2018* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister's requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 127 and that the bill be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 127 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2018*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move this bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 127 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Cox: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 128, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2018* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 128 and that the bill be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 128 — *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2018*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move this bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It's been moved by the minister that Bill No. 128 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Ms. Young: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 110, *The Animal Protection Act, 2017* with amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in the Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 110 and that the bill and its amendments be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first time? I recognize the minister.

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 110 — *The Animal Protection Act, 2017*

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read the first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 110 — *The Animal Protection Act, 2017*

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It's been moved by the minister that Bill No. 110 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Ms. Young: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 83, *The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act, 2017* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 83 and that the bill be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 83 — *The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act, 2017*

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 83 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 258 through 264.

The Speaker: — Tabled 258 to 264. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answer to question 265.

The Speaker: — Ordered 265. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to question 266.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Can't hear. Could you repeat? Sorry, Mr. Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to question 266.

The Speaker: — Table 266. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answer to question 267.

The Speaker: — Ordered 267. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 268 through 270.

The Speaker: — Tabled 268 to 270. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to question 271.

The Speaker: — Ordered 271. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 272 through 274.

The Speaker: — Tabled 272 to 274. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answer to question 275.

The Speaker: — Ordered, 275. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 276 through 285.

The Speaker: — 276 to 285.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar-Saskatchewan Valley.

Recruitment and Retention of Health Care Professionals

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to be able to take part in today's 75-minute debate. I will be making a motion at the end of my remarks, but the motion topic today is the Government of Saskatchewan's commitment to innovative solutions to recruiting and retaining physicians and nurses in Saskatchewan, which has led to nearly 900 more physicians and 3,700 more nurses since 2007.

But I think it's important that we take a step back before we get into the details of what our government has done, some very innovative and important things that we've done since 2007, and really give a lay of the land before the Saskatchewan Party formed government.

Before members on this side formed government, the province, some would say, was in crisis on many different fronts. Just

look at the population numbers; the population had dropped by 22,000 people. From 1996 to 2007, population was in decline. You know, we were declining as far as growth in the economy, as well as people in this province.

We would sit in opposition, and listen to members say that statistically it was impossible to grow the population of this province by more than the 1 per cent that the opposition had forecast was possible if we formed government. It was quite disheartening to see the NDP government of the day to make comments like that. You know, they had ministers saying that, you know, more people left, well there'd be more for the rest of us. And we'd always say no, when people left for Alberta or around the world, there wasn't more for the rest of us. We really lost something in Saskatchewan.

And this really speaks to our health care professionals. They would leave. Yes, they were leaving in droves to mainly Alberta, but around the country and around the world, to take up jobs, and there wasn't more for the rest of us when they left. It was a loss to this province, and it was very disheartening.

Saskatchewan lost 450 nurses and 173 doctors from 2001 to 2006. At that time, Saskatchewan had the longest surgical wait times in Canada. Under the NDP government of those days, they closed 52 hospitals, mainly in rural Saskatchewan. They also closed the Plains hospital here in Regina. You know, you look at how they treated seniors in those days. They closed 1,200 long-term care beds. On the seniors' income plan benefit, there was not an increase in the benefit for 16 years under the NDP government.

So just given that type of, you know, feeling that was in the province makes it very important how we, when we came into government in 2007, how we looked at the situation. You know, we also had the former NDP Health minister saying that, you know, they didn't want to have targets about how many more nurses that would be hired in the province because they may not meet the target. Well you know, they weren't going to meet the target because they didn't put anything in place to meet those targets. They didn't want more nurses and doctors because they were planning for decline in the province. People were leaving, and they didn't feel they needed to have targets to increase the number of nurses and doctors in the province.

When we formed government in 2007, you know, some were saying that health care . . . Well health care was in a crisis. But at what point were people's health and lives were going to be at risk because of the lack of, particularly, registered nurses and doctors? And it was getting very, very serious at that time, Mr. Speaker.

So when we came into government in 2007, our government made a decision to give an increase in salary — I believe it was 35 per cent over three years — to registered nurses, and that was one very important thing, because under the NDP government we were not paying nurses the salary that would keep them in the province. They could go to Alberta and other places for much more money, and they were leaving. So there was no doubt that that had to be addressed. And we did that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, When we formed government it was the member

from Indian Head-Milestone was the Health minister. And he had to take on a very heavy load, trying to deal with all these issues in health care, and he's done a fantastic job. He did a fantastic job, and he's followed by the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, who did an amazing job as well as Health minister. And today our current Health minister continues to do an amazing job to keep health care on track and for the safety and health of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

[11:00]

So I want to talk about innovation in this motion. I think there's a number of things that we have done as a government which speaks to innovation. So obviously one of the problems was the shortage of physicians in Saskatchewan and mainly rural Saskatchewan. So there was a kind of an archaic process of trying to get doctors accredited in the province. So our government changed things and brought in the Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment or SIPPA. And it's a made-in-Saskatchewan solution with supports to recruit many more physicians to our province by assessing foreign-trained family physicians from a broad range of countries.

And I have to say at this point as well is, you know, many questions. How do you, how do you recruit physicians? Well through our experience, I just know from the town of Biggar, the best resource to recruit physicians is the physicians that's in the community. In Biggar we traditionally have had three physicians and occasionally we would go down to two. And there were would be, well quite frankly, it would be a serious problem. Many people, there were people who'd be trying to go to other communities or just going into a waiting room, emergency waiting list, quite frankly.

So over the last few years when it was down to two doctors in Biggar, the clinic, which was owned by the two remaining doctors, they would recruit physicians and they were very good at it. And so they had a key role in recruiting physicians, whether they were international physicians or from around the province or from around the country. The community stepped forward and financially made a commitment to retain, recruit physicians, and over time we're back to a stable, three-physician community, which is really, really a benefit to the area and to the citizens in and around Biggar.

So first, best recruiter is the physicians being helped financially, and more than just financially, just on a personal level to help these people integrate into the community with their children and their spouses. Looking for a job for the spouse is very important.

You know, the health regions then — now it's one health region — they play a key role in recruiting as well. And under the Saskatchewan Party government we have Saskdocs, which is the provincial recruiting agents, to go find doctors around the country and around the world. So everyone working together, we have made tremendous strides in the recruitment of physicians.

And SIPPA is just another very important way of getting these doctors accredited and into our communities in the province. So now nearly 900 more physicians are practising in the province compared to 2007. That's a 51 per cent increase overall: 62 per

cent increase in specialists, 43 per cent increase in general practitioners, 98 per cent increase in pediatrics. In the same time, the provincial population has increased by 17.5 per cent.

Through the Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment program, or SIPPA, over 200 hundred doctors are currently practising in the province. One hundred fifty-four of these are practising in rural or remote communities. As of March 2017, approximately 52.9 per cent of physicians practising in Saskatchewan received a medical education from outside the country. For family physicians this number is 65.5 per cent, and for specialists it's 38.3 per cent. We have one of the best physician compensation rates in the country. As part of this compensation package, we provide special incentives to doctors in rural Saskatchewan.

So I'll just move on to the other very important areas when we talk about nurses. As I said, we gave a salary increase that was much needed. And so our record now is that over 16,000 nurses of all designations call Saskatchewan home, 3,700 more than in 2007. That's a 27 per cent increase in registered nurses since 2007, 48 per cent increase in LPNs [licensed practical nurse], and 126 per cent in nurse practitioners.

In 2016 Saskatchewan had 923 RNs [registered nurse] per 100,000 people, well above the Canadian average of 796. We delivered on our promise to hire 900 more registered nurses, added 300 more registered nurses, RPN [registered practical nurse] training seats, and doubled the number of nurse practitioner training seats from 20 to 40. So very important innovations to recruit and retain health care professionals.

Now another innovation that we brought in was CECs, collaborative emergency centres, to improve the access to health care in rural and remote communities. They are designed to provide care for 24-7 to help stabilize and improve access to primary health care and emergency services, and during the day the public has access to a primary health care team, including physicians and nurse practitioners which extend hours on evenings and weekends. Overnight the care is handled by a registered nurse and paramedic team with a physician oversight by phone.

Saskatchewan has opened three collaborative emergency centres in Maidstone in 2013; Shaunavon, 2013; Canora, 2014; and additional CECs are being implemented in Wakaw and Spiritwood. As of March 2017, over 4,000 patients have been served and 77 per cent have been able to stay in the community rather than transfer to another hospital. So CECs have been a very innovative program that has come in. It's been very successful.

Back on the physician recruitment front, something else was very important is that we've added 40 seats to the College of Medicine, from 60 to 100, and doubled the number of residency positions from 60 to 120. We expanded the distribution of postgraduate medical education to Prince Albert, Swift Current, La Ronge, North Battleford, and Moose Jaw. Further plans are in development for additional sites.

One hundred per cent of medical residents in 2017 graduating classes from Swift Current and Moose Jaw decided to stay and practise in Saskatchewan. And I think that point we have to

make again and again and again. These innovations have . . . you know, when students do their residency in smaller urban centres around the province, they tend to stay in those communities and service those communities that they have been trained in.

So, Mr. Speaker, my time is running out, so my other colleagues would like to say a few words. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a motion:

That this Assembly supports the Government of Saskatchewan's commitment to innovation solutions to recruiting and retaining physicians and nurses in Saskatchewan, which has led to nearly 900 more physicians and 3,700 more nurses since 2007.

I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Biggar-Sask Valley has moved:

That this Assembly supports the Government of Saskatchewan's commitment to innovative solutions to recruiting and retaining physicians and nurses in Saskatchewan, which has led to nearly 900 more physicians and 3,700 more nurses since 2007.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into the 75-minute debate today. It will probably come as no surprise to members opposite that I will not be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Biggar-Sask Valley today, and there are a few reasons for this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which I will get into.

The first question is, I think, quite obvious to folks who are asking questions and approach things with a critical lens, and that is what is the per capita change in the number of representation because that information is conveniently left out. Often we see this Sask Party government reporting raw numbers back to us, and the question I always have is, what was the per capita change? If we're going to do this, we're looking back 11 years and we're picking this amount of time, I'd like to be able to see something that actually represents how many people exist.

We see the same problem in terms of their reporting of numbers in education, and I know that the Education critic talks about this quite frequently as well. So this is something that I would like to see before I would be able to support a motion like this. And I see the Minister for Rural and Remote Health heckling me right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But what I would appreciate is getting some of those details about the per capita representation because I think those are important.

There is still an important piece. There's still some shortages that exist here as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we know that there is still shortages in terms of recruiting family doctors and emergency medicine physicians, and that this disproportionately impacts some communities in our province more than others.

So we've heard concerns about shortages that still exist in the Southeast, the Arcola and Carlyle areas out to Estevan. We know there have been concerns with people who want to have babies in Estevan, and whether they have the care there for that to take place. The Wolseley hospital being shut down, Preeceville hospital not having its 24-hour emergency room anymore, Mr. Speaker. And we know the impact that that has on folks in removing those emergency services which are so essential.

And when we consider the compounding effects of losing our provincial transit system, STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], with some of the lack of services that exist in these areas, we're happy to give credit where credit's due, but I'm not convinced that that is the case here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are still a number of areas in Saskatchewan health care that are suffering. And unlike the members opposite who may believe that privatization is the answer to better health care, we say give it the resources it needs to survive and to thrive in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We've all heard stories of folks waiting all day in the emergency room, or we've been that person, Mr. Deputy Speaker; of services being cut in rural communities, as recently as lab services being cut in Ituna, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I remember the member from Saskatoon Riversdale doing some good work in raising awareness about some of those lab services, and getting partial restoration. Another story of this government's approach of cut first and ask questions later.

Stories about long wait times for mental health. Can you imagine children waiting two years to see a psychiatrist, and the damaging effect that can be done during what is a very formative time in the child's development? And of course the med school in our province being on probation due to historic funding cuts, cuts they've never seen, like they saw in last year's budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So before patting themselves on the back and saying, good job, job well done; before patting themselves on the back and saying, job well done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think these are some pieces that they should be looking at. And of course, we want Saskatchewan to be the best place to live for the residents here. And these are some key concerns that we are hearing out on doorsteps, and I've been out on doorsteps quite a bit lately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, out in Regina Northeast. I've heard these concerns from folks. And of course, I am also the product of a by-election — my very presence here, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and was out pounding the doorsteps with a number of folks on this side last summer. And we heard these concerns from folks right in Saskatoon as well. So, right across the province, lots of concerns.

So rather than patting themselves on the back, they should be looking at the ways that suffering still exists. And we all have these stories that exist in our family as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I am not unlike many folks in this Assembly, probably, who have stories of folks who I know and am really close to who have suffered as a result of some of these shortages, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I don't have much time here today, so I won't provide a full personal account of these situations, but in the past couple

years I witnessed my grandfather — who I was quite close to and lived with for a period of five years — I witnessed him be diagnosed very late in the game with pancreatic cancer, which we know is often terminal in those situations. We witnessed his health deteriorate quite rapidly over the course of a year, no ability to enter long-term care until he was in his final days. He was worried about the cost of private care. He was saying things to us like, I don't want to live very long because I'm concerned about the costs that I'm paying every month for private care. So when we have a health care system that can't look after some of our most vulnerable in what is a crucial time for them and their families, that's incredibly disappointing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[11:15]

And then my father was in an emergency room a few weeks ago, keeled over in pain, and didn't get help for hours and hours and hours. And the response that he was given was, go talk to a politician, when he complained about the amount of time that he had spent there. So just some concerning situations right now. Not sure if we're at the stage where folks should be patting themselves on the back.

And I'm happy to continue to talk about the Sask Party government's record on health. We've heard concerns about their record for years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of the money spent on lean consultants. You know, I understand that lean can be quite the efficient program if you're in the supply chain management business, if you're looking to streamline your business, but as soon as you start treating health care patients like cars on an assembly line, we heard nothing but negative comments about the use of this process and the money that was put into this, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We've heard from communities that feel abandoned by the Sask Party, that they raised their own money for a health care centre and then were abandoned by the Sask Party. We've heard concerns from health care workers who put in 24-hour shifts or stay after work to care for their patients. We have concerns that eliminating the 12 health regions in this province will mean that front-line workers no longer have input in the care that's provided at the local level, and this is rich considering the Sask Party has consistently attacked former governments for streamlining health care. And after a decade of unprecedented revenues, the people of this province are being asked to pay for these shortcomings, this mismanagement, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And if they had such a strong record on health care, why would we have SEIU-West [Service Employees International Union-West] rallying on the steps of this legislature back in October of this year at the start-up of this Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, talking about reversing the cuts to health care? We trust these folks on the front lines, and why would we be asking them for a wage cut of 3.5 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Just a shameful record on health care. I find it quite appalling that the government would come forward with a motion like this that is self-congratulatory and expect us to support it.

And so we still face a number of these challenges, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We face challenges that some of my colleagues will get into about mental health care in this province. We had an

entire 75-minute debate about mental health care in this province. Mental health is health, and we need to be affording it that attention. The high cost of prescriptions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, disproportionately impacting seniors; surgery wait times; wait times when you're sitting in an emergency room; to see a specialist, Mr. Deputy Speaker; and the children's hospital being off track, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I'll let my colleagues provide more information on that, but these are all the areas that we're talking about. I've got plenty. I'm just running out of time on the clock here.

I cannot support the motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a number of the reasons I've identified here. We can't be patting ourselves on the back at this time. We need to do better and we need to strive for a better Saskatchewan.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think in order to understand the importance of supporting such a motion, we need to first take a brief look back at where health care in regards to physicians and surgeons was in this province prior to 2007. And only then can we truly comprehend, acknowledge, recognize, and yes, even celebrate, the great work this government has done and committed to in finding innovative solutions to improving health care in this province.

Recruiting and retaining physicians and nurses — the most valuable people on our health care system — is crucial to sustaining a healthy, viable, and efficient health care system that can provide the very best quality, professional, caring services to patients.

Mr. Speaker, prior to 2007 and under the NDP, our doctors and nurses who were graduating out of our institutions were leaving the province to find work elsewhere. Between 2001 and 2006, we lost 450 nurses and 173 doctors. The closure of 52 hospitals and 1,200 long-term care beds most certainly didn't help these new graduates. Mr. Speaker, you can't provide health care or hire doctors and nurses when they don't even have a hospital or a care home to go to work to each day.

Mr. Speaker, growing the population of Saskatchewan was one of our goals, and we did it — something the NDP also didn't believe was possible. This has been a tremendous help to our economy, but it also puts more pressure on our health care system, so we needed to address that and we have. We heard the cry for physicians and nurses, and came up with some creative and innovative solutions to recruiting and retaining doctors and nurses in this province.

SIPPA, Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment program, was a made-in-Saskatchewan solution which supports and continues to support the recruitment of more physicians to our province by assessing foreign-trained family physicians from a broad range of countries. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the 200 doctors who have gone through SIPPA, 154 of these are practising in a rural or remote community.

The establishment of our Saskdocs website in 2007 has also assisted in the recruitment of more than 200 international

doctors.

The 2017 winter cohort under SIPPA ended April 20th with 12 candidates successfully completing their assessment and are expected to establish their practices by the end of May. The 2018 spring cohort began on April 26th with 12 candidates again, and they will begin their 12-week centralized field assessment on May 14th, which was this past Monday, and results are expected by mid-August.

Mr. Speaker, as physicians retire or leave communities, those positions need to be filled, not close the hospital or health facility, and SIPPA candidates are essential to filling these positions and are welcomed with open arms into our communities.

Mr. Speaker, we also recognize that we need to grow our own physicians here in Saskatchewan. We added 40 seats to the College of Medicine, going from 60 to 100, and doubled the number of residency positions from 60 to 120. We expanded the distribution of post-graduate medical education to Prince Albert, Swift Current, La Ronge, North Battleford, and Moose Jaw, and further plans are in development for additional sites. Of note, Mr. Speaker, 100 per cent of the medical residents in the 2017 graduating classes from Swift Current and Moose Jaw decided to stay and practise in Saskatchewan.

We have worked with many of our physicians to develop collaborative emergency centres, or CECs as we call them, to improve access to health care in rural and remote communities, and they are designed to provide 24-7 care to help stabilize and improve access to primary health care and emergency services.

Saskatchewan has opened three CECs: one in September 2013 in Maidstone; one in November 2013 in Shaunavon; and one in Canora in July 2014. Additional CECs are being implemented in Wakaw and Spiritwood. As of March 2017 over 4,000 patients have been served through CECs and 77 per cent have been able to stay in the community rather than transfer to another hospital.

Since 2013 our government has been working with specialists to implement the provincial referral model. And this model has led to significant improvements and continues as a model of care that we intend to further expand into other specialists. Mr. Speaker, this model has allowed for pooled referrals that level workloads for specialists, but more importantly speeds up a patient's wait time to see a specialist. And so far there are 21 specialty groups and 100 specialists who have signed up.

We also recognized, in order to recruit and retain physicians, we needed to offer competitive salaries. And we now have the second-highest compensation for doctors and particularly specialists, in the country, and it is well above the Canadian average. This has allowed us to recruit 487 new specialists since 2017.

Mr. Speaker, my son graduated from the College of Medicine at the U of S in 2007. He did not get a residency spot here but was given one at the Vancouver hospital in radiology and diagnostic imaging. Being a true Saskatchewan rural kid, he always wanted to come back. So after passing his Royal College exams as an interventional radiologist and becoming American board

certified as well, and getting married — yes, pretty much all at the same time and within a couple of months of each other — in 2012, he and his bride moved back to Lloydminster where he accepted a job with Prairie North Health.

Mr. Speaker, this young man had dreams and ambitions and with the support and help of his parents, a year later built and opened his own diagnostic imaging clinic while continuing to work for the health region. Since then he has reinvested in supporting the improvement of health care and wait times in this province. He has built another imaging clinic in Lloydminster and has built and opened ultrasound clinics in North Battleford, Meadow Lake, Weyburn, Swift Current, and recently Estevan.

His investment into the people of this province has greatly reduced the load on health regions, but more importantly has greatly reduced wait times for these patients and has removed the worry and stress for them in getting in for an appointment and getting their test results sooner.

With this government's commitment to finding innovative solutions to improving health care, the connecting of the PACS, or picture archiving communication system, across this province allows specialists to do reads, particularly with ultrasounds, no matter where they are located in the province — actually no matter where they are in the world, as long as they have the connectivity. And it has significantly lessened the wait times for patients anxiously awaiting test results and diagnosis. Advancing patient care is the number one priority in all of these innovations.

I am so proud of my son for being one of those doctors and specialists contributing to the improvement of health care in this province. Mr. Speaker, there are nearly 900 more physicians now practising in this province compared to 2007, a 51 per cent increase overall, with a 62 per cent increase in specialists, a 43 per cent increase in general practitioners, and a 98 per cent increase in pediatricians. And yes, we will continue to recruit more.

So let's talk about 3,700 more nurses. Yes, that's 3,700 more nurses providing care and services in this province since 2007. In total, more than 16,000 nurses are licensed to practise in the province, including registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses, nurse practitioners, and licensed practical nurses.

Mr. Speaker, back in 2004 I remember stepping into an elevator at the Sheraton Cavalier in Saskatoon and noted the name tags on the four other people already in the elevator. As the doors closed I commented on their ID [identification] and asked what brought them to our province from the great state of Texas. And lo and behold, they had a room set up at the hotel and were recruiting nurses. Such a shame to lose those nurses.

The then Health minister, Len Taylor, stated in the *Leader-Post* in March of 2006, "More nurses, but less than 600." There's no light at the end of the tunnel unless it's a train. These staffing levels are dangerous.

So what did they do, Mr. Speaker? Instead of recruiting, they closed 52 hospitals and 1,200 long-term care beds and put nurses out of work.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the NDP, our government has shown a strong commitment to recruiting and retaining nurses in Saskatchewan over the decade. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to ensure that these levels of valued caregivers continue to support our ever-growing and evolving health care system.

We can never go back to the weak leadership of the NDP and the lack of respect and care they showed for the health of the people of Saskatchewan. We will continue to stand up for the health care of the people in this province and find ways to support their needs. I do support the motion put forward by the member from Biggar-Sask Valley.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as always, great pleasure to enter into the debate here on the 75-minute debate on Thursday, private members' day. I don't know how many more we'll have this session, so I'm really happy to be able to enter into the debate.

The member for Biggar-Sask Valley was talking about the number of nurses that have been hired. I know that when you look at SUN's [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] records, in the last 10 years there is 1,000 nurses that have been hired. We don't have the numbers on LPNs, but I think it would be helpful to get that number too because if you say 3,700, really you could say that as far as registered nurses the number is actually 1,000. And I think that's something that needs to be looked at, Mr. Speaker.

[11:30]

Now it's interesting when you see the Sask Party crowing and bragging about the things they've done. And I have to quote one of our press gallery here, the new president of the Saskatchewan Press Gallery Association actually. Yes, Mr. David Fraser. And he pointed out in his . . . He has the running article called "Under the Dome." And this is one that came out recently in May. And he pointed out in there, the government propaganda they send out as news releases.

And I think that's what this motion is as well, Mr. Speaker. It's more this crowing and bragging, and this government has a habit of doing that. And what David Fraser said:

The premier's office sent out a press release bragging about the increase in the number of nurses in the province under a Saskatchewan Party government. In another instance, it was bragging about the number of doctors hired since coming into power.

[This is David Fraser. I'm quoting him.] I told the premier's press secretary this and will share it here again: that is not news, it's propaganda."

Mr. Speaker, so when you have the Chair of the Saskatchewan Press Gallery Association, president, pointing that out — and congratulations to him for his new appointment, and again, I guess, thanks to Karen Briere for carrying that role for so many years — I think this government needs to pay attention to what

the press is observing about their propaganda.

And yet again we see it here in the 75-minute debate, Mr. Speaker. Are there not better things that we could debate about instead of just arguing about government propaganda? I mean, the 75-minute debate is an opportunity to engage in real, meaningful discussions about things like mental health, Mr. Speaker, which we did last week. But now we see more of the propaganda spin machine putting it out. And I think it's something that we need to be really concerned about.

Now when I first got elected, this was back in 2011, November of 2011, and I think the Sask Party had this Health minister that was very, very engaged in the surgical wait times initiative. And I have a quote here from . . . I think this is . . . I want to find the right one. 2012. So it was shortly after I got elected and I was just getting my feet wet here in the House. This is another press release from the Saskatchewan Government and this was January 13th, 2012. And what were they saying at that time, Mr. Speaker? They were talking about health care, and they had a very able Health minister at the time, the member from Indian Head-Milestone. He was very vocal and very determined to talk about surgical wait times.

I remember him in the House often and I think you'll remember too, Mr. Speaker, that Health minister really made a real effort to get that issue out in front and centre. He did have some results too, Mr. Speaker. There was a number of millions of dollars invested in those surgical wait times. So he delivered. He delivered. He was a very capable cabinet minister, and he got the job done, Mr. Speaker. They promised that all people would have access to a specialist and diagnostics within one week. So in addition to reducing surgical wait times, there was a promise made by this government that all . . . I'm going to say this again. It's a quote from their press release: ". . . all people will have access to a specialist and diagnostics within one week."

That's a great promise, Mr. Speaker, and I think the people of Saskatchewan kind of liked it. And that Health minister was going to deliver on it. When he talked about these surgical initiatives he said . . . This is from May 2nd, 2012 so, again shortly after I got elected. I know he was up in the House on a regular basis when he was on the front bench there, and here's what he said, "We're proud of the progress made so far on our ambitious but attainable goal of providing sooner, safer, smarter care for patients." And that was the quote he made, and I think he was really intent on delivering it.

Then we had . . . The member from Weyburn took over from him and I think things kind of flatlined at that point in time. We didn't see any further progress, and he certainly didn't talk about it the way the member from Indian Head-Milestone did, Mr. Speaker. I mean it was just, all of a sudden it kind of went quiet.

And then we got a new Health minister, the guy, the member from Rosetown, Mr. Speaker. And mum's the word. We're not hearing anything anymore about surgical wait times or access to specialists, in fact to the point, Mr. Speaker, where we've had to actually ask questions in the House about what's going on because they're not talking about it anymore. And you've got to wonder why.

There was some statistics that we presented to the government and asked them, why aren't you talking about this? And here's what we found out: in less than three years the number of people waiting more than three months for their surgery has grown by over 7,000 people, Mr. Speaker. Now it's no wonder the current Health minister isn't talking about this anymore. Perhaps they should consult with the former Health minister to find out how he got the job done. And all of a sudden it's not happening anymore, Mr. Speaker. If you look at that number, 7,000 people, that's over five times as many people than were waiting in 2015 — three years ago — five times more people are waiting more than three months for their surgery.

So all of that big talk from 2011, 2012 and of course, you know, the member from Estevan when he was the minister for Health, he didn't talk a whole lot about surgical wait times . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh sorry, Weyburn. I apologize, Mr. Speaker. That is not very nice of me. And I was in Estevan a couple of weeks ago for a meeting with New Democrats and it's a lovely town. And I'm sure the minister, the member for Estevan, when he was Health minister was kind of quiet about surgical wait times. We didn't hear a whole lot from him. So maybe he stopped consulting with the member from Indian Head-Milestone, who made such great advances in surgical wait times and invested money in it, Mr. Speaker. And now the member from Rosetown, he's not even . . . We don't hear a whole lot about what he has to say about it.

So, Mr. Speaker, 2,500 more people are now waiting more than six months for their surgery. They're going the wrong way. Mr. Speaker, we don't see any of this in their propaganda news releases, and we certainly don't see it in the motions they bring forward for debate here in the House.

Mr. Speaker, we saw that there was a report that saw Saskatchewan fall desperately short on surgery waits compared to other provinces. You know, back in 2012, the member for Indian Head-Milestone was bragging how Saskatchewan was ahead of the game, that it was ahead of other provinces, and proud of that, Mr. Speaker. And how much they've fallen, Mr. Speaker. Like this is, this is a desperate situation for the people of Saskatchewan, and we see that this government is not capitalizing on the hard work of the member from Indian Head-Milestone and the accomplishments that he made, Mr. Speaker. And now we see subsequent Health ministers not continuing that curve, in fact it's going the other way.

Mr. Speaker, two years ago Saskatchewan was at 100 per cent of the benchmark for hip replacements, and now what is it at? Slid to 76 per cent. That's a whole quarter, 25 per cent that it slid. For a knee replacements, Mr. Speaker, the province was at 99 per cent of the benchmark, and in only two short years that's gone down to 61 per cent. So, Mr. Speaker, we're falling below the national average on several benchmarks just on surgical wait times.

The other issue, of course, and we raised it here in the House, and we talked about it last week in our debate on mental health which is an important and critical part of our system, and there we found out that children who need psychological support are stuck on waiting lists for years. And we know, with the suicide crisis that we have occurring in our province, in the North in particular, it's impacting other areas. And we have our surgical

. . . our counsellors and psychologists and they're identifying these lengthy, lengthy wait times. We see lack of services for children who are suffering from mental illness, and those are things that we don't see in the government propaganda for obvious reasons, Mr. Speaker.

But we need this Health minister and we need this government to take the surgical wait times, the regression in all the hard work that was done when the minister or the member from Indian Head-Milestone was the minister of Health when I first got elected . . . That's all gone by the wayside, Mr. Speaker. And for them to be crowing about the propaganda that they presented in the 75-minute debate doesn't do service to the children who are on the wait-list, to the seniors who are waiting for hips and knees, and to all the folks in Saskatchewan who want to see better delivery of health care services for them and their families, Mr. Speaker. So I won't be supporting the motion — surprise, surprise.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Steele: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to stand in front of you, this government, and the people of Saskatchewan to speak on health care within the province, specifically my support on the government's role in continuing to create innovative solutions to recruiting and retaining physicians and nurses in rural and remote areas.

Mr. Speaker, our government has been a leader in the field of health care since we took office in 2007. Our government has shown that not only does urban care centres benefit, but also those in rural and remote areas in this province. Mr. Speaker, we have made significant improvements towards creating facilities, providing innovative services, and recruiting health care professionals throughout the rural and remote areas of the province.

Mr. Speaker, our government has implemented collaborative emergency centres to provide services in communities such as Shaunavon, Canora, and Maidstone. This collaborative emergency centres provide 24-7 care to their communities, helping improve and stabilize primary health care and emergency services in rural communities. Since March 2017 over 4,000 patients have been seen at these collaborative emergency centres, with 77 per cent of them being able to have their care provided at local clinics rather than being transferred to other clinics or hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of physician recruitment for our province the numbers speak for themselves. There was a 51 per cent increase in physicians from the previous government's time in office. That's nearly 900 more licensed physicians. It's not only physicians. Since 2007 the numbers of specialists in Saskatchewan have grown up by 62 per cent.

Looking more specifically at rural and remote physician recruitment, there is no shortage of programs aimed to ensure citizens have access to health care professionals in their communities. It started with increasing the number of available seats at the College of Medicine from 60 to 100 and doubling the number of medical resident seats. Our government has also expanded the distribution of post-graduate medical education to

Swift Current, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, La Ronge, and Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, 100 per cent of the medical residents in the 2017 graduating classes from Swift Current and Moose Jaw stayed and are practising right here in Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — In Moose Jaw?

Mr. Steele: — Right in Moose Jaw.

Over 200 doctors from abroad have been assessed, passed, and recruited through the assistance of Saskdocs and are working throughout the province. One hundred and fifty-four of these doctors are practising in rural and remote communities. This made it even more incredible by the fact that nearly 77 per cent of the international physicians' practices are located in rural and regional communities of Saskatchewan.

Recruitment of these talented and skilled health care professionals is not only the thing that this government has done to support rural and remote health. Mr. Speaker, it's not just doctors that we have seen an increase in. There are more than 16,000 nurses working in Saskatchewan. An increase of 29 per cent since 2007 shows that there are 3,700 more nurses calling Saskatchewan their home.

Nurses are vital in their role in the health care system. No other health care professional has as versatile of a role in health care. They educate their patients. They assist in providing care and assist in cure. They support the care, help to assist patients on the road to recovery and rehabilitation.

We have made huge strides since 2007. Our government has continued to work hard, increasing the number of health care practitioners across the province, allowing us to provide levels of health care services in our rural and remote communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital as of February 2018 is approximately 80 per cent complete and is set to open its doors in 2019. Our government's strong commitment to recruiting physicians and nurses, and we are on track to hit our recruitment targets for the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital when it opens. The children's hospital will be fully staffed with 70 FTE [full-time equivalent] positions projected for pediatricians with 20 specialities.

We have already recruited 52 FTE pediatricians for the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, and all currently working in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, our province has seen a 79 per cent increase in pediatricians practising in Saskatchewan since 2007. Saskatchewan has the second-highest compensation rates for specialties per specialist in the country, allowing us to recruit 487 new specialists since 2007, an increase of 62 per cent.

[11:45]

Our government has been working with specialists to implement a provincial referral model. The provincial referral model has aspects that will lead to significant improvements and continues to ensure that there is a model of care that will attend to future expanded into our specialties. Mr. Speaker, the pooled referrals level off the workloads for specialists, and allows the patients to be seen by the next available specialist.

One hundred specialists in 21 specialty groups have signed up to be part of the provincial referral model. They have seen a wait time reduction ranging from 40 to 80 per cent with the help of the provincial referral model. The model also standardized referral forms, consult letters, to ensure that all the information is given to the specialist and referring general practitioners, and nothing gets missed. The model will coordinate diagnostics test to ensure that the lab and the imaging results automatically accompany referrals to specialists. Specialized assessments and triage ensures that patients are seen according to their needs.

Currently the provincial referral model is being implemented in Saskatoon's children to improve wait times for patients. They are working to establish a centralized intake, standardized assessment, and triage by teams that include Saskatoon mental health services. We expect that this work will be completed by the fall of 2018. The minister continues to work with the specialists who are willing to implement pooled referrals and other aspects to the provincial referral model into their practice.

Mr. Speaker, because of the continued diligent work done by this government since 2007, our government has kept our promise to continue to show strong commitment to create innovative solutions to recruit and retain physicians and nurses in our rural and remote communities in Saskatchewan. I would like to make the following motion:

That this Assembly support the continuing efforts of government to continue their ongoing efforts to recruit physicians and nurses and to stabilize hospital services in rural and remote communities.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to enter into the discussion here this afternoon around health care in Saskatchewan, around mental health care in Saskatchewan. What's disappointing is that what we see again from this Sask Party government is a government unwilling to recognize the reality that communities face all across our province, and all too willing to boast and promote and pat themselves on the back, Mr. Speaker. And I think that many of the families and communities that members opposite represent would be very disappointed with this approach, an approach that dismisses the real challenges that people and patients face all across our province.

The people are looking for the health care that they need and deserve — are looking for, Mr. Speaker — but instead we see a Sask Party frankly that's far more interested in self-promotion and self-interest, Mr. Speaker, from a partisan sense and not the public's interest, Mr. Speaker. And I think that folks in through . . . well the reality would be every corner of our province, would be disappointed with this approach, Mr. Speaker.

And I think of those all through the Southeast in Estevan and Carlyle and Arcola and that region, Mr. Speaker, that work so hard to attract and to retain medical professionals and doctors, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that they have the services that give them the peace of mind and security that they deserve. They'd

be so disappointed to see this sort of approach by the Sask Party.

I know folks all through the east side of the province, I think right up in around Yorkton . . . We've got the two ministers, Mr. Speaker. Now of course we're paying two ministers of Health in this province, Mr. Speaker, and they're failing to get the job done. We have a minister who is supposedly representing matters of rural and remote health, Mr. Speaker, but certainly his actions wouldn't demonstrate a commitment to making sure that rural people and remote communities have the access that they deserve to rural and remote health care.

And I think of communities like Preeceville, Mr. Speaker, not far from where that one minister, Mr. Speaker, who collects a paycheque for Rural and Remote Health, Mr. Speaker, resides. And I think of Preeceville, Mr. Speaker. That community of Preeceville, a proud community, Mr. Speaker, worked hard to come together with health committees and fundraisers to build a hospital, Mr. Speaker, a beautiful facility that they opened the doors to, to serve the community today and for generations. That was the hope, Mr. Speaker. And they raised dollars and they brought people together.

And shortly after the last election, only weeks after the last election, the Sask Party then closed the emergency room to that hospital. They closed the function, a very important function of that hospital, Mr. Speaker. And that time actually coincided with the time that that hard-working community was actually having a celebration of paying off that project, of burning the mortgage if you will, Mr. Speaker.

But of course the candidate in the area that had run through that period of time didn't tell Preeceville that that was on offer by the Sask Party. Of course the premier at the time wasn't straight with the people of Preeceville on this front. No. They ran an election, Mr. Speaker, pretended they were going to be committed to rural health care, then of course we see the exact opposite.

And I know it's people like those in Preeceville that are feeling particularly betrayed by the actions of this government. And it's this sort of motion, the self-congratulatory, boasting motion that's far more about political self-interest, Mr. Speaker, than the public's interest, that really turns people off.

You know, and I've been out to Preeceville, along with our team, multiple times to listen to the good people on this front. I was out there, I recall, just after that last election. It was a warm July day, Mr. Speaker. The community was gathering in the hall and had asked for representation. Of course they had asked for one of the two Health ministers as well. Of course one is just up the road in Yorkton. Should have been a short commute for him. Of course the MLA for the area, you'd anticipate would be there at the meeting, Mr. Speaker, to speak to his constituents on an issue that was very important to them. But none of that was the case, Mr. Speaker.

So I entered the room that night. Hundreds of people, good people from the region that are committed to that hospital were there, but no local MLA. Not an MLA in sight, Mr. Speaker, from the Sask Party. Not the MLA, not the premier who had been invited, not the Health minister from Weyburn, Mr.

Speaker, and not the other Health minister from Yorkton, a short commute up the road. And this is the kind of treatment that Saskatchewan people in rural and remote communities are growing accustomed to.

We see that same sort of glossing over and dismissal of the reality impacting communities like Tisdale and La Ronge, Mr. Speaker. We see it in every corner of the province. We see a government that is failing to recognize the incredible crisis that we face when it comes to mental health and addictions services in this province, a failure to recognize that far too many people in our province are suffering in silence, far too many people being left without the services and supports that they need when they ask for help, Mr. Speaker. And we're leaving people and families and kids all across our community in very vulnerable situations. We're placing them at risk because of the failure to recognize and act on the crisis that is mental health and addictions services in our province today.

But do we see the members opposite, the Sask Party, the governing Sask Party and their big majority, get up to speak to that important issue which touches every community in this province, which touches rural communities in our province in a significant way? No, nada. We see a government get up and to back-pat themselves and boast in a political, partisan sense instead of serving the best interests of the people of the province and the public interest of the people of our province.

We've watched a government that's gone completely backwards on surgical wait-lists, Mr. Speaker, at once a government that was newly elected and making headway. I can recall the minister at the time, the minister of Health, the member from Indian Head, Mr. Speaker. It would appear that he took that issue seriously. I saw him take to the floor in this Assembly and proudly speak to the investment and the action that they were having around surgical wait-lists, Mr. Speaker, and the numbers were coming down. You know, there was some debate about how that was going on, Mr. Speaker, but the numbers were coming down.

And that was the record under that Health minister, Mr. Speaker. And it sort of speaks to what we see in the Sask Party, once maybe focused on delivering their promises and serving the people, but falling offside of that agenda, Mr. Speaker, over that long period, Mr. Speaker, and that big majority. We saw a new Health minister come in, the member from Weyburn, and these numbers sort of flatlined at that time, Mr. Speaker, and we didn't see the progress that people were looking for. We saw them falling far short of that commitment, Mr. Speaker.

We saw them falling far short as well of being able to address emergency room wait times, Mr. Speaker. In fact, here in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker, at the Pasqua Hospital, we saw a government that could barely keep that emergency room operating, that left that critical emergency room at risk for the people of our province.

And then of course we've watched this latest iteration of the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, one that ran on one agenda and is doing something completely different, one that's focused on their own political interests ahead of the best interests of Saskatchewan people, and in that iteration we see a government going backwards. We see the minister, now the member from

Rosetown, and the second minister, the two paycheques that are being collected for this portfolio, Mr. Speaker, walking surgical wait times absolutely backwards, Mr. Speaker. So any touted gains that had been made up by the minister for Indian Head in working with the health system and then flatlined of course under the member from Weyburn have gone . . . are now skyrocketing once again, being reversed, Mr. Speaker, by the failure to act, Mr. Speaker, by the current Minister of Health.

Saskatchewan people are proud of the system that we've built. We need to work to build a national pharmacare system within our province to make sure our system is as effective and as efficient as it can be, to make sure that people are as healthy as they can be, and that they'd receive the prescriptions that they deserve. We need to prioritize and act on mental health and addictions services all across our province. We need to make sure that we have primary health available to all the people of the province, Mr. Speaker. That's the commitment of the Saskatchewan New Democrats, the official opposition, Mr. Speaker, and I know that's what Saskatchewan people want to see.

And to all those health care workers, to all those professionals across our province, I say thank you. Thank you for what you do in this system. Thank you for what you do amidst the weak leadership that we see from the Sask Party, the resources that are being starved from the front lines. And to all those people working in emergency services through all aspects of health care, I say, keep doing what you're doing; we need you. And let's work together to build this system that we're so proud of in Saskatchewan. And obviously I don't support the self-congratulatory motion of the Sask Party government.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — I only have a few seconds, unfortunately, but I did want to correct the member opposite who was talking about Preeceville and the issue around the emergency room. I mean he's talking about the Preeceville Hospital that was announced for seven years under the NDP and never was built but was built within the first couple of years of the Sask Party government. Is he talking about that Preeceville Hospital, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I can understand they would like to expand into wait times and everything else, but the motion talks about physician recruitment and nurse recruitment. Even the NDP should be able to congratulate a government that has expanded the recruitment of nurses and physicians in this province, that this province has never seen any other party do, Mr. Speaker — something to be proud of.

The Deputy Speaker: — Time for debate has expired. Questions. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government claims to want to do better with seniors' care, but we have the lowest per capita geriatricians in the country. Does the member for Cypress Hills think this is enough?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Steele: — Yes, of course. Well we're recruiting. You see the numbers of nurses that we've brought in since we've taken power can speak for itself.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, recently the opposition seemed to have been trying to position themselves as a party for health care reform. Their leader even came up to the wonderful constituency of Carrot River Valley and was talking about it. But when you examine the records of both parties, you see how ridiculous their plan is.

In this government's time on this side of the House we've increased nurses by 29 per cent, doctors by 51 per cent, shortened wait times drastically, and built new hospitals, including the children's hospital.

[12:00]

Think of what happened under the NDP. The members opposite closed 52 hospitals, understaffed them, and had among the longest wait times in all of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this question's for the member from Saskatoon Nutana: how can you possibly think the public will believe your rhetoric on this file, given your record?

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

Ms. Sproule: — It's more than humorous that you have a member from that side getting up asking about rhetoric when we see the press critiquing them for all the propaganda that they're putting out. And this entire question is exactly that. It's propaganda, Mr. Speaker, and self-congratulations.

What I wish we could see is, again, a minister like the one from Indian Head-Milestone who actually made actual progress in reducing wait times. And then since then, you know, we haven't seen that progress. The people of Saskatchewan deserve better. And instead of putting silly, rhetorical, propagandistic questions in the 75-minute debate, Mr. Speaker, perhaps they should focus some energy on those surgical wait times.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is to the member for Cypress Hills. Does he think it's acceptable that children are waiting up to two years to see a child psychiatrist?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Steele: — That's a good question, and of course not. We're working on it with the children's hospital in Saskatoon being and next year, 2019, is going to be open. Hopefully we can take care of a lot of those services that need to be delivered. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm curious to know, does the member for Biggar-Sask Valley think his government should be bragging about historical numbers when we are currently off track to staff the children's hospital?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar-Sask Valley.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you for the question. Well I think it's very important to go back and look at the record of the former NDP government. As I said in my comments, you know, Saskatchewan under the NDP lost 450 nurses, 173 doctors. Between 2001 and 2006, you know, they had the longest surgical wait times in Canada. The NDP closed 52 hospitals and the Plains hospital.

And look at our Saskatchewan Party record as in government. We added more than 900 doctors, over 3,700 more nurses. We are among the shortest surgical wait times in Canada, and we've doubled the investment in hospital projects, including the children's hospital in Saskatoon, the new hospitals in Moose Jaw and North Battleford.

Is there more to be done? Yes, but we are doing a great job compared to any other jurisdiction in Canada, and especially to the NDP record in the past.

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

Mr. Goudy: — When the party across was in power, they kept our nurses across the province feeling hopeless. Staggeringly low staffing levels, excessive workloads, and no guarantee of positive recruitment strategies was their reality. From 2001 to 2006, the province lost 450 nurses and 173 doctors. Since our government took power in 2007, the number of RNs is up 27 per cent, LPNs, 48 per cent, and nurse practitioners is up 126 per cent.

So to the member from Saskatoon Nutana: why wasn't recruitment and training for hard-working nurses across Saskatchewan a priority of your government when you were in power?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, this government has had record revenues for the past decade and what we see is an inability to use that money properly and actually make progress in surgical wait times here in Saskatchewan. They're going backwards, Mr. Speaker.

And if you looked at any of the news stories . . . I saw one just the other day about burnout. Nurses' burnout is incredible in the province right now. We have incredible overtime. We have jobs not being filled. And so I think the front-line medical staff would tell the member opposite a different story.

And what I think we need to see from this government is, rather than using propaganda to pat themselves on the back, that they

show the people of Saskatchewan that they care about those front-line workers and about the care people are getting. And so that would be an important thing for them to focus on rather than questions like this in 75-minute debate.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Speaking of nurses in Saskatchewan, doctors and nurses in Saskatchewan have — and across the country — have called for a national pharmacare program. It's estimated that about 700,000 Canadians skip groceries to pay for prescription medications and upwards of 240,000 skimp on heat to pay for drugs. To the member from Lloydminster: does she think it's right that some of her constituents have to choose between food and shelter or medication to keep them healthy?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Ms. Young: — I thank the member for the question. I'd like her to refer back to the motion that's on the floor though, and that is with regards to recruiting nurses and doctors in this province. And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our record speaks for itself. Year over year, increases to our health care budget, working with our nurses and doctors to come up with creative and innovative solutions in order to increase those numbers, and provide strong, efficient health care services to meet the needs of the people in this province.

We have recruited over 3,700 more nurses. We have recruited over 900 doctors, 487 of them being specialists in this province. We have worked with our physicians to ensure that the compensation we are paying them meets the needs and is the best . . . one of the best in the country, so we are competitive. We are invested in recruiting nurses and doctors in the province and to keeping facilities open.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Francis: — Mr. Speaker, the health care record of the NDP speaks for itself — physician shortages, overwhelmed and overworked nurses, no proper recruitment tools or plans to fix the problem, 52 hospitals closed, 1,200 long-term care beds eliminated, a true decline in the health care system for Saskatchewan families since . . . prior to 2007.

To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: setting aside the divided and inconsistent opinions of your leader, can you agree that this government's recruitment efforts in medical services have been a contributing factor in the growth of this province since 2007?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, when I think about my hometown and the hospital and the home care that's now replaced the hospital, I'm so happy that my mother, who's now a level 4 care patient in the Lafleche care home, is receiving excellent care in her hometown. And I think that is something

I'm really proud of, that changes that were made for my home community and a beautiful new facility, Mr. Speaker. And she's getting excellent care.

And so there are front-line workers that are doing an excellent job in our health care system. And we know that they're stressed. We know that they're burned out. And these are the things this government should be focusing on. They're too retrospective. They should be looking forward to ensuring that the people of Saskatchewan — and like my mother — are getting the care they need, that there aren't long waiting lists for surgery, there aren't long waiting lists for child psychiatrists, Mr. Speaker. And that's the focus that this government should have, rather than what we see the members opposite saying today.

The Deputy Speaker: — Time for questions has . . . Time for the 75-minute debate has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 606

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Forbes that **Bill No. 606 — *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I certainly appreciate the opportunity to rise today to speak to this bill. I'm very proud of the work that our team has put into this bill, the dedication of those who have done the research, looked across the country at what's being done in other provinces, and pointed out really what is an opportunity for us, a hopeful moment for us in this House to right what is wrong with our political system right now with our campaign financing laws.

Mr. Speaker, we are an outlier across the country, the only province with the types of rules that we see with no limits on corporate donations, no limits on out-of-province donations, a complete free-for-all on individual donations. It's really, it's really disturbing to see us so outside of the norm. But it's not a new problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's something that has been a long-standing problem in this province and in this profession.

Unfortunately we've seen that problem further exacerbated in recent years. This government has taken what is a long-standing practice and really made an art out of pursuing the corporate donation. Mr. Speaker, they've done so with policies that benefit large corporations much more than they benefit the people of Saskatchewan. And they've done so by travelling off to Calgary and other parts of the country, giving speeches, and pursuing those political donations. We even saw during the Sask Party leadership race, one of their members go to another province and have a fundraiser for his Sask Party leadership campaign. Mr. Speaker, that's very strange for someone who's

trying to represent the people of this province.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about that practice, that practice of pursuing corporate donations and pursuing policies that benefit those who donate above the people of the province. And it's a practice that really causes us all a lot of damage. And there are numbers to this debate. We talk a lot about the number of dollars given, the millions of dollars in corporate donations to the Sask Party, millions of those dollars coming from out of province.

We talk about the dollars that people pay to attend cash-for-access events to have greater access to ministers. We talk about the number of contracts that have been granted to companies that donate to the government. And, Mr. Speaker, we have of course the numbered companies, the numbered companies that won't even declare what it is their business is but they're happy to declare their support for the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker.

But the fact of the matter is . . . And to the members opposite, the fact of the matter is, this is not a question of numbers. It's not a question of numbers. It's a question of trust. It's a question of trust. Do people look at us when we're here in our desks and when we're out in the community, they look at us and say, those are people that I trust? We know that we've elected them to work for our best interests, to do what needs to be done, and to go into that work in an objective fashion.

When we're doing the work that is part of this business, looking at how we interact with companies, how we interact with different stakeholders, that we're doing that through an objective lens, making sure that we're working always subject to the necessities of the people of the province, that we're keeping in mind what the real purpose of our work here is. Because the real purpose of our work is not to make any particular company wealthy or any particular sector successful. Our work is to make sure that we work for the health and well-being of the people of the province. The primary goal of what we're trying to do is to improve the quality of lives of everyone in this province.

And I keep coming back to that, that health and well-being, for a number of reasons, but one that's very particular to the debate we're having today. When we talk about the health field — and as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm a family physician, and so I've had a chance to watch the way that this rolls out in that particular field — in that field there's a long-standing practice where pharmaceutical companies will come around and offer gifts, offer things to the different practices, whether that's a small gift, a pen or a mug or a pad of paper, or whether it is a matter of, you know, something larger, inviting them to a dinner, a golf event, or even going so far as to have money coming in for signing up patients to a study, etc.

All of these things are common practice, long-standing practice. And the studies show, Mr. Speaker, that the greater the degree of connection, the more that gift is, the more that we see influence on the behaviour of people that are prescribing medications. And the reality is the studies show that the bigger it is, the bigger the impact. But even small things — even that cup, even that mug, that pad of paper — makes a difference in people's behaviour. Gifts influence how we think about the

relationship that we're in, Mr. Speaker. Even those small gifts influence behaviour, which is no surprise. That's why they do it.

[12:15]

The pharmaceutical companies are not out there handing out pens because they want our writing to be nicer, as much as most of us in the profession could use that help. Mr. Speaker, they're doing it because it will influence the decisions of the people in practice. They're more likely to prescribe the medications of the companies that have given something. Studies show that over and over again. And the fact of the matter is, that's why they do it.

And the same is true for the companies that donate to the Sask Party. The reason they do it is because they believe it will influence the behaviour of the members on the other side. They believe that it will result in policies that will benefit their business, or in contracts that will benefit their business, Mr. Speaker. That's why they do it. That's why Cenovus does it. That's why Encana does it. They're not doing it because they love the vision of this party. They're doing it because they see an opportunity to improve their own bottom line.

And you know what? They're not doing anything wrong, because they're following the rules. The problem is the rules. The problem is that we've allowed this situation to continue where there's no control whatsoever over who donates. And so you can have companies giving an unlimited amount of money, collecting contracts, coming back and giving more money, and getting more contracts. And that's completely within the rules. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? That does a disservice to this province. It does a disservice because the reason those large donations are given is to influence our behaviour.

And now we've seen a change. We've seen in the practice of medicine there's been a real change in the approach to this. That profession has looked at that practice of how pharmaceutical companies come in with their gifts, and they've said, no that's sending us in the wrong direction. We're going to control that. We're going to decrease the amount of that kind of gift that can take place.

And this is in a profession where, you know, it's one of the most trusted professions in the world, up there with the pharmacists and the firemen, professions that people really trust. But they recognize that trust is their greatest asset. Trust is the only capital they really have. If they want to influence their patients to make good decisions for their own health, if they want to influence public policy to be healthy public policy, they need to be perceived as working for the health of patients, not for the bottom lines of pharmaceutical companies. And, Mr. Speaker, that's the reason that that's a practice that I've always avoided — avoided those connections with pharmaceutical companies myself — and why that profession is going more and more down that road of trying to eliminate those sorts of gifts, sorts of interactions.

Well if you look at this profession, you look at this profession, which unfortunately is one of the least trusted professions, one of the least trusted professions, and there's a reason for that. And the reason is these kind of rules, this kind of behaviour,

when you have companies giving large donations, and that resulting in changes in policy that benefit those companies directly.

You know even if you could, even if you could, Mr. Speaker, create some kind of a system where you could make sure that nobody on the government side was influenced by those donations when they went to make decisions, when they went to vote, even if you could do so, the reality is that the perception in the public matters. The way that they look at our profession matters because for us to do our job well, we need to be trusted. We need people to look at us and say, yes the people that I voted for, I know they're going to work every day, working for my interests.

Allan Blakeney often referred to politics as a noble calling, Mr. Speaker, and I agree with that. I believe it is a noble profession. Yes, I'll join the minister in quoting Mr. Blakeney, talking about what is, it is a noble profession. I look across and I see people in this building who are decent people, who are here because they want to serve the people who have elected them. And I believe that to be true. I believe that to be true.

But we're giving the opposite impression. When we stand up and say we are committed to having corporate and union donations, we're committed to keeping out-of-province donations, we're committed to never putting a limit on personal donations, we're giving the opposite impression to the public. We're undermining the trust and confidence of the people of this province in the work that is so important that we do in this House.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, it is so important that we get off of this drug, that we get out from under the influence of these donations, that we change our regulations. And we have an opportunity today to pass this bill. And the members opposite know that today is a chance for us to do exactly what we need to do, Mr. Speaker. We could eliminate corporate and union donations. We could change the law today and enact a limit on individual donations. We can get rid of the out-of-province influence.

This is a really important opportunity for us to get with the program. The federal government has done this. Almost every government across the country has already made these changes. This is the right way for us to go.

And right now in Saskatchewan, instead of that, we've got a situation where we've got public institutions, libraries, universities, charities donating to political parties. You've got massive donations coming in from corporations, coming in from unions. You've got situations where you've got 53 companies, 53 companies that gave a total of a million dollars in donations, ending up with \$100 million in contracts. Talk about a return on their investment, Mr. Speaker.

Eighty-one per cent of the public says that we shouldn't have any public institutions donating to our political parties. Sixty-nine per cent say no out-of-province donations. Seventy-four per cent say no money from charities, and 60 per cent agree that we shouldn't have any corporate or union donations, Mr. Speaker. Our work here matters. Our work here matters, and when we continue to have the type of a situation

that we see today, with no regulations whatsoever of any real impact, that cheapens the work of everyone in this place.

And today, I look at the members across and I say to you members, you have a huge opportunity. These members have a huge opportunity today to stand up and do what's right. And I look at the folks in the back benches there and I think, I hope today that the Premier has given you the opportunity to take a free vote, to stand up and vote with your conscience, because the people of the province are watching. They want to know if you're willing to stand up and do what's right, to get rid of the corporate and union donations, to do what we need to clean up this business, to re-establish the most important element — trust, Mr. Speaker. And I trust that the members here want to do what's right. And I ask them to join me, and join the members today in supporting this bill. Thank you so much.

The Deputy Speaker: — Pursuant to rule 27, it is my duty to advise the Assembly that this item of business has been previously adjourned three times and that every question necessary to dispose of the motion will now be put. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member from Saskatoon Centre that Bill 606, *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those opposed say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — I believe the nos have it. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:23 until 12:25.]

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member from Saskatoon Centre that Bill No. 606, *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time. All those members in favour of the motion please rise.

[Yeas — 8]

Meili	Wotherspoon	Beck
Sproule	Forbes	Mowat
Sarauer	McCall	

The Deputy Speaker: — Those members opposed to the motion, please rise.

[Nays — 42]

Moe	Merriman	Stewart
Reiter	Wyant	Morgan
Duncan	Marit	Hargrave
D'Autremont	Cox	Heppner
Kaeding	Makowsky	Tell
Eyre	Brkich	Harrison
Ottenbreit	Cheveldayoff	Weekes
Kirsch	Bradshaw	Fiaz
Ross	Carr	Lawrence
Young	Wilson	McMorris
Michelson	Bonk	Doke
Steinley	Hindley	Dennis
Nerlien	Steele	Tochor
Goudy	Olauson	Francis

Principal Clerk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 8; those opposed, 42.

The Deputy Speaker: — I declare the motion lost. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, so that members may get out and enjoy a long weekend with their families and have a good long weekend, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that this House adjourns. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, May the 22nd at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:28.]

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Meili4340

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President of the Executive Council

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor

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Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for Innovation

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission
Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water
Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre

Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Joe Hargrave

Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Finance

Hon. Jeremy Harrison

Minister of Trade and Export Development
Minister of Immigration and Career Training

Hon. Warren Kaeding

Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis
and Northern Affairs

Hon. Gene Makowsky

Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor
and Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Hon. David Marit

Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds and
Priority Saskatchewan

Hon. Paul Merriman

Minister of Social Services

Hon. Don Morgan

Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

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Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Jim Reiter

Minister of Health

Hon. Lyle Stewart

Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell

Minister of Corrections and Policing
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. Gordon Wyant

Deputy Premier
Minister of Education