



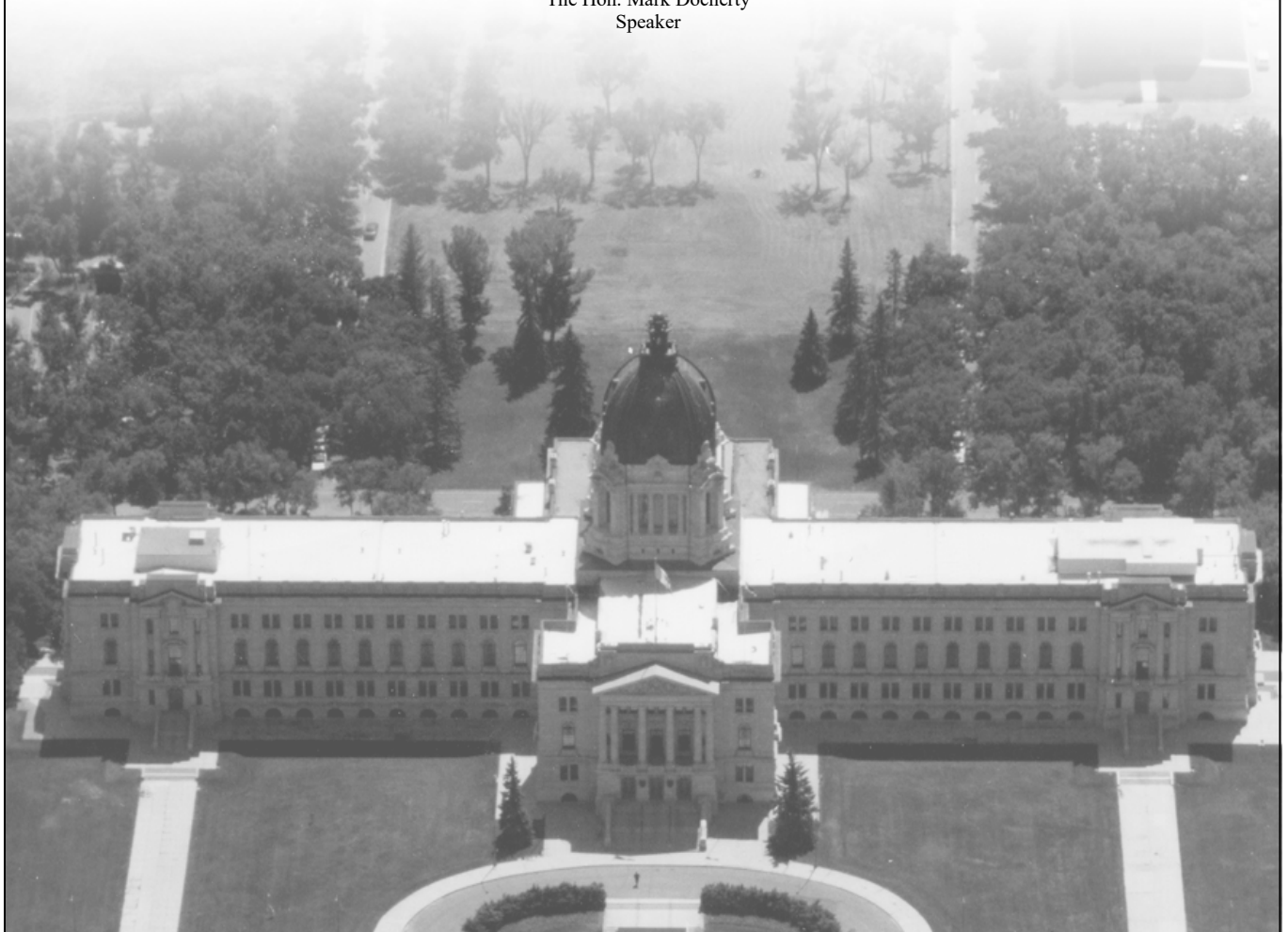
FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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
4th Session — 28th Legislature

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Lawrence , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	Vacant — Saskatoon Eastview

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13; Vacant — 2

Clerks-at-the-Table

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of introductions. I would ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The minister has asked leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery, on behalf of the Minister of Trade and Export, I would like to introduce Lauren Golosky — if you could give a wave — who's worked in the Ministry of Trade and Export Development as a communications consultant since May of this year and previously served as a media relations consultant in the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker. Lauren attended the U of R [University of Regina]. She has a Bachelor of Arts in journalism. This will be her last week with us, as she's moving back to her hometown of Fort McMurray to take a communications strategist position for the RM [rural municipality] of Wood Buffalo.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce Kristin Kutarna Gates — if you could give a wave — who's currently the director of communications for the Ministry of Trade and Export Development, who's also been with us since the summer. She previously held corporate strategy and marketing roles with ISM Canada and other corporations. Kristin attended the University of Calgary, holds a B.A. [Bachelor of Arts] in communication and culture, and attended the U of R, receiving an M.B.A. [Master of Business Administration] in executive management.

I would also like to introduce Ashley Schoff, Mr. Speaker, who joined the Ministry of Trade and Export as a communications consultant in August and most recently came from the Legislative Building, serving the Minister of Advanced Education and previously the Minister of Social Services. Ashley attended the University of Regina and holds a Bachelor of Science in geology.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce someone from Energy and Resources. Taylor Stenson has been with us as a ministerial assistant for just over a year. We wooed her from Social Services. Taylor started in the building in 2017 and has served a number of ministers. She's leaving our office for a position in the Ministry of Advanced Education as an executive director, and we will very much miss her calm grace, Mr. Speaker. Please join me in acknowledging these guests in your gallery.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Request leave for extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I introduce the school group that I'm so happy to have here, I just want to touch on and join the introduction of the minister and the guests that are here today. I want to certainly say hello to Lauren Golosky and to thank her for all of her time in Saskatchewan as a journalist and as well as a civil servant. We wish her well moving back to Fort Mac [Fort McMurray] and the service she'll provide there. It's been a pleasure to work with you and to get to know you. So thank you for all your good work.

I also want to just offer a good word to Kristin Kutarna Gates who's an exceptional person and has so much to offer. And certainly her and her partner, Craig, are just really good people and brilliant minds within this province.

I don't know Ashley, but Ashley, hello, welcome, thank you. But I did get to know Taylor Stenson, when she was in the Minister of Social Services' office. Often I was phoning over there at a time where there was urgent issues, crisis in people's lives, and I got to know Taylor as an incredibly dedicated, diligent worker on behalf of Saskatchewan people. I know my colleagues feel the same way so, Taylor, thank you for your work. So on behalf of the official opposition, I welcome these folks.

But why I was on my feet originally was to welcome an amazing group of students that I look so forward to meeting with here today. It is just so nice to have my good friends from Rosemont School here today, a wonderful class — give us a wave — of 35 students here today, grade 7 and 8 students, real leaders within the community with bright futures ahead of them. I look forward to our conversation afterwards. I know that they're here with their teachers, Kyle Brown and Cassie Fisher, as well as with parent chaperones, Maureen Tazzioli and Joshua Caburao. It's a pleasure to have you here today. I look forward to the questions after question period.

And I know some of those folks up there are likely gearing up for the Rosemont Outdoor Hockey League which, you know, is involved right in the . . . or takes place at the rink right behind Rosemont School. I'll be dropping the puck to start that season as soon as the weather permits. So on behalf of the official opposition, on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan, I welcome these young people to their Assembly.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess, with leave to make an extended yet awesome introduction.

The Speaker: — The member has asked leave for an awesome

and extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Mr. McCall: — Of course the introduction being awesome doesn't reflect on the giver of the introduction. It refers to the people being introduced, Mr. Speaker. Every year about this time there's a group that comes from the Regina Open Door Society. This is 24 students taking English as an additional language and they come here from the countries of India, China, Iran, Nepal, Eritrea, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Syria, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's always such a great thing. I'm very much looking forward to the visit because it's one thing that often gets commented on, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they've come from around the world to make a better new life here for them and their families. And it's also good to reflect on the things that we sometimes take for granted here, like the closeness of our politics and the ability to access your Legislative Assembly, just like this. So I'm very much looking forward to the meeting.

And I also want to say a very special word of welcome and thanks to the teachers, Tracy Gienow and as well, Deana Pageot. Deana Pageot is a tremendous educator and, you know, goes on to this chapter of her career and faithfully brings again people from around the world to their Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, just a tremendous teacher, tremendous asset for this community. So, Mr. Speaker, I thank colleagues for taking so long for this, but it's really a wonderful thing to see all of these people here at our Legislative Assembly. So please join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite and welcome the students, the Open Door Society students. Just for a bit of information, the Open Door Society are a non-profit settlement and integration agency for refugees and immigrants. They deliver programs and services to enable them to achieve their goals and fully participate in the community, and their vision is a welcoming community enriched by the diversity and the strengths of newcomers to Canada. So I'd like to ask all members to welcome the students to this Assembly. Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose an unfair and ineffective carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan.

And I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government 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 the good citizens from my riding, from the town of Osler. I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Speaking of another tax, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens, businesses, and communities from all across Saskatchewan as it relates to the Sask Party's hike and expansion of the PST [provincial sales tax], something that's accounted to a billion-dollar tax hike for Saskatchewan people.

For the average Saskatchewan household, that has resulted in \$800 more per year being paid in PST for that Sask Party government's tax hike. That's a hard hit for families. It's costing our economy. And as it relates to the imposition of this tax onto the construction industry, it's the epitome, the epitome of a job-killing tax, Mr. Speaker.

And sadly the results speak for themselves. We see projects that are important, that have been shelved all across Saskatchewan. We see permits down all across Saskatchewan. Sadly we see thousands of hard-working tradespeople that have lost their jobs, Mr. Speaker, many of those workers that have, in the pursuit of employment, been forced to move outside of the province that they know and love — a loss for their family, a loss for our province, Mr. Speaker.

The prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to stop saddling families and businesses with the costs of their mismanagement and immediately reinstate the PST exemption on construction and stop hurting Saskatchewan businesses and families.

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Regina. I so submit.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition calling on the Sask Party government to call by-elections in the constituencies of Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview. And the undersigned residents want to bring to our attention the following: that the seats in the Legislative Assembly for Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview are currently vacant, and that's because of a loophole in *The Legislative Assembly Act* that by-elections are not legally required to be called in these constituencies of Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview because the former MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] did not resign before August 6th, 2019. They resigned a few weeks later in September.

Now, unless a by-election is called, the constituents in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview will go without representation for nearly 14 months until the next provincial election is called late in 2020. Now the Premier does have a power and authority to call by-elections in these ridings, and they do want him to do that.

I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan urge the Premier to call by-elections in the constituencies of Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview.

And the people signing these petitions today come from Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again today to present a petition calling on this government to save the swales in the Saskatoon area.

This is in relation to the brand new high-speed highway that's being planned around Saskatoon, around part of Saskatoon, which is currently scheduled to go right through the swales, Mr. Speaker. Many, many people are upset about this. Many people recall the auditor's report and the criticisms that Highways had when they built the bypass the way they did. There's lots of concern about this in many of Saskatoon areas, but I would think particularly in Willowgrove, Silverspring-Sutherland, and Northwest, Mr. Speaker, and Westview.

So these are people who live in those ridings. These are people who are concerned about the failure to do proper environmental assessment, to do a cumulative impact study on all the species that live in these swales. And again, Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Central Services, the minister responsible for Willowgrove, is chirping from his seat about this. These are the people from his riding that are presenting this petition, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the provincial government to suspend planning for the Saskatoon freeway and development around the swales until a regional cumulative effects assessment has been completed; update *The Wildlife Act* and expand the list of wild species protected by provincial regulation; recognize the swales as an important ecological habitat and designate them as protected areas; and ensure adequate long-term funding for research, management, and enforcement to protect the swales for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, over 120 people have signed this petition today. The majority are from the city of Saskatoon. We have some from Regina, some from Dalmeny. And we urge the government to pay attention to this petition. I so present.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand on my feet today to present a petition calling for the provincial government to develop and implement a suicide prevention strategy. The individuals who signed this petition, Mr. Speaker,

wish to draw the following points to your attention: that *The Saskatchewan Strategy for Suicide Prevention Act* was introduced in 2018 but has not been passed because it has not received the support from the Sask Party government; that suicide remains to be the second leading cause of death for young people from ages 15 to 34; that suicide rates for First Nations people in Saskatchewan are four times higher than non-First Nations people; that in 2018 one in three suicides were among children in care; that nearly 2,100 people died from suicide in Saskatchewan from 2005 to 2018; and that the 49 per cent increase in annual suicides in Saskatchewan since 2005 amounts to a crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the provincial government to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to address suicide in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have petitions signed by people all across Saskatchewan because they see this as being an issue that needs to be addressed in Saskatchewan. This particular petition was signed by residents of Saskatoon. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Yorkton Raider Gridders Surge to Victory in 12-Man Football Championships

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yorkton and the Regional High School Gridders football team have proven once again all things are possible for those who believe, never give up, and work very hard.

Mr. Speaker, just two weeks ago the 5A 12-man high school provincial championships were held. I took part by doing the ceremonial kickoff. Unfortunately I almost took off Coach Perry Ostapowich's head. But the Yorkton Raiders did an outstanding performance, Mr. Speaker. They played the Saskatoon Bishop James Mahoney Saints, and they were down 23-8 with just 4 minutes left in the fourth quarter.

The Saints were so sure that they would win, I think they already popped their cork on the non-alcoholic champagne. But in traditional Yorkton fashion, the Gridders forged on. The Raiders dipped into their last reserve of adrenalin and scored a whopping 22 points, leading them to become the new provincial champions.

Mr. Speaker, we were all on the edge of our seats and couldn't possibly take our eyes off the field. With this victory, the Raiders have ended a 25-year dry spell. And, Mr. Speaker, I can't be certain, but the fact that I participated in the ceremonial kickoff might have just been the good luck charm they needed. So if any of the Roughriders are listening, I may be for hire.

But in all seriousness, Mr. Speaker, the Raiders have worked like crazy this year, and I can't be more pleased for this performance. Mr. Speaker, I now invite all members of this Assembly and the province to join me in congratulating the Yorkton Raiders, Coach Roby Sharpe, and all the coaching staff on becoming the new

Saskatchewan high school football champions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Celebrates 50 Years

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past year, we've had many chances to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan. MACSI offers addictions services at three locations here in the province: Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina.

Regardless of race, Mr. Speaker, all clients are welcome when seeking freedom from the harm of addictions in their lives. MACSI proudly draws from Métis and First Nations traditions, as workers support clients to achieve healthy lifestyles. As opposition critic for mental health and addictions, I am grateful for this essential work.

Some of MACSI's many events enjoyed this anniversary year include last May's Métis kitchen party dry dance at the P.A. Exhibition [Prince Albert Exhibition] centre; a celebratory event on National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21st at a hall in Saskatoon Riversdale; a community gathering and a dry dance in July at Regina's māmawēyatitān centre; the annual FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] Awareness Walk and community barbecue held in Saskatoon in September; and the more recent Louis Riel Cultural Festival, a celebration of culture, community, and reconciliation with live music by beloved Saskatchewan musicians, of which all the proceeds were donated to MACSI.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of us to celebrate and thank MACSI for 50 years of vital service to people grappling with substance misuse and all the underlying issues that led to that addiction in the first place. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Churchbridge Honours Hockey Player, Coach, and Community Supporter

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Kevin Kaminski just thinks of himself as an average guy who got to play in the NHL [National Hockey League]. Though he only played in 147 games, they are a memorable 147 for his hometown of Churchbridge. Mr. Speaker, since his retirement, the former hockey tough guy has shown his softer side, proving to be Churchbridge's biggest fan, giving back to the community any way he can.

Kevin has hosted an annual golf tournament for over 20 years that has raised over \$430,000 for local projects. In 2019 he became coach to the SJHL [Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League] La Ronge Ice Wolves. And on October 19th Churchbridge decided to give back to their favourite NHL player in front of a jam-packed arena. For the ceremonial puck drop between the Yorkton Terriers and the La Ronge Ice Wolves, Kevin was called to centre ice where a banner was lifted high above the rink to reveal the old arena that Kaminski learned to skate in, played minor hockey in, and where his dreams of

playing in the NHL started would now be known as the Kaminski Arena.

Although Kevin had a successful coaching career in the United States, he decided to live closer to his family in Saskatchewan. His dad, Julian, lives in Churchbridge and his brother Sheldon is a teacher in Langenburg. Both are a huge part of the success of his annual fundraising golf tournament.

For Kevin this honour came as a complete surprise, but for the town of Churchbridge it was the least that they could do for someone who continues to give back to his community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Annual Cultural Connections India Night

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, on September 14th it was a pleasure to attend the annual Cultural Connections India Night once again, along with Stephanie as well as the members for Regina Lakeview, Douglas Park, and Northeast. It was a packed house and a beautiful gala once again with amazing food and incredible talent on display. Stephanie and I, as well as the member for Regina Northeast, had fun as part of the fashion show.

It was another impressive India Night and in support of such worthy work. This year's proceeds supported the 4 to 40 Campus For All at the University of Regina, a program creating social and economic inclusion for people experiencing an intellectual disability. The event raised \$120,000 for Campus For All.

I want to thank the exceptional Cultural Connections India Night board and their incredible Chair, Renu Kapoor, as well as the very talented emcee, Kavita Ram. Annual India Nights organized over the years by Renu and community leaders have raised more than \$1 million for valued charities and programs in our community. I ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in thanking the remarkable leaders of Cultural Connections and all those that made India Night 2019 another incredible success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Rotary Club of The Battlefords Receives Premier's Service Club Award

Mr. Cox: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past summer I had the opportunity to attend many functions and celebrations in The Battlefords. One of the most memorable was on June 24th when I had the honour of presenting the Premier's Service Club Award to the Rotary Club of The Battlefords. In order to be considered for this award, the club must be dedicated to improving the lives of those around them.

The Battlefords Rotary Club certainly demonstrates that. The members demonstrate what selflessness truly means, and their actions contribute to the strength of our province. Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight a few of the ways this club has been able to contribute back to their community. They provide yearly sponsorships for post-secondary education. They have helped fund the Herb Sparrow Rotary splash park. They've funded the

Rotary skateboard park. They've contributed to the Boys & Girls Club new building fund. They've contributed to the Humane Society building fund. They were a sponsor for the 2018 Saskatchewan Winter Games. They participated in the New Beginnings campaign for our Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. And each Christmas, members ring bells for the Empty Stocking Fund. And, Mr. Speaker, they also deliver Meals on Wheels on a regular basis.

Mr. Speaker, the Rotary Club of The Battlefords has been giving back to our community for 99 years and will be celebrating their 100th anniversary in 2020. So, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Rotary Club of The Battlefords on winning the 2019 Premier's Service Club Award and thank them for all they do in their community. We wish them all the best in their centennial celebrations next year.

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

Indian Head Broncs End Undefeated Season With A Championship Win

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on November 9th the Indian Head Broncs high school football team defeated the Notre Dame Hounds 14-6 to win the 3A 9-man high school football championship. It was a hard fought battle for both teams, and for the Broncs this championship has been something they have been working towards since August. They finished their regular season with a perfect 10 and 0 record, Mr. Speaker. And this provincial championship marks the fifth time that the Indian Head Broncs high school football team has hoisted this trophy.

Head coach Tim Klein, who deserves so much credit, said that the team's undefeated season was a testament to all 39 players buying into the Broncs' philosophy. He said, and I quote:

Since August 23rd, we have wanted to prove that there is no doubt that we are the best team in the province and have ended every practice and game with that chant. Today we proved it, and we ended our season with those words. We have coached the grade 12 group since they were in grade 8, and they are an incredible group of kids who have grown so much. Add in an awesome mix of grade 9's, 10's and 11's and wow, what a great team. What a family.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Broncs on a provincial championship and for the 2019 undefeated season, Mr. Speaker. Well done, Broncs.

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

Award-Winning Community Member Named Special Olympics Junior Coach of the Year

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past September, Theo Lautsch from Swift Current was recognized at the Special Olympics Saskatchewan AGM [annual general meeting] and awards banquet in Yorkton. Theo was awarded as the Junior Coach of the Year for his involvement in the curling and bocce ball community.

Mr. Speaker, Theo is an incredibly devoted coach, putting in many hours each week to coaching athletes and furthering his education in the national certification coaching program. Theo holds many certifications which have all helped him adapt his skill set to a range of athletes in his community. Mr. Speaker, he feels that the athletes he works with give a voice in his community, and he's always willing to go above and beyond for them.

Mr. Speaker, this is just the latest in a long line of awards for Theo. He just finished up his final year as a member of the sea cadets in Swift Current. And earlier this year he received both the Navy League of Canada Saskatchewan Division Yanow Award of Merit, and he was presented with the 2019 national Sea Cadet of the Year Award as the top sea cadet in all of Canada. I also saw Theo actively involved at the local Remembrance Day service held earlier this month.

Mr. Speaker, he is still a teenager. He's graduated from high school, and I believe now that Theo is actually taking his post-secondary education in Moose Jaw. Theo is a true leader at such a young age. And I now ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Theo Lautsch and to thank him for his service to the Special Olympics, his service to the sea cadets and to his community, and to wish him well in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we asked the Education minister about the Premier's broken promise to hire 400 more EAs [educational assistant], and we got a strange answer from that minister: "I want to state categorically for the record that the Premier did not breach his promise, Mr. Speaker. Thirty million dollars was added into the formula, which is the equivalent of 400 EAs."

The minister wants to have it both ways, but he can't claim that he delivered on 400 EAs while shoring up the hole that they put in the budget. So which is it? Did the Sask Party cut 54 million from our kids' classrooms? Or did they break the Premier's promise to hire 400 EAs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, part of that budget the Premier and this government had committed to an additional \$30 million to be added into the education formula, Mr. Speaker, to make up . . . as part of the additional money that we were committing to public education, Mr. Speaker. That was the equivalent of 400 EAs, Mr. Speaker. But as the member knows — she's a former school board trustee, Mr. Speaker — those funds are provided to school divisions, Mr. Speaker, in an unconditional way. And the school divisions have the option of using those funds in whichever way they want, Mr. Speaker.

Now if the member opposite, as a former trustee, wants this government, Mr. Speaker, to start earmarking money that goes to

school divisions through that formula, she needs to stand up and say that, Mr. Speaker. But I can tell you this: there isn't one trustee in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that I've spoken to that thinks that's a good idea. We're going to continue to support public education in this province, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that the people of Saskatchewan, the teachers of this province, and the children in our classrooms can count on.

[10:30]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, that minister also knows — who is also a former school board trustee — that they are the ones who have cut millions of dollars from the classrooms, rammed ahead with Bill 63. And we won't be taking any lessons from them.

The Sask Party chose to cut millions of dollars from our kids' classrooms. They made that choice in the budget, and adding \$30 million after cutting \$54 million is not something worthy of self-congratulation. The Premier promised 400 EAs and he's 354 EAs short. How can the minister honestly say he's met the target when he's missed it by 89 per cent?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, that \$30 million was two budgets ago, Mr. Speaker. We added another \$26 million to the budget last year, Mr. Speaker, the largest education budget in the history of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And we're very proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

Now we know there's more work to be done, Mr. Speaker. But again, Mr. Speaker, if that member wants to stand up and say that this government should be earmarking money that goes to the school divisions, that we should be telling the school divisions how to spend their money, she needs to stand up and say that, Mr. Speaker.

That \$30 million was the equivalent of 400 EAs, Mr. Speaker. How the school divisions deploy that money is completely up to them, Mr. Speaker. We respect local autonomy of school divisions, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to look to make the investments that we need to make in the best interests of the children in this province.

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

Contents of Health Authority Memo

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, the government likes to respect local autonomy of the school boards when it's convenient for them, and only then.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health referred to the hush memo released by the Leader of the Official Opposition as gotcha politics. Is it gotcha politics to reveal when a government is trying to silence their workers? People who are advocating for change in our hospitals and throughout this government are afraid. We hear it all the time and their concerns shouldn't be

dismissed.

To the Minister of Health: are you really saying people aren't afraid to come forward?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday Dr. Susan Shaw, who is the Chief Medical Officer with the Saskatchewan Health Authority, did a scrum in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. And she refers to the memo and I'll quote from her, Mr. Speaker. It says:

I disagree with that interpretation [which is saying that it's a hush memo, Mr. Speaker]. I think we fully support our physicians and all of our staff on speaking effectively, but having clarity on when you're speaking on behalf of the organization or when you're speaking personally . . . that's something we all need to be mindful of.

Mr. Speaker, I've said many times in the last few days, I thought the memo was poorly written. It could have been more clear. But, Mr. Speaker, there's never been any indication from anyone in this government side that anyone should be muzzled, not allowed to speak out. If the member opposite thinks that's the case, she should ask the Leader of the Opposition, her boss, Mr. Speaker. He spoke out when he was a doctor in the system. There was no retribution for that.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, the Public Interest Commissioner said recently "We'll get brown envelopes. So that to me shows that there's a fear, and we have to make sure that we fix that fear."

This government promised to protect whistle-blowers, Mr. Speaker. But instead of protecting them, this memo shows that they're hushing them. What is this government's plan to rectify the damage done by this hush memo?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I referenced an interview that Dr. Susan Shaw did yesterday when she clarified that there's no attempt to muzzle anyone in the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

Mr. Speaker, when this was first raised on the floor of the Assembly by the Leader of the Opposition with a memo that I had never seen, Mr. Speaker, I indicated at that time, that day, and I did follow up with senior executives at the Saskatchewan Health Authority and asked them to clarify this. It's my understanding, I believe at some point today, if it hasn't happened already, Mr. Speaker, that Dr. Shaw will be sending out a memo making that very clarification.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, the Public Interest Commissioner's quote is quite clear. There is a problem within the culture of this government that this Sask Party government needs to fix. Mr. Speaker, regional health authorities were not protected under this government's public interest disclosure Act,

and it's clear as well that it doesn't cover employees of the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

Will the government amend their whistle-blower legislation to make it clear that SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] employees are also protected?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, again, there's no attempt by anyone in this government to muzzle anyone in the Saskatchewan Health Authority. Mr. Speaker, as the regional health authorities are amalgamated, that the member opposite speaks of, a lot of work is being done on numerous policies across the province with the individual health regions to blend them all into one operating authority, Mr. Speaker.

As they do that work I would be happy to speak to the senior management there to ensure, to do a review, to make sure people have the ability, free to work out. I'll ask them to look at all options, including piggyback on existing whistle-blower legislation that covers other provincial employees, Mr. Speaker. We'll do whatever's necessary to make sure that people have that opportunity to speak out.

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

Supports for People With Addictions

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, more than 300 people in Saskatchewan have died from opioid overdoses since 2015. But despite the serious risk opioid addictions cause in communities across the province, physicians and front-line care providers are raising concerns there aren't enough prescribers of opioid agonist therapies like methadone or Suboxone or counsellors to support the needs of individuals trying to get better through the OAT [opioid agonist therapy] program.

But we do know you can't simply prescribe someone out of addiction, and there is that dire shortage of people providing the essential counselling that needs to be paired with medical approaches for this program to succeed.

To the minister: what's the plan to get more addictions counsellors on the front lines?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is right. This is a very serious situation. It's a situation that all provinces across the country are grappling with, including North America, Mr. Speaker. There is an opioid crisis.

We made a significant number of announcements and a significant increase in resources and mental health and addictions in the last budget last spring, Mr. Speaker. We're in the budget process right now. I would expect you would see more of the same, Mr. Speaker, to her point about the number of counsellors, the number of addictions beds, those sorts of things, Mr. Speaker.

I brought this up many times in the House before. Currently there's RFPs, requests for proposals, out from the Saskatchewan

Health Authority for a number of programs including 50 new pre- and post-addiction treatment beds for individuals that are transitioning between detox and in-patient treatment. We've opened new addictions beds in Pine Lodge, addictions beds in Calder Centre. There's going to be six new addictions treatment beds for youth under 18 are going to open in southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot of work left to do.

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

Ms. Chartier: — A lot of work left to do, Mr. Speaker, is an understatement. This government is significantly behind on where we need to be to catch up to what they've done around addictions treatment, Mr. Speaker.

We've received written questions that show how dire the staff shortage in the OAT program really is. In Regina and Prince Albert there's a single addictions counsellor in this program for every 200 patients. In Saskatoon each addictions counsellor in this program has an average caseload of 400 patients, Mr. Speaker.

Last year a Prince Albert man tried to get addictions care, and instead he's now serving jail time. Last week he received a sentence for manslaughter. The lack of access to addictions treatment is a huge driver of the unacceptable rates of crime in our communities.

Does the minister really think a single counsellor is able to provide support to 400 patients? And if not, what is his plan to fix it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said, we recognize how serious this issue is. Addictions treatment is very important. We've added a great deal of resources. I talked about the addictions beds that we've added. Mr. Speaker, we're adding addictions counsellors. We're opening, they're referred to as RAAM clinics, rapid access to addictions medicine clinics in Saskatoon, Regina, and P.A. to assist in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that all provinces and across the country and also in the United States are grappling with. Mr. Speaker, it's a very serious issue. But for the member to infer somehow that this is just simply a lack of resources being provided is just not accurate, Mr. Speaker. Just as an example, Mr. Speaker, the number of addictions beds that are available in the province increased by 56 per cent since 2007. They went from 274 beds to 428.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, this minister should look at his own numbers. There were fewer beds before this budget, in this last budget, than there were five years ago when it comes to in-patient addictions treatment. That's from his own written questions, Mr. Speaker.

This government says it wants to provide the right care and community but leaves programs like this that can save lives

without the resources needed to succeed. We only need to look at the lives lost to know that we need to get this right. And we are not getting it right.

What's the minister's plan to expand access to opioid-substitution therapies to ensure there are more providers and to hire more counsellors so that when people are ready to take on their addictions, they have the support necessary to do so?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, the workers that are dedicated to the opioid-substitution therapy are not the only workers that are helping addictions patients, Mr. Speaker, and not all patients are managed through that program. Mr. Speaker, patients can also get treatment through outreach services, through out-patient treatment, through detox, through in-patient treatment, day treatment, through their physician.

Mr. Speaker, we have increased supports for programs. We've increased addictions counsellor FTEs [full-time equivalent] by 34 per cent, and we've increased social workers dealing with this issue by 53 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we've increased funding right across the whole health care spectrum, Mr. Speaker, including mental health and addictions. In fact it was a priority in last spring's budget.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Access to Childbirth Services in the North

Mr. Vermette: — Last year we asked the Sask Party government what their plan was to ensure women in Creighton in northeastern Saskatchewan can have access to birthing services close to home after the Manitoba government cut services at the Flin Flon hospital. What has the government done since we asked those questions nearly one year ago?

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

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, we're aware of the temporary disruption that occurred at the obstetrical services in Flin Flon. My predecessor as well as myself have discussed this issue with the Manitoba Health minister as early as a few weeks ago when he was here.

We've been advised by officials within the ministry and SHA, as well as our counterpart in Manitoba, that this is unfortunately a recruitment and a retention issue. Retention of health care providers in rural and remote areas is a concern across the country, Mr. Speaker. Alternate delivery sites have been made available to our Saskatchewan residents in either Prince Albert or The Pas, Manitoba. As well my colleague, the Minister of Highways, has initiated significant road and airport improvements in the various communities that are affected in this area.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Later today the Leader of the Opposition and the Health critic will be meeting in Saskatoon with mothers who

are worried. These are the mothers who just want to be able to give birth to their babies close to home. They're looking to this government to do something, but they haven't seen any progress. What would the minister say to those mothers who have been travelling for hours and hours and without cell service to have their babies because they've been abandoned by the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Manitoba?

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

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, we're well aware of the concerns that our northern communities have with the access to obstetrical services. Therefore we've made plans and created areas of support in the Prince Albert and in our northern health communities to make sure that our obstetric patients are looked after in a prudent and sufficient way.

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

Government's Fiscal Management

Mr. Wotherspoon: — It's hours from Flin Flon to Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker.

The plan released last week by the Sask Party contained no plan to eliminate emergency room wait times or to help classrooms that are bursting at the seams, directly undermining important population growth targets, and it has no plans and no targets to reduce government debt.

Gone are the days of this government's promises to half the debt. We've moved on to, "we'll do our best." Debt has tripled under the Sask Party, a direct result of grossly mismanaged projects and finances. Far from reducing debt, the Sask Party has jacked up debt to an historic \$22 billion that they're saddling Saskatchewan people with. To the minister: what's the plan to get our ballooning debt growth on track?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I've spoken numerous times on debt. We are very, very happy that our debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] ratio remains at the third lowest in our country. It's also recognizing how we manage our debt by the way that the credit rating agencies have rated our province, giving it a AAA credit rating because of the way we manage the debt.

The member opposite needs to understand that there are three types of debt that the province holds. That and the Crown corporations in a growing province, I'm going to suggest that the member opposite thinks that the hook-ups for those industries and those individual homes and residents need to happen, in which case the burden can't be dumped on the existing utility users. It needs to be borrowed. They can do the hook-ups, and it's in their business plan to regain those funds.

There's also a debt due to infrastructure build, and we have built over \$30 billion worth of infrastructure. Now I'll continue with the next question.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — A bit of creative math involved there, Mr. Speaker. Tripled the debt, the Sask Party, and they're putting that on Saskatchewan people. Their own Public Accounts documents paint the real picture. Debt-to-revenue, debt to capita, debt-to-GDP have more than doubled in the last five years, a dangerous and reckless trajectory. Debt itself has tripled.

And while this government pats itself on the back for shuffling numbers around to get to a so-called balance, people across this province burdened by this government's choices are losing their jobs, losing their homes, and can't pay their bills. Far from an actual plan to make life more affordable and get people back to work, this government hasn't even acknowledged that people are struggling as a direct result of their damaging choices.

What's the plan to help the thousands of households across the province who are no longer able to make ends meet?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity to continue with my answer. It's interesting, in August of 2019, what did Moody's have to say about the Saskatchewan budget when they gave it a AAA credit rating? They said this, and I quote: "The credit profile of the province of Saskatchewan reflects healthy liquidity levels and solid economic growth over the next three years that support rising revenues."

And it also said, and I quote . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — It's getting a little loud on both sides. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it also said, and I quote, "Debt affordability remains very strong."

Mr. Speaker, the third debt that we have is the one that is most troubling, and that's the operating debt. We needed to use the operating debt when the resource revenues fell quite dramatically so that we could maintain and sustain our health care and education services within our province.

But, Mr. Speaker, our operating debt is still below the level it was when the NDP [New Democratic Party] were in government, Mr. Speaker. We don't want to go back to those debt levels.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Page 48 of their own document, they've tripled the debt, Mr. Speaker. Hope isn't a plan, Mr. Speaker. Our construction industry is on its knees and this government refuses to help it by removing the PST they've imposed on construction labour. More than 4,000 jobs have been lost in the last year alone in this important sector.

Royal Bank has downgraded our economic outlook, with both RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] and TD [Toronto Dominion] projecting less than 1 per cent growth for the coming year. New

numbers peg Saskatchewan's manufacturing sales down 11 per cent year over year, dead last among the provinces. Now we're seeing the Lowe's store in north Regina closing because our economy is, quote, underperforming.

To the minister: when will the government actually get to work for Saskatchewan people, recognize the damage they've caused to our economy, and scrap the PST on construction labour?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I've answered this question numerous times. The members opposite don't want us to borrow money, and yet they want schools built. They want hospitals built. They want major repairs done. They want \$80 million added to the education operating, but they don't want to have the taxes looked at in order to pay for it, nor do they want us to be able to borrow.

Mr. Speaker, they have no plan. They have no vision. We have a plan that we've come forward. The construction industry has supported that plan. They've come out very positive on that plan, and they see it as a path forward to make Saskatchewan a stronger place for all of the citizens of this province.

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

Status of Crown Corporations

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Not unlike the finances, this government isn't giving the straight goods when it comes to our Crown corporations and their plans around sell-offs, Mr. Speaker. In the last election, Brad Wall promised, when it came to our Crowns, that they weren't for sale. But we know that wasn't true. The Sask Party struck a secret cabinet sell-off committee, but they won't release any details around it.

We've asked this question. I've asked this question to the Premier before. He failed to answer. Was he a member? Was the Premier a member of that committee?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, every few days the members opposite run out of things to ask about. So they go back to the bottom of the . . . [inaudible] . . . and say, oh let's ask about this all over again.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, please. Both sides. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Let's ask some questions that have already been answered. Mr. Speaker, they can ask the question day after day after day. They can rehash the same thing. The simple answer, Mr. Speaker, is this: SaskTel is not for sale. Mr. Speaker, that's the simple position.

The members opposite talk about committees and strategies. Simple matters, everything was debated on the floor of the legislature. The legislation that dealt with it was tabled, not somewhere else sneaky or off-site, right here on this desk in the

Legislative Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The question was to the Premier, and we've asked this to the Premier before. Instead he's lawyered up, Mr. Speaker. The question is straightforward. Was the Premier on the committee?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, they want to talk about being lawyered up. They got three of them over there. We only got two over here. I guess we got one away right now but, Mr. Speaker, they're pretty well lawyered up over there.

And what I'd urge the member opposite to do is sit down with some of the lawyers on that side and have some discussions about what the legislation says, what the legislation means, and how it's going to be applied going forward, Mr. Speaker. And I'd also urge them to spend some time going through *Hansard* and the things that have taken place in the House. You get a pretty clear and straightforward answer: SaskTel is not for sale.

Mr. Speaker, in simple terms, a bill was introduced to allow for privatization of up to 49 per cent. The bill was utterly and completely withdrawn right here in the Chamber. No sneaky meetings, no sneaky committees or anything else. Done. Not on the table.

The Speaker: — Now we'll move on. Why is the Premier on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request leave to move a motion under rule 61.

The Speaker: — Will the Premier briefly state the purpose of the motion and read the text?

MOTION UNDER RULE 61

Action to End CN Labour Dispute

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a motion of great importance to our province regarding the labour dispute at CN rail.

The motion is as follows:

That this Assembly call on the federal government to immediately end the CN rail strike through binding arbitration or back-to-work legislation in order to provide support for our critical agricultural, mining, and energy sectors.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave to move without notice a motion of urgent and pressing necessity under rule 61. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Leave has not been granted. Leave has not been granted. Next item of business.

Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I request leave to move a motion under rule 61.

The Speaker: — Will the member briefly state the purpose of the motion and read the text of the motion. I recognize the member.

Negotiation to Resolve CN Labour Dispute

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The motion here that's of great importance to the province of Saskatchewan.

The motion reads as follows:

That the Assembly recognizes the importance of rail access to the Saskatchewan economy, including farmers, miners, manufacturers, and energy workers; and that the Assembly recognizes the collective bargaining rights of workers; and that the Assembly calls upon Canadian National Railway to urgently negotiate a fair deal and get Saskatchewan products moving to market.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Leave has not been granted. Next item of business.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 31 to 43.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I'm sorry. Members, members, please come to order. Okay, we're going to try it again. Government Whip, I'm sorry. Could you read your written questions again?

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 31 to 43.

The Speaker: — Order, answers 31 to 43.

[Interjections]

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Support for Health Care

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to start off this debate today on the dire condition of our health care here in the province. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks here today I will be moving the following motion:

That this Assembly condemns the government for its failure to address the urgent problems in health care that are of its own creation, including:

the prevalence of hallway medicine;

the issuance of directives to health care staff discouraging them from speaking publicly about the growing problems in health care; and

the ballooning amount of infrastructure repairs needed in hospitals, clinics, and care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, one of the points here, the prevalence of hallway medicine, what we're seeing here is huge demand in our emergency departments, demand that those emergency departments can't handle in part because there's no place in hospitals to admit patients to, so there's a backlog in our emergency rooms. The problems in our emergency rooms are not . . . They're not the problem. They are simply a symptom of the problem. They really are the canary in the coal mine of our larger health care system, Mr. Speaker.

I want to point to a couple of articles actually specific to this issue. We have the May 15th, 2019 story in which the Minister of Health, in CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation], it says: "On Tuesday Minister Jim Reiter cited the province's growing drug problem as one of the reasons behind increasing emergency room wait times," Mr. Speaker. I couldn't agree with that more.

[11:00]

And just to reaffirm that, Mr. Speaker, from a CBC story posted on November 7th, 2019, Dr. Rashaad Hansia, who is a physician executive with the health authority integrated urban health unit, had commented that mental health and addiction was a big issue in Saskatchewan and was an important part of the puzzle of the challenges in our emergency rooms right now, Mr. Speaker.

The piece around mental health and addictions, so we have for the last five or six years or so a growing crisis around mental health and addictions. The minister is, and I've said this before, days late and dollars short to the game. I would give them credit in this last budget that they have finally decided, this government, the Sask Party government has finally started to invest — in small measure, I would argue — in mental health and addictions, fewer than 10 million new provincial dollars for new mental health and addictions initiatives, Mr. Speaker.

Just to be clear, there was \$16.5 million for the Sask Hospital North Battleford for doctors and nurses, which they like to talk

about around this budget. But it would be interesting to know if that 16.5 with the state of the hospital right now, with a roof that needs to be replaced, with only 130 patients as of last spring — and we don't have the new numbers yet — of 188 psychiatric rehab beds. Are those dollars flowing?

The fewer than \$10 million for mental health and addictions beds though is the real issue here, Mr. Speaker. We have the chief of police, Evan Bray, here in Regina talking about some of the challenges. This is a government who has buried their head in the sand over the last several years while front-line workers, patients quite frankly, and police services across the province have raised this alarm around mental health and addictions, Mr. Speaker.

Evan Bray has talked about criminal incidents involving cocaine that over the last four years have increased by 74 per cent, which is unacceptable. But when he talks about the criminal incidents involving meth, 2,400 per cent increase in criminal incidents involving crystal meth over that same time, Mr. Speaker. We have a growing mental health and addictions crisis here in the province. We have, over a period of five years, the number of folks reporting or in residential in-patient treatments who say crystal meth was the issue that brought them here. From 2013 to 2018 it went from 3 per cent of patients in residential treatment to 30 per cent of patients in residential treatment saying they were using crystal meth.

So this is a government who . . . everybody was sounding the alarm and this government wasn't listening. Finally in this budget they've put some money in, but we have absolute crisis situations in our hospitals. We have in Saskatoon, for example . . . You talk to anybody that the numbers we have from last year's written questions across the board aren't good. But folks with whom I've had the opportunity to speak say, ask more written questions; those numbers are even worse. So we just had written questions ordered here today around mental health and addictions questions, Mr. Speaker.

I can point to the fact that in '13-14 there were 364 addictions beds, and prior to this budget there were 356 beds in the '18-19 year, Mr. Speaker. So at a time of growing crisis there were fewer addictions beds in this province than there were five years ago, Mr. Speaker.

This government likes to talk about the money that they've spent over the 12 years they have had the privilege of governing this province. My reference when I know that they've not done anything for the last several years or their response has been weak is when they like to talk about 2007, Mr. Speaker. This is a government who's had more money, more resources at its disposal than any government in the history of this province. And they spent a lot of money in those early years, which was important money to spend for sure. But if we looked at the record of the last five or six years, it has not been good, particularly around mental health and addictions, Mr. Speaker. And I'd argue actually prior to that around mental health and addictions, it wasn't great either. There are so many challenges here.

We've had a conversation in this House particularly around a memo that has been circulated or that we received through an FOI [freedom of information], Mr. Speaker. And we have a government who has sent memos to staff saying, "If you do not want to see it in the newspaper, then do not include it in the

meeting minutes.” And it had criticized, “Physician leaders have communicated directly with external agencies . . .” The member opposite is heckling. Government sent the memo. The buck stops with the minister, Mr. Speaker. The SHA is . . . Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the buck stops with the minister and the culture is from the top down here, Mr. Speaker. That’s where culture starts.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, there is not a week that goes by that my colleagues or I don’t meet with people in community, whether they’ve been patients or front-line health care workers, who express huge concern with what they see in their workplace or from their own health care experience, Mr. Speaker. I’m the mental health and addictions critic so people approach me on that particular front quite often. And in fact I’ve had meetings with workers the last three weeks talking about challenges in their workplace when it comes to how they feel this government is dealing with the mental health and addictions crisis, Mr. Speaker.

So when this government gets up and says that people are not afraid to speak, he can say, oh, people come and talk to me and they’re not afraid to talk to me. Well no, they’re not afraid to talk to the minister. And not everybody gets an opportunity to have a meeting with the minister. And when they chat with him, I actually have people say to me, oh, I had a really good meeting with the minister; I feel like he listened.

But you know what? They also then later report to me that that listening doesn’t turn into action, Mr. Speaker, and that’s where they get frustrated. And that’s why people often come to us as the opposition to try to find ways to raise their concerns, to highlight their concerns, using all the tools that we have available to us in this legislature to help people in Saskatchewan understand the dire circumstances that people are facing in this province around health care.

This is a government who under the previous Health minister, the premier . . . I believe it was 2013. You’ll have to forgive me. I might get the dates wrong here because I haven’t been the Health critic for a while. But in 2013 the then premier, Brad Wall, promised that there would be zero waits in our emergency departments by this time, Mr. Speaker. In fact, by a couple of years ago.

And that Health minister, in his wisdom, dialled that premier back and they set different targets, Mr. Speaker. They set a target of a 65 per cent reduction of the 2013 then ED [emergency department] wait times, Mr. Speaker. And you know what? That was to be reached by the end of 2017, I believe. They have set a baseline reduction of 35 per cent. When I’d ask questions about where they were around that 65 per cent target, they were still at zero progress, Mr. Speaker. They were around the baseline of making any of that reduction. And then they realized that they were nowhere close to making that 65 per cent reduction so they changed their goal to 35 per cent.

And do you know what’s now happened in this last budget, in this last annual planning, Mr. Speaker? They’ve said there will be some reductions at some point in the future. So they dropped the really ambitious goal of zero waits for people in emergency departments, Mr. Speaker, from 65 per cent reduction to 35 per cent reduction; then now to some unknown reduction at some point in the future. And that’s because they are nowhere near meeting those targets, Mr. Speaker. They are not even close to

the range.

They had to set up a command centre to deal with emergency in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, because there are no places for patients to go. And again, just hearkening around that point that the emergency room isn’t the problem. It is the symptom of greater problems in this province, Mr. Speaker, or in health care in general. We’ve got folks who are waiting three to eight weeks for in-patient mental health and addictions treatment, Mr. Speaker. If you decide at some point in your life, if you’re someone who lives with a substance use disorder and you want help and you’ve reached that place, you cannot wait three to eight weeks, Mr. Speaker. It’s just not in the realm of possibility. So many people . . .

The philosophy really needs to be, behind every door on which you knock is someone who has a substance use disorder. There needs to be an answer and the right answer to help you deal with that. Waiting three to eight weeks is not the solution, Mr. Speaker. And this government did put some resources just in mental health and addictions in this budget, but if we would have invested five or six years ago in this area, Mr. Speaker, we would’ve solved and prevented lots of these problems at a far cheaper expense, Mr. Speaker.

We talk about the Sask Hospital North Battleford, it’s been open for a year now. It’s not gotten up to capacity and it’s still . . . We don’t have the numbers yet. We’ve asked those in written questions and I’m not sure if those were the ones that were ordered today. The brand new hospital, Mr. Speaker, admitted 18 patients in the last year, Mr. Speaker, in the last fiscal year — from the time it opened until the end of March, 18 patients in a facility that has 188 psychiatric rehab beds. So there were obviously people in some of the beds already, but 18 new patients when you’ve got people showing up in our emergency departments.

Multiple times you’ve got people staying longer than 60 days in our acute psychiatric centres like the Dubé Centre or General here in Regina or elsewhere. Those are folks who could benefit from being able to get a bed at North Battleford hospital, but they can’t because they were not admitting new patients in June when the issue came out around the roof. I don’t know if they’re admitting new patients now, but it really is a problem. When you’ve got people who show up more than three times at an emergency department, Mr. Speaker, for mental health, or who’ve been admitted more than three times in a year, that’s a signal that people need better and longer rehab treatment.

They can’t get into those beds at Sask Hospital North Battleford. Part of it is the bottleneck on the other end because we don’t have community care beds. The problem in . . . And you know, there is a budget line in this budget and an RFP went out for 75 beds, but this government’s own document prior to this mental health and addictions crisis said we in fact needed 120 of those step-down beds to be able to get people into Sask Hospital North Battleford flowing out and back into community once they’ve had treatment.

The issues in our emergency departments are again not the problem; they are the symptom. The problem is not being able to access care in community. And I do have a motion that I need to read here, Mr. Speaker. Fifteen minutes is not nearly enough time

for this particular debate.

I would like to move:

That this Assembly condemns the government for its failure to address the urgent problems in health care that are of its own creation, including:

the prevalence of hallway medicine;

the issuance of directives to health care staff discouraging them from speaking publicly about the growing problems in health care; and

the ballooning amount of infrastructure repairs needed in hospitals, clinics, and care facilities.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved a motion:

That this Assembly condemns the government for its failure to address the urgent problems in health care that are of their own creation, including:

(a) the prevalence of hallway medicine;

(b) the issuance of directives to health care staff discouraging them from speaking publicly about the growing problems in health care; and

(c) the ballooning amount of infrastructure repairs needed in hospitals, clinics, and care facilities.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Always a privilege to enter into the 75-minute debate. I had the opportunity to stand a couple weeks ago and talk about education; today they've raised an issue on health care — the two largest budget items this government has, Mr. Speaker, that have both seen huge increases over the last number of years. And they're finding problems.

I found it interesting when I read the motion though that there is an urgent problem regarding the three items that they listed which I believe is an upgrade if you're to use health terms. It's an upgrade from a crisis. We're not in a crisis but we're an urgent problem, Mr. Speaker, so that's a bit of an upgrade.

There are certainly issues when it comes to health care and it's a subject that I am glad to enter in and talk about. I've had probably as much experience as anybody in this House because I sat for, well eight years on the opposition side but the last three was the health care critic. So I certainly saw it when the NDP were in power and looked at some of the problems that we faced in health care back then.

We had the opportunity of forming government 12 years ago, had the opportunity to be the Health minister for the first five and a half to six years, saw a number of changes, and then have watched with great interest, I guess, on the way the health care system has continued to evolve over the last number of years.

[11:15]

So I have kind of a broad perspective and I can't help, when I go through this 10 minutes, not to only talk about what we have done but to look back on where the system was when we became government because there is a marked difference from where we are now to where we were a number of years ago. But I'm going to touch each point, point (a), (b), and (c) and touch a little bit on each one. And 10 minutes, it goes by very fast.

But the first one is the prevalence of hallway medicine. And I think there is no one on either side of the House who thinks that's okay. I mean there is no one that believes — and if you've been in a hospital recently where you go into the emergency and you see some of the beds lined up on the side of the hallway — that that's proper health care and that's the health care that we want to deliver. Certainly it is not. But I would say that, you know, there are ebbs and flows to that situation. Where in some periods of time, you know, in the flu season — and I believe the flu season has hit earlier this year with the October that we had and now into November — that the flu season has something to do with it.

There are a number of issues that have to do with hallway medicine. This is not new. This was an issue when I was the minister. This was an issue when I was the critic. This was an issue 20-some years ago that there was hallway medicine. This is not new. It's a continuing issue that governments have to deal with, that health regions have to deal with. And there isn't one solution. It isn't just more staff. And it isn't just throwing money at it. A lot of times it is issues around the processes within the hospital. Are people being discharged at the proper time? Is there proper home care for them to be discharged to, so that when people are coming in through the emergency they have appropriate beds?

So it is a much bigger and complex issue than to just say, oh, we need more staff, because that doesn't necessarily attribute to it. And what you need to do on this front, and I know government has been working on it over the past 12 years — still more work to do — is that for many people their first access to the health care system is through the emergency doors and that shouldn't be the first place they access health care. It needs to be done well before. And there are drop-in clinics and there are so many things that people can utilize before they get into that situation of being admitted into a hospital and then getting into hallway medicine.

So it's not acceptable. It absolutely isn't. But if the opposition, and I know they've mentioned it once or twice, that, you know, it's because . . . and they mentioned it yesterday. CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] was here and CUPE came out in the media and said, we need more staff . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Pardon me? SEIU [Service Employees International Union]. Sorry it wasn't CUPE, it was SEIU. Purple. I should have known that. They were here and they said they need more staff.

And, you know, we always want to listen to those concerns because we do want to listen to concerns from health care providers. They didn't feel threatened to come here and raise the issue that they needed more staff. You know, I certainly congratulate them on that. Because on point (c) that was one of the problems, or point (b) is one of the problems that people are

afraid to bring that forward.

Just really quickly, I don't know if there's any government, certainly, that I know of that can talk more about the increase in health care human resources that we have seen over the last 12 years. And it hasn't been the first few years of those 12; it has been over the 12 years. We put forward a goal, and I remember it, that we were going to increase the number of nursing by something like 900, 8 or 900, and we went to . . . In fact a member that is going to be speaking here in a little bit went to the Philippines to recruit more nurses. We brought 300 more nurses. There wasn't one positive thing said from the opposition. You've got to have more health care providers, but not those, not those ones, you know.

And so I've got two other points to talk on, but I could certainly talk a lot more on health care providers. But I do want to bring this one quote up. It's just amazing when . . . And I want to thank the researchers we have in our caucus office. They are absolutely amazing. Both Hayley and Tayler and all the staff are amazing. They brought this forward to me because we were raising questions about health care and how many staff they should have, and we were saying you need to set targets. Because we in opposition, as the opposition party, were setting targets on how many more doctors and how many more nurses you should have.

And I remember asking the health care minister at the time, Len Taylor, you need to set some targets. And Len Taylor, this is a quote: "Even if we were to put numbers on it, there is no guarantee that we'll be able to meet those numbers in any case so let's just not put numbers on it." That was the NDP's way to deal with human resources. So it is really quite funny that they would come and talk about condemning us for the number of health care providers.

The issue around discouraging feedback from health care providers . . . And again I would say if number one priority was to make sure we got the proper number of human resources, number two is to make sure those people felt comfortable coming forward and talking about any concerns that they had. And I know each and every one of the health care ministers that we've had meet with front-line staff, meet with administration, and try and . . .

You know, you can't solve every problem. You can't deal with every issue. But you want to hear every issue and do your best to try and resolve it. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why . . . I remember we put a doctor in as the Chair of the Cancer Agency. Never happened before. To say that we don't want to listen to what doctors have to say, you put them as the Chair of the Cancer Agency so he has a direct impact on what the board is saying.

Mr. Speaker, we've elevated so many of the different physicians that do an absolutely wonderful job. I remember a young guy that worked in my office, Kevin Wasco, who was instrumental in forming the Saskatchewan Health Authority from a doctor's point of view. Any doctor that had concerns could talk to him, and he could bring it right to the board. We have Susan Shaw that talked yesterday that would talk about how important it is to get that feedback from front-line workers.

So, Mr. Speaker, to talk about we're discouraging is absolutely wrong.

In fact you know, Mr. Speaker, this is one other thing that I just have to really quickly say. You know, opposition can bring points forward and, you know, that's perfectly fine. But when they mislead at times, Mr. Speaker, you know, they talked . . . there was a — I shouldn't use that word and I apologize and I withdraw that remark — when they bring facts that aren't quite true, Mr. Speaker. I remember when I was the minister of Health and we had announced the children's hospital. Do you know what the NDP put forward in Saskatoon? They put a brochure out that the children's hospital had been cancelled. We made the announcement that it was going to be built. They put a brochure out and sent it to every household in Saskatoon saying the children's hospital was going to be cancelled. Do you know what that did to fundraising for that children's hospital, Mr. Speaker?

So it's one thing to raise cases and one thing to raise issues, Mr. Speaker, on the floor of this Assembly, but make sure you've got your facts behind you. To say that health care providers are discouraged and afraid to come forward are absolutely wrong. And if they have proof, bring it forward. We want to hear it and we want to deal with it, not to reprimand the health care provider but to try and solve the problem that they're bringing forward, Mr. Speaker. That's what this government is working on.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, you know, the health care facilities, over some 300 facilities that are working, it's not like dealing with an office building that works 9 to 5. Our health care facilities are running 24-7, 365 days a year, so to do maintenance in them is always, you know, is a struggle. You have to time it and it's a balance, Mr. Speaker. But nobody has put more money into health care facilities, both capital facilities and repairs, than this government.

In fact the opposition, Mr. Speaker . . . I've got to bring this up again, I'm sorry. But they did a VFA report the last two years they were in government. It cost them \$2 million to do the VFA report that talked about the conditions of the facilities. Do you know how much money they put in to fix it the next year? Nothing. They could have taken that \$2 million and put it into fixing facilities. They would have been far better off than just to study it.

The first year our government was in power, we put \$100 million in the first budget because we were in such a backlog, so much money that the health care region couldn't spend it all. They had to spread it out over two or three years. Last year \$136 million into just repairs, Mr. Speaker. We'll take no lessons from the opposition when it comes to keeping our facilities in shape.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my honour to rise and enter into this debate and bring the members opposite back into the present day. They love to talk about 15, 20 years ago. And we're here with a lot of concerns about problems that we're seeing in health care today, and we'd like to have that debate on what health care is looking like right now, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd like to thank my colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale for putting forward this very important motion that speaks to three main concerns that we've been hearing recently and that we've been bringing to light in question period.

First of all the prevalence of hallway medicine which is a symptom of a larger problem we're seeing in health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a crisis in health care. It's urgent. I'd say the two phrases are fairly synonymous, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't know which phrase the members opposite want us to use but both are accurate and appropriate in this particular circumstance.

Mr. Speaker, the problem with hallway medicine is it's not . . . Like I said, it's a symptom of the larger problems within health care. And it's a symptom of actually failings in several ministries that are culminating in the concerns we're seeing in the health care system. Our ERs [emergency room] don't turn people away. They can't say sorry, we're not helping people right now. So we're seeing when the opioid crisis is being ignored, when the crystal meth crisis is being ignored, when the mental health crisis is being ignored, when this government is ignoring problems around homelessness, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're seeing it pop up in a prevalent way in our emergency rooms, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The second point in our motion today is around the directive to health care staff that was issued by the Saskatchewan Health Authority discouraging employees from speaking publicly about the growing problems in health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it is what was said in that memo, and it's concerning. And it also is indicative of a larger problem we're seeing within this government. There's a culture in this government of fear — fear of speaking out and fear of retribution if you do speak out.

Like we said, nearly every week we hear from somebody within the public sector who has a concern, who sees a problem within their ministry and wants to share it with us but does not want to share it publicly, because they are afraid of what's going to happen to them and their employment if they speak out. And I think today's question period and the quote from the Privacy Commissioner was indicative of that.

The Privacy Commissioner stated that their office is receiving brown envelopes. And then that is because people are afraid to speak out, Mr. Deputy Speaker. People are afraid to come forward. And we're receiving similar brown envelopes all the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from people, like I said, who work within ministries who have concerns and are afraid of retributions. So the Ministry of Health is no different, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we're hearing that. And we thank them for trusting in us to be able to bring their issues forward, and we call on the government to take these concerns seriously, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The whistle-blower legislation does not protect Saskatchewan Health Authority employees, and that's a real problem. This government should be doing everything in their power to ensure that whistle-blowers within ministries are protected from retribution, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's odd that the employees of the Saskatchewan Health Authority are left out of that legislation.

And if that was done in error, then that should be rectified immediately, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's definitely plenty of room in this session's legislative agenda to be able to put that forward rather expeditiously. And I'm sure we could put that forward in a way that both parties could agree to it quite quickly,

Mr. Deputy Speaker. So that would be one solution for the government to take on right now to rectify the problem that was created by this government but that we see manifested in this memo, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So if this isn't the fault of the government, like they say — we didn't see it, we didn't look at it, we didn't write it, therefore it's not our problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker — then rectify it. See that this is a problem. See that this is a culture that's been created and do what you can to rectify that issue. That doesn't mean just one more memo saying, oh never mind, ignore that last memo. It means putting into legislation the rights of whistle-blower protection for employees of the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The third point in our motion today is around the ballooning amount of infrastructure repairs needed in hospitals, clinics, and care facilities. And I'd like to thank my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview for doing a really phenomenal job, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on bringing to light the concerns that we've been hearing again from individuals, sometimes in brown envelopes, sometimes face-to-face conversations, of employees who are seeing these concerns and wanting to bring them forward but are worried about bringing them to their superiors for fear of, again, of retribution. But these are serious concerns nevertheless.

Our health care infrastructure, needs to be better supported, better maintained, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I can just read you a few titles of a few articles, just a few articles over the past couple of weeks, that highlight the serious concerns that we're seeing in health care.

[11:30]

Here's one from CBC News, November 9th, 2019: "Employees at new North Battleford [new North Battleford] hospital worried problems go beyond leaky roof, unsafe water: [says] CUPE," Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I think replacing an entire roof is a problem in and of itself. Unsafe water in a hospital is a problem in and of itself. But not only that, the employees are concerned that there's significantly more problems within that hospital. And that's just one article that we've seen recently.

"Government initiating audit of new Sask. Hospital after water warning." This was published October 25th, 2019 by Global News, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And really the articles are numerous in terms of the problems that have been seen.

My colleague has recently been talking about the problems within the General Hospital and the infrastructure repairs that are so desperately needed in the General Hospital, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and how they are going ignored by this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I wanted to talk more about the problems around overcrowding and the result that that's having on all sorts of ministries throughout government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I see I don't have a lot of time left, but I do want to go back to that first point, and the problems around the prevalence of hallway medicine, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Like I said, and I want to reiterate, our ERs are overcrowded for many different reasons. And some of those main reasons are:

when the government ignores the crisis around opioid addictions, when the government ignores the crisis around crystal meth, when the government ignores the crisis around homelessness in this province, when the government refuses to provide dental care, when the government refuses to provide adequate pharmacare, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You're seeing it. You're seeing the results of that in our emergency rooms.

My critic portfolio, I'm critic for Policing, Corrections, and Justice. I'll just speak to policing in particular. These problems manifest and make things more expensive in other ministries. When I talk to police groups and I ask them what their main concerns are, they say mental health. Mental health is taking up more of their calls. They're spending more and more of their time in emergency rooms, waiting to be able to discharge individuals that they are called to pick up and have to send, because of a mental health issue, to the emergency rooms because that's their only choice. They have to get discharged by a psychiatrist, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and because there's so few of them, they have to wait 12, 24 hours. That's two police officers being taken up from the streets, from doing police work, to wait until they can discharge that individual by a psychiatrist. That's taking up ER time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's taking up policing time, policing resources, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All of this is correlated. And all of this, when we ignore the problem, costs more money in each ministry, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So this is why we put this motion forward. This is why I'd like to thank my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, for taking this issue seriously and pushing this forward. And I'm looking forward to the rest of the debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't have the history of the member from Indian Head-Milestone or near the eloquence of his ability to speak but . . . So I'm going to jump in here feet first — not head first because we don't need anybody else going to the hospital.

So I know the NDP hate talking about the history and where it came from and where it started and the continuation of problems that were created, maybe even before that, maybe not. Maybe they've been around since the '60s or '70s. I know I've heard members on the other side of the House go, well I was in high school. Well at some point in the past, I was in high school too. Quite a while ago, but I was in high school.

And if we take a look at just the difference . . . Like they're not wrong in bringing to attention the three points they've brought, but the entire premise of everything else is just inaccurate based on their own history. Like when we talk about long wait times, what if we had 173 more doctors? Because that's what they got rid of when they were in power — 173 doctors. And that's only from 2001 to 2006, so that's for the last five years. They got rid of 173 doctors. They got rid of 450 nurses. And if you point that out to them, it's, well I was in high school; I was doing this; I was doing that; that's not my fault; that's before my time.

Well at some point this stuff catches up to us, and it's caught up to us. You know, we talk about long wait times in the hospital and hospital rooms. Maybe part of that problem is because the

NDP closed down 1,200 long-term care beds. Now I don't have the numbers of CCAs [continuing care assistant] and RNs [registered nurse] that were got rid of when they closed 1,200 long-term care beds. And those folks have to go somewhere. We have an aging population in our province, and it's been known we're going to have an aging province or aging population since the early '70s, if not the late '60s. And what does the NDP do in their infinite wisdom when they're in? They close 1,200 long-term care beds.

We also have a spread-out population across this province. We've got the two major centres and the NDP always forgot that people lived outside of Regina and Saskatoon. I'm not sure when they forgot that because there was a time back when, long time ago when Tommy started the party back in the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] days, they were a party to protect the farmers. They haven't been that party for 30 years. They don't even know that there's farmers out there. So what do they do? They close 53 hospitals in rural Saskatchewan.

Now one of the things they throw out there is, well why didn't you guys open those 53 hospitals back up? Well now we're talking about what we have done and what we're fixing and what we've replaced. Our member from Indian Head-Milestone pointed out they spent 2 million bucks on a study. How much did they actually spend on fixing anything?

Now they talk about the money they had in their bank account. They talk about that all the time. Problem is, it's like owning a house. If your roof is rotten in your house and you don't re-shingle it, your house falls apart. Doesn't matter if you've got \$10,000 in the bank; your house is falling apart. You've got a foundation you've got to build on. If your foundation is crumbling, you can't fix it with the money sitting in the bank. You actually have to spend the money. So there's some real good questions. You know, when you take a look at our infrastructure, what we've done . . .

Now just on the new hospital side of things, we've got the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. And I found out that wonderful little tidbit that after we announced it, they actually put out a flyer that said it was cancelled. Why would they do that? You know, and you know, it just . . . They talk about doing politics a different way. I'm waiting to see that because I haven't seen it yet.

We got the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. We've got the brand new hospital in Moose Jaw and it's not even brand new anymore. It was opened in 2015. Now I want to . . . The last election somebody created this meme I saw on the internet. There was this beautiful field of grass, an open field of grass, and it was the Moose Jaw Hospital after 17 years of NDP rule. Then there's a picture of the new Dr. F.H. Wigmore Hospital underneath it. After four years of announcing, we're going to have a brand new hospital. So they announce and they announce and they announce, but they don't build anything. They close them down. They tear them down and they lay off doctors and nurses and CCAs. Absolutely amazing.

We have also built the Humboldt District Health Complex. And I've heard some of the other members talk about that, that have been around here a lot longer than me, like yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They made 8 or 10 announcements on the Humboldt

hospital but never got a shovel in the ground. Well we get in and we build it.

We've got the Rawlco centre for mother baby care at the Regina General Hospital. That's 36 private rooms, a mother baby unit, eight patient's rooms, the labour unit, two operating rooms, and 21 infant care stations in NICU [neonatal intensive care unit].

We've got the Dubé Centre for Mental Health at the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon — 54 beds for adults plus 10 beds in a separate section for children and youth.

And yes, there are some issues out there. They've pointed out very well there's lots of problems out there with meth. There's lots of problems out there with fentanyl and the other opioids, and that's been around for a while. And, like, everybody thinks meth is a new problem. Well back in the oil field back in the '80s — because I'm that old — it wasn't called meth back then. It was called speed. That stuff has been around since the '60s, if not longer, and it's always been a problem. It's just a ballooning problem now, getting out of hand.

And we're putting the supports in place. We just put in more in the last budget to get beds there for mental health and addictions. And getting people's heads wrapped around that it's not always an addiction problem and it's not always a mental health problem. They go hand in hand. Not every single time, but a lot of times it's a mental health and addictions problem. So getting those people to work together has been work and getting them to do that. And they're actually doing it now. So you're making headway, little steps, little steps.

Unfortunately, because we had the NDP in before us and they closed down all the rural hospitals and everybody does have to come to a major centre now . . . Maybe if they hadn't closed . . . I'd love to have the number of rooms that were closed, number of beds that were closed in those 53 hospitals, because then we could keep our people close to home.

And if we wouldn't have . . . 450 doctors? Like, we've got 900 more doctors. Not only did we hire back the 450 they got rid of, we got 450 more. Thirty-seven hundred more nurses of all kinds, so that's RNs, LPNs [licensed practical nurse], and nurse practitioners. So is that enough? No, obviously not. And these problems that they brought up aren't something to be laughed at or sneezed at or swept under the rug.

And the second point: "The . . . [insurance] of directives to healthcare staff discouraging them from speaking publicly about the growing problems in healthcare."

I'm one of the few people here that have worked for two separate Crowns under that government when they were in power. And working at Boundary dam power plant under the NDP, when you're trying to work on holding that power plant together . . . Okay, my time's up. I'm going to not support their motion.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much. That was a riveting speech and I would love to . . . [inaudible] . . . my time so that he could carry on. But I guess the rules won't allow that, so I'll take

it up where he left off, Mr. Speaker.

I think rightfully so our opposition has been raising issues in the health care system consistently throughout this session and in the past as well, Mr. Speaker. You'll recall the lean program. We talked a lot about that. We don't hear much about that anymore from this government, but the incredible waste that happened under that program. And now we see the results of that kind of waste or misdirected spending, Mr. Speaker, because one of the points in our motion today is the horrible amount of infrastructure repairs, the deficit in infrastructure repairs that we see in our health care system right now, Mr. Speaker.

And this is a government who has seen record revenues. They spent all the money that was in the bank when they got into government, and yet we still see — and this is not our numbers; these came from official numbers, Mr. Speaker — the amount of needed infrastructure repairs has grown by 50 per cent, 50 per cent, from 2.2 billion to 3.3 billion.

[11:45]

And we see floors in the hospital being held together with duct tape, Mr. Speaker. We see critical issues in the neonatal intensive care unit. Mr. Speaker, I had a child in that neonatal intensive care unit when he was born, and I can tell you, that is a very important place in the hospital and we need to make sure that our hospitals get the repairs, and they get the infrastructure repairs that they need, Mr. Speaker.

And I mean this doesn't extend to older buildings. We see it with brand new buildings. And the previous member was speaking about fixing your house when the roof leaks. Well, Mr. Speaker, if the roof leaks the day you build the thing, there's a real problem. And that kind of infrastructure failure spills right through from existing hospitals to the brand new facilities, Mr. Speaker. So there's a deficit here. And you have to ask yourself, why are they so far behind in this spending, on this infrastructure spending, Mr. Speaker?

Well you look at some of the choices this government has made. The member from Willowgrove likes to blame and point fingers at other administrations. But, Mr. Speaker, they have to look carefully at the choices they've made right here and now in this day and age, Mr. Speaker.

And I think there's three glaring examples of money being spent that could have maybe helped with some of these infrastructure deficits, some of the staffing deficits that we see, and certainly — and I'll talk about this a little bit more later — the prevalence of hallway medicine. And we heard some interesting points from the other side about why that exists as well, Mr. Speaker.

But I think the first thing I want to take a look at is the bypass, Mr. Speaker. And we know that members on this side raised the critical issues of safety in the east corridor, on the east side of Regina for years. I remember this happening before I was even elected, Mr. Speaker. There was problems identified in safety and lives were being lost, Mr. Speaker. We asked for traffic lights. They wouldn't put them in, Mr. Speaker. So they came up with an idea — \$400 million to fix that corridor, safety being paramount. And that was a fine way to approach it, Mr. Speaker, and certainly has achieved the goal of saving lives. We know that

that corridor is much safer now.

But what happened, Mr. Speaker? These guys came up with this thing called the GTH, the Global Transportation Hub, and that wasn't on the east side of Regina, Mr. Speaker; it was on the west side of Regina. So how were they going to satisfy . . . How was Bill Boyd going to satisfy his friends at Loblaw who insisted that there be free-flow access in the GTH area?

Well let's think about it for a minute, Mr. Speaker. We could do the bypass around the southern part of Regina, and we could spend . . . \$500 million was spent. There was 500 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Perhaps the member wants to get back into the debate, Mr. Speaker. I think he's already had his 10 minutes. All that GTH money on the west bypass to accommodate Loblaw has been a loss for the system and for the taxpayer dollars to be appropriately spent on health care. They don't like the comparison, Mr. Speaker. It's a touchy point for them because they know that that money could have been directed to health care easily, but they instead chose Bill Boyd's friends and Bill Boyd's connections in Loblaw. So that was a bad choice on the part of this government, Mr. Speaker, and they wear it. They wear it, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately, one of the results of this misspending on the GTH, Mr. Speaker . . . And I mean, the west Regina bypass, if you look at the number of overpasses there, Mr. Speaker, that is hundreds of millions of dollars that went to supporting the failed idea of the GTH, which has been a colossal failure on their part. And I haven't even talked about the money wasted on the GTH itself, Mr. Speaker: lawsuits for not paying people properly for expropriation, getting SaskPower to move its power line so that they could expropriate that land. Mr. Speaker, there are all kinds of examples at the GTH alone where monies have been wasted and monies have been misspent.

And those could have been directed to the infrastructure deficit that we currently see in this health care system, to the lack of adequate staffing and resourcing for those front-line workers who come here to this legislature, Mr. Speaker, to make the plea for adequate resourcing. And not just more staff, Mr. Speaker, but obviously more beds. And those all tie in together.

And I will agree with the members opposite when they say it's complex. And my colleagues as well have pointed out the complexities and some of the reasons why our emergency centres are so incredibly jammed, Mr. Speaker. It's because of failures on the part of this government to deal with the issues that cause those congestions, Mr. Speaker.

Imagine if you need an ambulance in Saskatoon or Regina or in other areas, and they're all sitting at the dock in the emergency room because they can't discharge the patient they're currently looking after. And I worry about that, Mr. Speaker, with elderly people like my mom. And if they can't get access to an ambulance in order to get emergency care, that is something I think that this government is going to have to wear and they're going to have to deal with, Mr. Speaker, because it's not acceptable.

It goes back to all the issues that my colleagues raised. We have a failure to deal with an opioid crisis. And the Minister of Health likes to accuse us of playing politics when we raise this issue,

Mr. Speaker. This is not playing politics. This is a serious issue. It is one that this government needs to deal with.

We also have a suicide epidemic in the North, Mr. Speaker, where children have lost hope, young children — and think of some of your grandchildren, Mr. Speaker, at that age — who don't want to live. And yet we have a failure on the part of the government to handle that situation in any meaningful way. We've twice called for legislation at least implementing a suicide prevention strategy, Mr. Speaker, and no response from this government. I know that we're still working with them to try and push forward that idea because we know it will save lives.

Letters are pouring in from all across the North, Mr. Speaker, supporting the need for a strategy that will prevent suicides from escalating or happening in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, one of the previous speakers said, you know, there's always problems in ER and, you know, it's the flu season, Mr. Speaker. He tried to write it off by saying, oh it's not really a problem; it's just the flu season. Mr. Speaker, that is not dealing with issues, that is . . . Yes, they're setting up special centres, Mr. Speaker, to deal with that. So the thing is, is that you can't put your head in the sand forever.

This is a government who can't handle the growth that they've initiated, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's part of the problem, is that they spent all the money when they had it. They came into government with \$2 billion in the bank and oil was \$140 a barrel. Money was pouring in and they did not put a penny aside for this time when oil prices have changed and gone back to the way they were before they came into government. They can't handle it, Mr. Speaker. They can't handle the growth and demands on our education system. They can't handle growth and demands on our health care system. And we see it over and over with stories that are coming out of the media, stories we're hearing from people directly.

And, Mr. Speaker, I haven't even had time to talk about this hush memo that the government, through the SHA, is pressuring people to not talk about the issues that are concerning them. And there are doctors who do care, and again the Minister of Health was going on and on about being, you know, scared to come forward. People are scared to come forward, Mr. Speaker, and for that minister to lessen that by ridicule is not acceptable at all. And if he thinks people aren't worried about their jobs, then I don't know what planet he comes from.

Even CBOs [community-based organization], Mr. Speaker, in the funding that they're getting are — and I know this because I've talked to people in CBOs — they are concerned about speaking out for fear of retribution. They don't want to lose their funding, and they certainly don't want to lose their job.

So the dismissive attitude we've seen from this government in terms of that hush memo . . . Where they should have taken a much more pro-active approach, and as my colleague from Douglas Park has suggested, actually amend the legislation so that they will be under the whistle blower protection. Those people in the health care system are not under that protection right now. And if this government was willing to listen to those concerns, they would indeed be amending that legislation to ensure that health care workers have the protection they need if

there are issues that need to be addressed and dealt with.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I'd love to go on and on but I'm out of time. But I support the motion.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased and honoured to be able to rise in the House today and speak to the motion presented by the opposition. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not be supporting this motion. This motion has three aspects that they covered off: in-hallway medicine, health care staff discouraging them from speaking, and infrastructure repairs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to probably start with the infrastructure repairs. We have spent an incredible amount of money ensuring that health care is being looked after in this province. We've built new hospitals, new long-term care facilities. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we formed government, the disrepair of our health care system was shocking. And it wasn't just the buildings either. It was a lack of staff.

And as the previous member spoke to, I had the opportunity and the honour of being the Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Health. And my role was to look at nurse retention and recruitment because, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we were in a serious situation. We had a lack of proper nursing staff. So we had to go and we went to the Philippines and we recruited over 300 nurses to fill that gap.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we set targets. This was something the opposition never could do. They refused to set targets because you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It would've meant that they would've had to work to reaching those targets, and they were not prepared to do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we have across the way is an opposition that really doesn't understand what it takes to run a government. And that's what I really . . . Just listening here, we hear that we've got people saying, just put more money to it. Just dump tons of money to it.

And then they turn around and we put forward a growth plan which talks about the economy because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can tell that not one of those people across the way have ever run a business. They've never had to meet payroll. They don't understand that the only way you can hire more nurses, hire more doctors — the whole cadre of the health care professionals — or build more facilities or repair more facilities is because you have to have a strong, thriving economy where the money is able to flow into health care. And so that's where you really realize that they do not understand.

To ensure that you have a strong economy, you have to have a positive attitude also, and that's something across the way our members from the opposition do not have. This week was absolutely astounding. When we had the Leader of the Opposition stand up, and I sat here and I thought, oh my God, I think he's 12. He must be 12 years old because the only thing he missed doing was stomping his feet. He didn't focus in on what's important. He absolutely torqued every question he had. And by

doing so, he absolutely destroys the faith that people have in Saskatchewan, because you're not talking about real issues.

The real issues in this province? It's the economy because a strong economy is going to ensure that we have health care. The strong economy is going to ensure that we have a strong education system, that we have more teachers, we have more schools. That's something that you can really see that the members of the opposition do not understand.

And then when they have the . . . I can't say that, I guess. They stood up and stated that, in fact, that we have a culture of suppression. I just find that so disturbing. That, coming from a government that had no qualms to really have a culture of suppression within their own government. The NDP were more than prepared to hush up and cover up the Murdoch Carriere case. And no, they say, oh, that was a long time ago. Oh, not that long ago — 2008. You know, it just is so . . . 2006.

It's very disturbing when they talk about, as a government, that we would not allow health care professionals to speak. You know, I have health care professionals that come into my office all the time. I know members here on this side of the House have shared with me that in fact people come in and are not afraid to talk about issues or concerns they have. So for those members to turn around and say that we have a culture of suppression, I find that very disturbing coming from an opposition that in fact had no qualms about having that kind of culture within their government.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when they talk about infrastructure . . . You know, when we formed government the infrastructure was in a just deplorable state. And it wasn't just the schools and it wasn't just the hospitals and it wasn't just the highways. There was bridges and culverts and you name it, because they didn't pay attention.

[12:00]

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have paid attention. We built more hospitals. You know, they had a member from North Battleford — in fact he was the Health minister at one point — who talked about, you know . . . And he never, ever got it done. He refused to acknowledge that a 100-year-old hospital was unacceptable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had an opportunity to tour that hospital. And I was there when in fact some of our brand new nurses that we had recruited were employed at that hospital. Now the sad part was when they said to me, oh, please member, do not walk on that side of the stairs because we've had members fall through those treads because they're rotten through. Rotten through was that government, the NDP government. That's what was rotten through because they ignored the situation in that hospital. And now they stand there and, you know, with their hands folded in kind of that pious way, saying we are not paying attention to mental health care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the North Battleford hospital, what's its focus? Its focus is to ensure that we have a proper facility to take care of patients with mental health issues. And what did they do all those years they were in government, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They ignored it. And that wasn't the only hospital they ignored. Oh, they ignored the Plains too. Shut the doors, locked her up,

and said, cat, we don't need that.

Do you know what the Plains was for? That wasn't just for the citizens of Regina. That was for the citizens of southern Saskatchewan. Those are the people that went out, raised the money. They were putting money in ice cream pails, doing whatever they could to build a hospital for their needs. And what did the NDP do? They shut the doors. They didn't care. They shut the doors, said, oh, we don't need that place. That's what's so disgusting. When they stand over there, their hands folded, looking very pious and kind of scold us on what we're doing in regards to health care, I find it disgusting and deplorable.

And when we have the Leader of the Opposition standing on the other side, stamping his feet and torquing the issue, he's not being productive. And that's the sad part. They are not being productive on that side of the House. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the important thing is to listen to people of Saskatchewan. When they elected us they asked us, please get down to the business of running this province. They were not running the business of this province. They don't understand business. They don't understand the economy.

It's a sad day when those people across the way stand up, fold their hands, and want to scold us. What have we done? We didn't fold our hands. We rolled up our sleeves and we worked hard to get the job done. I'm so disappointed in that they would turn around and stand there and say, we would like you to support this motion. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could never support the motion that they put forward. Thank you very much.

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

Hon. Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Across this province doctors and practitioners are serving communities, looking after families and neighbours, and providing exceptional care. When the NDP were in power, they were closing facilities, driving out many of our talented medical staff, leaving them no place in rural Saskatchewan. Now I hate to say it, Mr. Speaker, but people in rural Saskatchewan still feel betrayed by the NDP government.

My question is for the member from Saskatoon Nutana. We've built many new facilities, added 900 more doctors. Why do you continue to vote against supporting this government as we increase capacity and service in rural Saskatchewan?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Well I do thank the member for the softball, Mr. Speaker. We continue to oppose this government's actions in health care because of exactly what this motion is about — the prevalence of hallway medicine. And no, it's not due to the flu season, Mr. Speaker. The issuance of directives to health care staff discouraging them from speaking publicly, this is a muzzle order, Mr. Speaker. And they should be very concerned about that, and of course what we've seen in terms of the ballooning amount of infrastructure repairs that this government has failed to address.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm going to do my best job of imitating my good friend, the member from Regina Elphinstone. An imitation is the best, the most sincere form of flattery. So let's all cast our minds back to the speech from the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow when he said that, what's the point of having money in the bank when your roof is leaking. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a government whose roof is leaking and they have no money in the bank. So to the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, how on earth does he square that circle?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Mr. Lawrence: — Well I'm really good at math and geometry, but I never did figure out how to square a circle. Or circle a square — I could circle a square. I can't square a circle.

When we want to talk about infrastructure dollars and what we've done and what we've built, I've gone over it, and I'm happy to go over it again. We've got the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital; the Saskatchewan North Battleford Hospital; the F.H. Wigmore Regional Hospital; the Humboldt District Health Complex; the Rawlco Centre for Mother Baby Care, Regina. And then we'll jump into — I'll skip the last one — and we'll go into the Leader and District Integrated Healthcare Facility, Kelvington and district integrated health care facility, Biggar long-term care. And I'll continue on . . .

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

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last year the Kindersley Hospital and district health centre received \$150,000 for a diagnostics room renovations, \$100,000 for a nurse call system upgrade, \$120,000 for a boiler unit replacement, and \$125,000 for emergency room renovations — all in a budget that members over there opposed.

To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: can that member tell the citizens of Kindersley why she voted against giving them health care upgrades in much needed rural Saskatchewan areas?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, again there's a question that I think we need to talk about: the real essence of the motion here. And that is about hallway medicine — which the member opposite didn't reference at all — about directives to health care staff, muzzling them and telling them not to speak out about issues they see. He didn't reference that at all, Mr. Speaker, nor did he reference the ballooning amount of infrastructure repairs that we see, from 2.2 billion to 3.3 billion under this government's watch, with no concern whatsoever for the impact that it has on health, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm ready to ask the next question. Oh, I guess my colleague has it.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from

Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the former legislative secretary for long-term care, could the member from Regina Rochdale explain to families and residents why her government continues to short-staff these facilities to the detriment of both residents and staff?

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

Ms. Ross: — I'm not sure if she mentioned Regina Rochdale. She did. Excellent.

Well thank you very much for that question, because one of the things that I had asked for in my report as legislative secretary for long-term care was to ensure that we had a minister that was focused on seniors. And in fact that's exactly what we have done. And if we want to talk about long-term care, we want to talk about long-term care facilities that they closed, beds they closed. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will take no lessons from the opposition. Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This fall we announced that the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital will be expanding its neonatal intensive care unit. This means communities like Batoche, Shellbrook, and my constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers, whose hospitals were closed during the NDP's neglect of rural Saskatchewan, will have better access to these specialized expanded services.

To the member from Saskatoon Riversdale: why is the member not in favour of the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital expansion of its neonatal special-care nursery? Why won't the members opposite support this expansion in health care, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Oh, Mr. Speaker, that is the weirdest and most nonsensical question we may have heard in this place for a little while. We are completely, completely in support of making sure those people in Prince Albert and north of Prince Albert, the area, have access to the best possible hospital that they can, Mr. Speaker.

This is a government who's promised money, and they delivered on planning money, but has still continued to fail to deliver on a good hospital for those good people of Prince Albert.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think I'm going to cast everyone's mind back to the member from Regina Rochdale's speech where she stated that health care professionals come into her office all the time. Can she clarify what exactly these health care professionals who are coming into her office "all the time" are saying to her?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rochdale.

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the member opposite. Yes, they come in and they talk about some of the challenges, but they also talk about how we have increased the number of nursing seats and how we have gone out and recruited doctors.

In fact I had a wonderful woman come the other day and said she really appreciated that in fact her children were able to come home because they were both health care professionals, that before, during the NDP, there was no jobs for them here. So they were really pleased to be able to come and speak to me.

So when the member asks the question opposite of me, in fact I am pleased to talk to all the professionals that come to ask questions of our government. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Olauson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Jim Pattison Children's Hospital is open. It is a commitment we made to this province, and something all of us in this House can proudly stand behind.

But back in 2010 the NDP were claiming the hospital project had been cancelled. This resulted in the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Children's Hospital Foundation having to go to news outlets to let people know that the project had never been cancelled, and that the accusations that the NDP were spreading were actually hurting fundraising efforts.

To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: the NDP were against the hospital then and are still against it now. Can the member speak to their party's record and opposition to having a children's hospital in Saskatchewan?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and interesting question. You know, I often wonder why their only comeback is blame the NDP for all their problems. Well let's just blame the opposition, you know, can't even reflect at all on the efforts of this government in this House.

And I think the GTH is good example of that, Mr. Speaker, where we see this government and that Minister of Justice actually say, well it's the NDP's fault that we aren't selling land out there, Mr. Speaker, which is one of the most ridiculous things that I've ever heard.

Now of course I want to talk a little bit about the Plains hospital because, Mr. Speaker, this government complains, but what have they done to reopen the Plains hospital? They complain about the difficult decisions to close hospitals in the 1990s when Grant Devine had put this government on the brink of bankruptcy, and yet what have they done to reopen those hospitals, Mr. Speaker? So it's a little bit of speaking out of both sides of the mouth that I hear from this government, Mr. Speaker.

And this is something that I think they need to stop complaining, get to work, and find ways to fix the many problems in our health care system like crowded emergency rooms, like . . .

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

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — The Clerk is sitting right in front of me, and I can't hear what she's saying. So perhaps maybe we could come to order so that everyone can hear the next item of business. I'd ask the Clerk to start over.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

Motion No. 1 — Support for Pipelines

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to stand before you today. Mr. Speaker, during my remarks today I will be speaking about the importance of the energy sector and how pipelines benefit and create many jobs while providing safe transportation of our energy products. I also speak about the potential pipelines and outlining the positive economic and environmental impact it could have.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government needs to start supporting and investing in pipeline projects like the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and many of the other projects across Canada, in turn putting many hard-working energy sector employees of this province back to work.

[12:15]

I want to begin, Mr. Speaker, by highlighting the fact that the oil and gas industry has been a long, proud part of our national and our provincial history. Talking about our resource industries as a common topic of opportunity in Saskatchewan's stories from the past and the present, the potential and growth in opportunities the oil industry has provided in our province is endless.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk on one of those opportunities and share one of those stories from the past that happened in my constituency. Fosterton, piece of black gold, 1952:

Oil strike set Saskatchewan on fire, a fire with rumor, speculation and hope. The strike made American headlines, one of the greatest oil strikes on the continent at that time.

On January 4th, 1952 it was confirmed that the well was a producer. Soon the area was busy with equipment, workers, reporters from radio and newspapers, and of course lots of curious sightseers. On the ground, it was slick and black-looking. The liquid black gold was going to change the community and surrounding area's future and change the welfare of our province. The well was a big producer with 900 barrels an hour, or

producing 480 barrels every 24 hours. New wells were drilled in surrounding areas shortly after the big discovery.

This discovery brought promise, and it has brought an increase of activity, growth, and prosperity. And we see the growth and prosperity continues with the oil exploration and development across our province. The impact of the economy improved the quality of life for the province, attracting both investment and people.

With the discovery of the abundant supply of crude oil and natural gas in the West, Canada's oil and gas industry began expanding its vast pipelines network back in 1950s. This expansion contributed significantly to the development of our domestic and international energy markets, all while propelling the Canadian economy forward. These facts still ring true today as Canadians and their international counterparts still rely on natural gas resources and products made from crude oil to meet more than two-thirds of their energy needs each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, it is very concerning that the federal government continues to hit the oil and gas industry with stacking environmental policies and regulations. Our government continues to work together with industry leaders and the oil and energy sector, working on ways to enhance and improve policies.

Mr. Speaker, this week the Fraser Institute released a *Canadian-US Energy Sector Competitiveness Survey* for 2019. This survey looks at barriers to invest in oil and gas exploration and production facilities in each of our two countries.

Mr. Speaker, we do have something to be proud of in this report. Despite the opposition from the members opposite, their federal leader, and Trudeau's government, Saskatchewan is the most attractive jurisdiction in Canada for upstream oil and gas investment. But what may be troubling is that the top jurisdictions on this list are all from the United States. This is because investors see uncertainty and concerns with regulations, taxations, and consistencies that are holding them back from investing here rather than in the United States. And we have our federal leaders, including Jagmeet Singh, to thank them for that too.

Mr. Speaker, overall, investors are expressing major concerns over taxation in Canada as compared to the United States. They do not want to bring jobs up here to Canada because they know any projects they do will either be held back by our federal leaders or will be slammed with an unfair and unproductive carbon tax. Sixty per cent of the investors are concerned about coming up to Canada because of the tax, whereas 32 per cent of the investors are concerned about setting up shop in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot be discouraged by these facts. We must celebrate that we are ranked as the most attractive investment jurisdiction in Canada for upstream oil and gas, but we must continue to fight and stand for the energy sector.

What is also very concerning, Mr. Speaker, is the number of jobs we have seen leave Saskatchewan. In Canada as a whole, companies who employed thousands of hard-working people, like Husky, have begun to lay off workers due to restrictions and regulations made by our federal leaders. As a result of the

pressures and restrictions from their NDP government in Alberta, as well as the messes the federal government had left with them in, Husky had to reduce its budget and say goodbye to hard-working people.

Mr. Speaker, it should not be left to the politicians to get pipelines built. It should be the industry that leads, with our support, as our jobs that these energy groups bring not only add strong communities in our province, but a strong economy to help fund those communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan government acknowledges investments of oil and gas industry from our communities that sustain our communities and help the quality of life for our residents. Many of our companies have community investment policies that is focused on supporting the communities in which they operate and live in, supporting charities, local groups, investing in infrastructure.

Many other companies in the energy sector have also made an impact on the economy and have helped with, improved many of our communities across the province. Furthermore the oil and gas sector still remains an important driver, not only of our province's economy but also of the nation's economy. Oil has been the world's major commercial energy source for many decades and will maintain this leading role for many more years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot stress the importance of the energy sector and how our government continues to support them. It is important that we are committed to working to further pipeline development opportunities enabling access of shipment of their product.

Pipelines only benefit the oil and gas sector, contributing significantly to the strengths of Saskatchewan and Canada's economy. Pipelines bring important benefits to Canada. Not only do they deliver energy safely, but they also deliver prosperity across our country. There is job creation but also energy independence and tax revenues that fund important programs across Canada.

The design and construction of pipelines ensure pipeline integrity starts with proper design and construction with safeguards and protective equipment. Another beneficial feature of pipeline transport is that they have a small surface footprint. Mr. Speaker, pipeline routes are chosen to minimize potential impact and above-ground warning signs clearly making pipeline right-of-ways to avoid human interaction with the pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, what is not being spoken about very often but deserves the spotlight is the potential that pipelines have to combat climate change. Emissions are rising and, as a government, we recognize the urgent need to change the way our industry operates so that we cannot preserve natural resources and lower emissions.

What is very clear is that the carbon tax will not reduce emissions. Even though the members opposite and their federal leader, Jagmeet Singh, advocates and supports the tax, it will not help our emissions lower and will not help industry become more sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, if Canada had pipelines running from east to west, we could get our products to market. It would also help us with our reliance on coal, also could eliminate importing coal from these other countries altogether. We would also be cutting out getting resources from countries whose environmental consensus is very different than ours. Canada, especially Saskatchewan, has an opportunity here to be global leaders in both combatting climate change and making sure that the products get to market. By having pipelines, we could not only lower emissions but also open ourselves up to newer markets. And why not? Where is the holdup? It is a shame that our federal leaders are so against this.

These energy highways move billions of barrels of liquid petroleum products every year. The pipelines are needed as they are safe, efficient means of transporting large quantities of crude oil and natural gas across our country. Large-scale transportation of natural gas by tanker truck or rail is not financially feasible and adds to emissions. Mr. Speaker, pipelines are more cost effective than alternate transportation, and they require significantly less energy to operate and have a much lower carbon footprint.

The oil and gas industry last year supported upwards of 34,000 employees directly and even more indirectly, including construction alone. Pipelines moved petroleum products through refineries and to customers across our country.

The oil and gas sector contributes to Canada's gross domestic market, GDP, and fees to the government. In addition, the industry generates significant profits for SaskPower and SaskEnergy. The industry contributes billions over the years in taxes, royalties, and fees to the government. This revenue helps to support public pensions, provide health care, as well as helping building infrastructure of our schools, hospitals, housing, and highways.

Mr. Speaker, Canada has been unable to build any new major pipelines despite increased oil production over the recent years. Pipeline projects like the Trans Mountain Expansion and the Keystone XL pipeline are unable to move forward due to delays and weak leadership from our federal government. Big projects such as Northern Gateway and Energy East have been cancelled. 2.6 billion of foregone revenues lost last year cost the energy sector, hurting the industry. This pipeline shortage affects the energy sector and drives down prices of Canadian oil, and it affects the Canadian economy.

Mr. Speaker, the future of pipelines is uncertain due to regulatory delays and political interference. Mr. Speaker, the energy is fundamental to our personal and the economy's well-being. Canadians rely on natural gas and products made from crude oil to meet more than two-thirds of their energy needs each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan has strong support for TC Energy, formerly TransCanada Energy; and Energy East projects, Enbridge's Northern Gateway and Line 3 project, and the Trans Mountain Expansion project. All provide Western Canada's crude oil producers important access to new and expanding markets in the United States and Asia. This provides market pricing benefits to Saskatchewan's crude oil, even when Saskatchewan crude oil is not exported.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government will be destroying the energy sector if they do not stand up for the industry. Without pipelines to get our oil across the country, Saskatchewan must sell nearly all of our oil to one market — the United States — for sometimes as low as half the price. Meanwhile more than half of the oil in Atlantic Canada comes from foreign sources.

Pipelines are a safe, efficient, and reliable method of transporting our energy products. They have worked hard to create a stable, predictable, reliable environment. They are great stewards of the land, leaving it in better condition than they have found it.

Mr. Speaker, Trans Mountain construction will also benefit workers in Regina. Evraz North America has a contract providing approximately 2500 metric tonnes of pipe and construction. Much of that pipe will be constructed at the Evraz plant.

[12:30]

Mr. Speaker, our government will be standing up for the jobs of our oil and gas industry and continue to press the federal government to support the oil and gas sector and take action to get the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion built.

The Trans Mountain pipeline will help reinforce local businesses and economies across this province. It is vital that we help them in the energy, oil, and gas sectors to enable them to transport and continue to work together to ensure to make it better. The energy sector also contributes to our local rinks, pools, schools, hospitals, and many more. The energy sector have helped communities with funding and upgrading equipment and manpower allowing communities to achieve goals otherwise not possible without their support and help.

Mr. Speaker, the oil and gas sector attracts other businesses to invest in our communities, such as restaurants and hotels. Our economy will continue to see financial effects because we cannot deliver our products to international markets, securing better prices. Mr. Speaker, the sooner the government agrees to allow additional pipeline capacity to be built, the better off Saskatchewan will be beyond Saskatchewan. Canada's lack of pipeline capacity should not only be borne by the oil-producing provinces, as it impacts the country as a whole. The social and economic benefits of our natural resources extend well beyond the Western provinces.

If the new government is truly concerned with our best interests of our country and bringing Canada together, Mr. Speaker, their top priority would be building and expanding pipelines.

Mr. Speaker, I support our government to call upon the federal government to be supportive and co-operative in getting pipelines built and to have legislation stop creating even more regulatory uncertainty in Canada's energy sector, which is hurting the energy companies and Canadian workers. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion. That's it. I move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Cypress Hills has moved to adjourn debate on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Government Deputy House Leader once again.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:33.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Scott Moe
Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor
Minister of Advanced Education
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for Innovation

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis
and Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Environment
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 Responsible for Rural and Remote Health
Minister Responsible for Seniors

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 Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

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

Hon. Greg Ottenbreit
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Security Agency

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Health

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Corrections and Policing
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. Gordon Wyant
Deputy Premier
Minister of Education
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds and
Priority Saskatchewan