

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of residents in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action to ensure that the required level of service in radiology is maintained in the North Central Health District and the priorities of its board be adjusted accordingly.

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

Mr. Speaker, the majority of the signatures to this petition are from Melfort, but they are also from Fairy Glen and Kinistino.

I am pleased to present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to present. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action to ensure the required level of service in radiology is maintained in the North Central Health District and the priorities of its board be adjusted accordingly.

As is in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The communities involved in the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Melfort and Saskatoon. I so present.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition, and these are signed from people from various communities across Saskatchewan. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to put an immediate halt to all investments in foreign countries by all Saskatchewan Crown corporations, and invest Crown corporation profits in Saskatchewan.

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

I so present.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of citizens who are concerned that there is adequate funding to support a radiology service in Melfort.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from of course the community of Melfort, but also Fairy Glen, Gronlid, Ridgedale, St. Brieux, Star City, and Arborfield, Mr. Speaker.

I so present.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today that reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action to ensure the required level of service in radiology is maintained in the North Central Health District and the priorities of its board be adjusted accordingly.

As is in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people that have signed this petition are all from Melfort.

Mr. Boyd: — I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan residents today dealing with the issue of the level of services in the North Central Health District, and the concern that people have in that district about those services.

This petition comes from the Melfort-Tisdale areas of the province, and I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise again today on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to present a petition. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are all from the fine constituency of Arm River, and namely the community of Bethune. I so present.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens of the province concerned about the closure of the Plains hospital. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

And those petitioners signing these today are truly representative of a cross-section of the province, Mr. Speaker, communities of Oxbow, Carlyle, Alameda; we head over to the west side of the province — Abbey, Shackleton, Lancer, Cabri; and east-central area with Punnichy, Govan, Nokomis, and Semans, and also Raymore and Kelliher. I so present.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan with respect to the closure

of the Plains Health Centre:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

And the good citizens who signed these petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from Ituna, Goodeve, Melville, and Kamsack. I so present.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present petitions this morning. The prayer of relief reads as follows:

Your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent its closure, and providing adequate funding so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

Your petitioners this morning come from Lipton and Ituna.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I join with my colleagues here today in bringing forward petitions which now bring it well over the 110,000 presented in people's efforts to stop the closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed the petitions here are from Coronach, Rockglen, and, Mr. Speaker, many others.

The Speaker: — I'll ask one of the pages to remove the exhibit. Order, order.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present petitions on behalf of citizens who are concerned with men and women who have lost spouses in work-related accidents.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to have The Workers' Compensation Board Act amended for the disenfranchised widows and widowers of Saskatchewan whereby their pensions are reinstated and the revoked pensions reimbursed to them retroactively and with interest, as requested by the statement of entitlement presented to the Workers' Compensation Board on October 27, 1997.

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

The signatures today, Mr. Speaker, are all from Regina.

Mr. Goohsen: — Good morning, Mr. Speaker. On this beautiful Friday morning, it is my duty to present the following prayer for relief on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reach necessary agreements with other levels of government to fund the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway in Saskatchewan so that work can begin in 1998, and to set out a time frame for the ultimate completion of the project with or without federal assistance.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These folks all come from the towns, like Moose Jaw and Maple Creek, along the south-west side of the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order a petition regarding the Carrot River hospital presented on May 28 has been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) it is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly on the following matters: the funding of the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway; to save the Plains Health Centre; to halt all investments in foreign countries by Saskatchewan Crown corporations; and to ensure the required level of service in radiology is maintained in the North Central Health District.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Stanger: — Mr. Speaker, it is a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the members of the Assembly, 30 grade 8 students from Turtleford. It isn't often that we get visitors from the north-west, a very important part of the province. I'm so happy to have them here today.

And with them are their teachers: Renee Hammer, Christie Kotzer-Milne; and the chaperons, Rose Lynn Gory, Debbie Rookes, Gene Rindero, Doug Maddaford, and Glen Chambers.

I wish that they have a good tour of the legislature and Regina, and I hope they enjoy their stay. And I will be meeting with you at 10:30 for some drinks and discussion and a photo.

And I'd like the members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome these folks to Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of privilege today to introduce to you and the other members of this legislature, a number of students from a fine, growing community of Osler, Saskatchewan — 36 students in

the east gallery, grades 8 and 9. And I'll be meeting with them afterwards to answer some of the questions they have about the activities they see here today.

And with them they have their teachers, Suzzane Clements, Michelle Lane, and Glen Osmond, and chaperon John Jasnoch. And we're glad to have them here. So would you join with me and give them a real welcome to Regina and to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to introduce to you and to all members, 19 grade 5 and 6 students that are seated in your gallery from Mayfair Central School in Mayfair, Saskatchewan.

And accompanying the Mayfair students are Tammy Jung and Lynn Martin, their teachers; and chaperons Doyle Saccucci, Oliver Lamontagne, Vivian Saccucci, Lorna Buziak, Elaine Woloshyn, Ester Huard, and Heather Buziak.

I will be meeting with this group in about a half an hour and I ask all members here to help me welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well you can tell how excited I am to have 39 grade 8 students from White City School visiting with us this morning. And to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce them. They're seated in the west gallery and they're accompanied by teachers Geof Schick and Joyce Dudley.

I've had an opportunity to tour White City School and I've been there for Optimist bicycle safety days and other fun events. And so I'm very glad they're able to come today to tour and meet with me about 10:30 for a visit.

I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming the group from White City School. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a good friend of mine, Dr. Paul Nandi, who's sitting in the east gallery. And he is an anesthetist and practises in London, England — I'm happy to say, with the national health service in that country, Mr. Speaker.

And also here today in the east gallery is my wife Pauline, who has been visiting me in Regina for the past few days. And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming my friend and my spouse to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'm happy this morning to be able to introduce Mr. Paul Meid who is sitting over here in the government gallery.

Mr. Meid had an illustrious career with one of the better ideas

that the federal government had, which of course was the PFRA (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration) which has brought an awful lot of good to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Meid informed me earlier today that because he was born in Europe and has had a lot of experience in the world, he assures us that in spite of some of the problems that we have here, Canada and Saskatchewan is still the best place to live.

Please welcome Mr. Meid today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Saskatchewan's First Biopharmaceutical Company

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I heard the news announcement earlier this week about a licensing agreement between U of S (University of Saskatchewan) technologies and Alviva Biopharmaceutical with great interest because, Mr. Speaker, I have a bit of a personal connection with the principals of Alviva.

Mr. Speaker, in the '70s I was very privileged to work with Dr. Alan Boulton when I was a young training psychologist and he was working on fantastic neuropsychiatric research. And I used to watch in amazement at his dedication and diligence as he put the rats through their paces and had all sorts of arcane machines that he was titrating various biochemical compounds.

And I am so pleased that his research has now resulted in this new Saskatchewan-first company that will allow them to be able to actually reap the rewards of their research rather than having it exploited by multi-national drug companies.

On a personal note, I have witnessed first-hand in my own family the tragedy caused by neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's so I'm very pleased to congratulate Alan Boulton, a fine Saskatchewan researcher.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatoon Eastview By-election

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there have been some interesting developments in the Saskatoon Eastview by-election. It seems that NDP (New Democratic Party) candidate Judy Junor has taken her vows and become a nun, or it would seem so from the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's mass mail-out — to its entire membership that is.

Allow me to share the letter to the Assembly that the SFL (Saskatchewan Federation of Labour) sent out:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As you may be aware, former Sun president Judy Junor has won the NDP nomination in Saskatoon Eastview. We write to request that you contribute to our political action fund so that we can assist in getting Judy elected.

As well, if you know anyone who lives in Saskatoon

Eastview, please encourage them to vote for Judy. If at all possible, include your friends and other union members in Saskatoon to get out and work for Judy in the by-election.

Every vote counts.

And it's signed, "In solidarity" by the Co-Chairs of the SFL political education committee. In conclusion the letter states, "Let's do everything we can to get Sister Judy elected."

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — The SFL is sending out the campaign requests for the NDP on SFL letterhead. Goodness sakes, Mr. Speaker, you'd think the union, after funnelling a chunk of their people's money through mandatory union dues into NDP campaign chests, would have done enough already.

We believe that the proper way to do this, Mr. Speaker, is through a democratic unionism Bill and we'll be presenting that later today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Agriculture in Lloydminster Area

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Agriculture is the second largest industry . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Now the hon. member for Lloydminster has been recognized to make a statement and the Chair has not been able to hear a single word. And I will ask for the cooperation of — order — I'll ask for the cooperation of all members to allow the member for Lloydminster to be heard.

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Agriculture is the second largest industry in the Lloydminster area. It has put over a billion dollars into our local economy and will continue to remain a strong indicator of the economic strength of the area.

Agriculture in the Lloydminster area is primarily situated in the black soil zone with dark brown soils to the south and grey soils to the north. This enables area farmers to plant a diverse range of crops which include wheat, barley, oats, and rye. In addition, some oilseeds such as canola and flax, are planted. Field peas, lentils, grasses, and legumes can also be found in the area.

The Lloydminster area is known as Canada's canola capital, with Canada's largest crushing plant. ADM (Archer Daniels Midland) Agra Industries alone contributes \$300 million to the local economy. A \$5 million, high through-put elevator and a 2.1 million livestock marketing centre are also in my constituency.

Along with the diversification in the crops planted in the area come a strong ranching sector. One-quarter of all the cattle raised in both Alberta and Saskatchewan are raised within a 160-kilometre radius of Lloydminster. In addition one can find elk, bison, llama, emu, ostrich, wild boar, miniature horse, highland cattle, and Jacob's sheep.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate and thank . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The hon. member's time has expired.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Proposed Emergency Motion on Plains Health Centre

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, by way of this member's statement I am giving notice that today, immediately after question period, I will introduce on behalf of the Liberal caucus an emergency motion in our efforts to stop the closure of the Plains hospital.

Mr. Speaker, procedurally this can only happen with the cooperation of the Tories by not ringing the bells, and I ask for their support.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Call for Free Vote on Plains Health Centre

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the bells continued to ring yesterday, and the bells continued to ring because this NDP government refused to allow a free vote on the future of the Plains.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP refuse to take responsibility for their decimation of the health care system. If the Premier believes he has made the right decision, why won't he allow a free vote on the future of the Plains?

It makes you wonder, Mr. Speaker, if he doesn't trust his back-bench MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly). Does he think that, given the opportunity, they would stand up for their constituents? It is clear from the outcry across southern Saskatchewan that people don't think the Premier has made the right decision. They have come here today to deliver that message and, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier doesn't listen to that message today, rest assured that they will deliver it again in 1999 when they cast their vote for the Saskatchewan Party.

Mr. Speaker, people have come here today to fight for the Plains. They have come here in hopes that the Premier will allow a free vote. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier disappoint these people or will he allow a free vote on this issue today? Thank you very much.

University Convocations

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week over a three-day period 2,460 degrees, diplomas, and certificates were granted to students of the University of Saskatchewan. Among the degrees was an honorary Doctor of Laws degree to Sharon Capeling-Alakija, a Moose Jaw native whose distinguished career has her now with the United Nations as the executive coordinator of all UN (United Nations) volunteers.

This morning and this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, 1,237 students will convocate at my Alma Mater, the University of Regina. Among the recipients will be the Sandra Schmirler curling rink, and first nations painter, Allen Sapp — both receiving honorary degrees.

Mr. Speaker, the University of Saskatchewan has been

graduating distinguished Canadians for close to a century — such as John Diefenbaker, Carlyle King, Emmett Hall, and our Premier. By contrast, Mr. Speaker, this is the 24th spring convocation for the University of Regina, which has already given us Pamela Wallin as well as our Minister of Highways and Transportation and our Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, a century in Saskatchewan means a venerable tradition. A quarter of a century suggests approaching maturity. Each of our two universities have their own strengths and their individual characteristics — academic and cultural traits that will be further enriched by the future accomplishments of these graduates.

I'm sure all members will wish we could congratulate all graduates at the two universities. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Watrous and Arm River Hockey Players Draft Picks for Western Hockey League

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge the outstanding athletic ability of two young men from the Watrous constituency and one from the Arm River Constituency.

During the 1998 Western Hockey League bantam draft, Connor Lowe, a defenceman from Meacham, Saskatchewan was chosen by the Calgary Hitmen as their top pick and 12th overall. Nathan Paetsch from Leroy, another defenceman, was chosen fifth overall by the Moose Jaw Warriors. And I'm sure the member from Arm River will join me in congratulating defenceman Brendon Vanthuyne from Liberty as he was picked by the Swift Current Broncos in the third round.

These three solid defencemen I'm sure will be welcome additions to their respective teams. The draft concentrated on first-year bantam players, that is 1983-born players who will be eligible to play in a full season in the 1999-2000 campaign.

The WHL (Western Hockey League) is recognized as one of the top junior leagues in North America, if not the world, and many of their players move on to the ranks of the NHL (National Hockey League).

I would like all people to help me congratulate Connor, Nathan, and Brendon on their achievements. I know their families and their communities are very proud of these young men and we wish them all the best in their future careers. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Filibuster in Legislature

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a democracy we agree to settle our disputes through reasoned debate rather than through force. It is therefore sad when a group has so little confidence in the strength of its arguments that it resorts to either force or filibuster. A filibuster is nothing more than an attempt to compensate with noise what one lacks in wit.

I'm proud of our Liberal members and our leader who have succeeded in highlighting for the people of Saskatchewan the issue of the closure of our hospitals, whether in Carrot River or Rabbit Lake or Regina. I'm proud that we have been able to ask the questions in the Channel Lake inquiry that need to be answered.

My colleagues and I are prepared to meet the NDP on its own ground and we are confident that the strength of our arguments will prevail in any reasoned debate. We are saddened that the Saskatchewan Party has no such faith in its ability to probe and question and debate the issues of the day and must therefore resort to shutting down this House at a cost of 28,000 a day.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Liberal caucus will not abandon the struggle as the Tories have. Mr. Speaker, I warn the NDP in the words of Sir Winston Churchill: we will fight them on the beaches; we will fight them in the air; we will fight them on the land — but we will not ring the bells.

Mr. Speaker, we will . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The hon. member's time has expired.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Free Vote on Closure of Plains Health Centre

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier or the Deputy Premier. Mr. Deputy Premier, right now people are gathering in front of the legislature to protest your decision to close the Plains hospital. They are here because they know the only people with the power to reverse this terrible decision are the 57 members of this Assembly. That can only happen if you allow your members to vote freely and represent the wishes of their constituents.

Mr. Deputy Premier, could you do that today? You could allow a free vote to happen and we could save the Plains hospital and then you could march out on the steps of the legislature and announce that the Plains hospital will remain open. Will you do that, Mr. Deputy Premier, or are you going to ignore Saskatchewan people once again?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this vote has already occurred in this legislature. On December 17 there was a clear question on the Plains that was unequivocal. It was a recorded vote. Every member in the legislature stood up and said yes or no. So the vote has already occurred.

What then is this about? It's about competition between these two parties over ownership of this issue. And the hostages in the competition are the voters of Saskatchewan. I'd like to quote from the *Leader-Post*:

So the Saskatchewan Party has taken the legislature hostage — at a cost of \$56,000 and counting — for what? . . . to force a vote that had already been held . . .

Quite clearly, this has everything to do with politics and absolutely nothing to do with keeping the Plains Health Centre open.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't know why they're so afraid of a free vote.

Madam Minister has indicated yesterday that all the members agree with this decision. We don't really believe that. We still believe that somewhere in the benches on the NDP side there are people who are willing to stand up for the people they represent. Somewhere over there, there are members who still know how to listen and who could vote to save the Plains if they were given the chance.

Madam Minister, Mr. Deputy Premier, if you're so sure your members support the closure of the Plains hospital, why not allow a free vote? What are you afraid of?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite, that's already been answered. We have voted in this legislature, on December 17; every member has recorded their vote. And since then we have had debates in this legislature in which our members have said what we are saying to the people of Saskatchewan. The Plains decision was a difficult decision, but it was the right decision if you believe in quality health care.

So we are being accountable to the voters of this province for our action. What you folks have to do is you now have to be accountable to the people of this province for your action. And your action is to take petty politics to the point that you're stalling the business of this province and costing taxpayers \$28,000 a day. You're accountable too. You have to explain that to the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House Leader said she was open to the idea of another vote on the future of the Plains hospital. She said, and I quote, "They haven't asked us."

Of course that isn't true. We've been asking for a vote for four weeks now. But nevertheless she went on to say, "If they . . . want another vote on private members' day, that's a different issue. We wouldn't have any problem . . ."

Well that's exactly what we're asking for here today. Will you allow a vote on the future of the Plains hospital this Tuesday as you have promised? And will you allow that vote to be a free vote?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite. My point was a simple one. These people do not have to be using this tactic to make their point on the Plains hospital. They have the capacity on private members' day to bring forward any resolution that they want, and to debate it freely

here as it has been debated several times since December. But I go back to my original point.

My point is on December 17 a vote occurred in which members' opinions were registered. We have had debate since in which we have defended our decision. What they have to defend and again I'll go back to quoting the *Leader Post*, is their view of taxpayers' dollars. For their own partisan, petty, political reasons, they are holding up the legislature and costing taxpayers \$28,000 a day. I quote again:

The Saskatchewan Party has spent most of this session decrying the wasteful expenditure of tax dollars to cover up the government's political misadventures. Sadly, the Saskatchewan Party is now guilty of the same offence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that the member opposite, the minister, understands what the concept of the free vote is. According to Dr. Lewis Draper, the NDP believe that a free vote occurs when the Health minister or the Premier walk in and give the marching orders to the cabinet. The decision then is whether or not you want to stay or leave. That's their definition of a free vote.

If the minister is indicating that next Tuesday we will be able to have a free vote in this legislature, we would ask her to rise today and indicate to this Assembly that next Tuesday on private members' day there will be the opportunity to vote freely on the issue of the closure of the Plains hospital.

Will she stand today and indicate that for the record that there will be a free vote next Tuesday?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of doing that. The position of the government . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now the question has been asked and I had no trouble hearing the question being put, and I am having some difficulty being able to hear the answer being provided. I ask for the cooperation of all members.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — I have no intention of doing that. My point to the opposition is simple. Tuesday, private members' have the freedom to put on the order paper debates and debates will occur.

And I go back to my central point. The legislature has voted on this. It has been a recorded vote. There have been members speaking on this defending our decision.

What these people have to face, is this is about petty politics. It's about competition with those folks. It's not about the principle of quality health care. It's not about the principle of the Plains hospital.

And what they have to do is they have to explain to the people of this province why they are holding up the people's business at a cost of \$28,000 when this decision has been made.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Synchrotron Project in Saskatoon

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Economic Development. Madam Minister, much of your economic strategy for Saskatoon over the next few years centres around the Synchrotron project.

Now the future of that project appears to be in question if the federal government doesn't come through with \$14.5 million by Monday. A story in today's *Star-Phoenix* says, at this point the political clout of Ralph Goodale appears to be key as to whether the money will be found by Monday. Madam Minister, if this project depends on Ralph Goodale, it's in a lot of trouble.

Madam Minister, what steps are you taking to ensure the future of the Synchrotron project? Is the federal government going to come through with its share of funding by the Monday deadline?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I welcome this question. Saskatchewan people should be very proud of the fact that in a national competition the University of Saskatchewan was chosen as Canada's only site for the Synchrotron.

We have been working as a government with the collaborative committee headed by Bernard Michel representing the private sector. We've been working with the federal government. I've met with Mr. Manley; I've met several times with Ralph Goodale. We are very confident that this project will come to fruition, that the application will be ready for the CFI (Canadian Foundation for Innovation), and that in about a year from now the final decision will be made and this project will go ahead.

But what I do want to say to the member opposite is, we wish you would join with us and take some pride in Saskatchewan accomplishments like this. We should all be very proud that the major scientific investment of this decade is going to be made in the province of Saskatchewan because of our record on innovation and research and development.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are proud of Saskatchewan, but we're also concerned when we see some of the messes that your side of this House has got us into in the last little while.

Madam Minister, this project is expected to create 80 to 200 high-tech, high-paid jobs in Saskatoon. And we want to see those there. And now its future appears to be in doubt because of a lack of commitment for the federal government. It appears to be another example of the federal Liberals abandoning Saskatchewan.

Madam Minister, you built a lot of your economic strategy for Saskatoon around this important project. Not only is it expected to create new jobs, but current jobs at the accelerator lab at the U of S could be in jeopardy if this project is kiboshed by Ottawa.

Madam Minister, how confident are you that the Synchrotron

Project will go ahead? And what plans do you have to deal with the lost jobs if this project is cancelled?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Well first of all, Mr. Speaker, I have no belief that the project is being . . . has been cancelled. I, and other people in this government, have worked very hard at a low-key level — not public; this is not something that's going to be resolved publicly — to bring all of the players onside, working with the collaborative committee, which has been developing support in the private sector, working with key ministers, and the public service in Ottawa.

All I want to say is we are confident that this project will be brought to fruition. We are confident that the federal government will live up to its obligations. And, I return to my central point, what we should all be doing is saying we should be very proud of our scientists in Saskatchewan and the University of Saskatchewan for winning this incredibly prestigious project because it will mean a lot to the future of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hospital Bed Shortage

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker one of the major reasons the Liberals are fighting to save the Plains hospital is because Saskatchewan is in a health bed crisis.

Last week Donald Jones of Coronach had a seizure. He fell, suffered a concussion, and was transported to the Coronach Health Centre by ambulance. His doctor phoned Regina but there were no available beds. So he was sent to Weyburn. From there he was sent on to Bengough and then told to try Regina again.

On the way to Regina the ambulance driver was informed his patient would not be admitted because, you guessed it, Mr. Speaker, no beds available. Finally he was admitted to Assiniboia. From the time of his seizure to his admittance to hospital, nine hours went by — nine hours, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Premier. How can you suggest that there is no bed crisis when people like Donald Jones are bounced around like hot potatoes in your health care system?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to say to the member opposite that I very much am concerned about the issue that he raises with me today in the House. I've had a discussion, Mr. Speaker, with my department, who in turn have had a discussion with the Weyburn health district, or the district of which Weyburn is served . . . (inaudible) . . . served

And I want to say to the member opposite that we will continue to work fully to ensure that we get a full appreciation of what happened on this particular case. Because we, like the member opposite, are concerned that when someone has a particular need within the health care system, is exposed to the kind of distance and travel and not quick decision, it concerns me significantly.

And so I've now heard from the Weyburn health district

who've apologized for the fact that there may have been an issue that could have been dealt with there . . . that have not. I've heard from the district CEO (chief executive officer), and say to the member opposite and to the House that we'll have a full appreciation and understanding and report of what happened in this particular situation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker. If the Premier had the guts, he'd be here today to answer that question.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Now the . . . Order, order, order. The hon. member will recognize immediately of course that he's used language which is not acceptable parliamentary language, and I'll ask him to simply withdraw his remark and then proceed with his question — to withdraw his remark unequivocally.

Mr. McPherson: — I withdraw that remark, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the family of Donald Jones say they find what he went through unacceptable. And they say they're disgusted that anyone should be turned away in Regina. And if there's any apologizing to do, it should be the minister. These Regina cases have been raised too many times for you to let on this is a single case.

Mr. Premier, the family of Mr. Jones have a pair of questions for you. How can you justify using lives as your margin of error? And what has to happen before you will listen to what the people need in the way of proper health care?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I've already indicated to the member opposite that in this particular case we do not take it lightly. And I've given the commitment to the member opposite, given the commitment to the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, that we would ensure that there's a full analysis and appreciation of what's happened here. But I say to the member opposite that in the case of this individual, just on periphery, there was a bed available for him at the end of the day — there was a bed available.

But I say to the member opposite, say this to the member opposite, on the daily basis there are 35,000 people that are served by the health system — 35,000 people. And when the member opposite says that we're not doing anything about health care and ensuring that we have quality health care services in the province, let's look at the kinds of injections and innovations that have happened in the province in the last short little while.

I say to the member opposite that there have been 200 additional nurses that have been added to the system just recently; a brand-new CT scanner in Prince Albert, a new renal dialysis program for rural Saskatchewan, an increase in ambulatory services across the province, a new physician services in the province — a new contract that's just been signed.

And we'll continue to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that we enrich the quality of health services in the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Care in Southern Saskatchewan

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, we have received a number of letters and calls in recent days from physicians and other health care workers who wish they could attend today's rally where there's people at this moment gathering out front. But because of the shortage of front-line staff, I'm sure the Premier and his government will understand why many could not be here today.

Dr. Julian Raphael of Shaunavon states, and I quote:

Mr. Premier, this is not a bricks and mortar issue. The buck rests with you. You are accountable. You have the influence to reverse this madness.

Carolee Zorn, a nurse from rural Saskatchewan, has concerns about access to the General Hospital. She says her biggest fear is hearing the following, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

If the patient had only gotten here just a few minutes sooner. All we needed was a few more minutes.

Mr. Premier, who wants to take that chance? Who wants to take that kind of responsibility? Mr. Premier, do you want that responsibility to fall on your shoulders?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite and the people of Saskatchewan, particularly southern Saskatchewan . . . because the member opposite raises the issue about the value and quality of service in Regina into the future for the Regina residents and those of us who live in the southern part of the province.

He and I . . . and we share exactly the same objectives. And that's to ensure that we have the best quality health care services that serve us out of this community — for Regina and all of southern Saskatchewan. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we have enriched and enhanced our participation and contribution to the Regina health care district.

We've added, Mr. Speaker, \$84 million — which now has grown to \$94 million — for services and equipment for Regina and for people in Saskatchewan, which means that there's going to be improved equipment and specialty services for Regina, which we talked about, and are going to ensure that's in place.

We're going to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that there are going to be no additional bed losses in this community. We're going to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that there'll be no specialist losses in this community serving southern Saskatchewan. And with the doctors, we've got a contract today that will see more itinerant services practising in rural Saskatchewan.

We have a plan, not only for Regina and southern Saskatchewan, but for the province. And we're going to continue to advance that in the best interests of the people across the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Closure of Plains Health Centre

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, people are assembling outside the legislature today hoping that this NDP government will come to its senses and cancel plans to close the Plains hospital.

For the past few months the Liberal opposition has staged Save the Plains meetings across southern Saskatchewan. We've attracted more than 3,000 people to these meetings. Another 8,000 people have sent letters of support and more than 100,000 people now have signed petitions opposing the closure.

Mr. Premier, you like to paint yourself as a saviour of medicare. You say you're trying to carry on the work of the late Tommy Douglas. Everyone knows Mr. Douglas was never afraid to address a crowd. Will you be addressing the rally here today or are you going to continue to hide behind your minister?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, first and foremost I want to say that I have been now at almost all of the rallies across the province and have had an opportunity to speak. And I appreciate the opportunity that the Liberal Party has provided for me to stand up and be able to share the views of our government in terms of the direction that health care is moving in.

And I say to the member opposite that there is no question in my mind that the people who've attended the public rallies around the province have a sincere commitment to ensure that quality health services are sustained in Regina and for southern Saskatchewan. And I share the same view. Which is not the same reason for why, in particular, the Liberal Party has been part of that campaign. Clearly a large part of their association with it is strictly political.

And I say to the members opposite that like you, like you, we're concerned about the future of health care in Saskatchewan and are making an inserted and assured investment that people in Regina are well served, that people in southern Saskatchewan are well served — by more physicians, by more nurses, by no additional bed closures to Regina.

And I say to the member opposite, that's the commitment that this government makes — to ensure that the people of Regina and southern Saskatchewan continue to be well served by the best health care service anywhere in the country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've had the opportunity to review the motion that the third party wishes to put forward today in emergency debate. And I know that the House Leader, I'm sure, has also had that opportunity.

I want to indicate that we agree with the context of the motion in terms of the call for a moratorium on the closure of the Plains hospital, and the kinds of clauses that it does contain are very relevant to the issue of the day.

And, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Economic Development, the Government House Leader, would be, is that is she prepared to allow this emergency debate to take place

today based on this question, and will she allow a vote today to take place in this legislature on the resolution that will be put forward by the third party?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, what I would say to the member opposite is, this vote has occurred. December 17 we had a vote on a very clear question. It was a recorded vote. Every person stood up, recorded their vote. We have had debates since then, private members' debates. They have the option in the future to have private members' debates on this issue if they so wish.

From our point of view, this decision is made. It was a difficult decision. We sincerely believe that the health care system in southern Saskatchewan will be better off in the long term because of this decision. We're prepared to defend that to the people of this province. What they have to defend, as well, are their actions, to the people of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, recognizing the fact that the Minister of Health has attended our meetings, and with all due respect to him, but like it or not, the Premier is the only person who has the power to save the Plains at this late stage.

Mr. Premier, we've asked and asked you to reconsider your decision, and to this point you've refused. If you truly believe that closing the Plains is the right decision, do you have the courage to attend today's rally and face the people. Will you tell them to their face why you refuse to listen to them and tell them why you are allowing Tommy Douglas's dream to die?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite first and foremost that I will be addressing the crowds that are there today. I'll be addressing the crowd.

But the member opposite should also have an appreciation on a daily basis that this question's been raised in the House. On a number of occasions the Premier has stood and the Premier has responded on the issue of the future of the Plains.

And the Premier has unequivocally stated on every occasion that he's spoken that the decision on the Plains Health Centre was made in 1993; that the decision was made by the district health board after long deliberation and consultation; that the Premier supports the democratic process of decision making in this province and the decision of the closure of the Plains Health Centre, of the moving of those services from the Plains to the other two facilities — it's been made and that it's final.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Before proceeding, the Chair would like to ask leave of the House to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I would ask for order of members of the

House, please.

I would like to introduce to members of the Assembly, 50 grade 3 and 4 students from Sunningdale School in Moose Jaw in my constituency that are visiting us here today and are seated at this moment in the Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Kathy Sudom-Young and Mrs. Linda Kerr, both of whom have been here with students from Sunningdale School before.

I'm looking forward to — after their departure from the gallery in just a moment, after their taking a tour of the building, I understand — to joining with them for photos and refreshments and a visit and opportunity to answer their questions. And with the assistance of the Deputy Speaker, I'm sure that I'll be able to join with them in doing that.

This has always been an enthusiastic school for visits to the legislature, and I ask all hon. members to join me in extending a welcome to these students from Sunningdale School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 218 — The Saskatchewan Right to Work Act

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill, Bill No. 218, The Saskatchewan Right to Work Act.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a first time and ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 219 — The Democratic Unionism Act

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill, Bill No. 219, The Democratic Unionism Act be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a first time and ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 463 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Duck Lake)

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 463, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act for the town of Duck Lake.

The division bells rang from 10:55 a.m. until 11:05 a.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Krawetz	Bjornerud	Draude
Gantefoer	Goohsen	

Nays — 17

Flavel	Van Mulligen	MacKinnon
Shillington	Johnson	Goulet

Lautermilch	Calvert	Trew
Scott	Cline	Kasperski
Ward	Murray	Langford
Murrell	Thomson	

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the members. I would like the members in the House at this moment to welcome eight individuals — ten actually — from the mental health clinic in Moose Jaw. They are here to tour the legislature, to watch some of the proceedings in the House, to further understand our democratic process in Saskatchewan and Canada, and, I expect, to see some other sites in Regina while they're here.

Mr. Speaker, they're accompanied today by Fairlie Godin and Susan Howard-McLaren. And I'd invite all members to welcome them to the legislature this morning.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 464 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Duff)

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 464, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Duff).

The division bells rang from 11:07 a.m. until 11:17 a.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Krawetz	Bjornerud	Toth
Draude	Gantefoer	

Nays — 19

Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Shillington
Mitchell	Johnson	Lautermilch
Calvert	Trew	Lorje
Scott	Cline	Hamilton
Stanger	Jess	Kasperski
Ward	Langford	Murrell
Thomson		

Bill No. 465 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Dundurn)

Ms. Draude: — I move first reading of a Bill No. 465, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Town of Dundurn).

The division bells rang from 11:20 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Krawetz	Bjornerud	Toth
Boyd	Draude	Gantefoer

Nays — 17

Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Lingenfelter
Shillington	Mitchell	Johnson
Lautermilch	Lorje	Scott
Cline	Stanger	Jess
Kasperski	Ward	Murray
Langford	Murrell	

Bill No. 466 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Duval)

Ms. Draude: — I move first reading of the Bill 466, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Duval).

The division bells rang from 11:32 a.m. until 11:42 a.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Krawetz	Bjornerud	Boyd
Draude	Gantefoer	Hepner

Nays — 17

Van Mulligen	Shillington	Mitchell
Johnson	Lautermilch	Lorje
Scott	Cline	Hamilton
Stanger	Jess	Kasperski
Ward	Murray	Langford
Murrell	Thomson	

Bill No. 467 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Dysart)

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 467, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Dysart).

The division bells rang from 11:44 a.m. until 11:54 a.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Krawetz	Bjornerud	Boyd
Gantefoer	Hepner	

Nays — 18

Van Mulligen	Lingenfelter	Shillington
Mitchell	Johnson	Lautermilch
Lorje	Scott	Cline
Hamilton	Stanger	Jess
Kasperski	Ward	Murray
Langford	Murrell	Thomson

Bill No. 473 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Edam)

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to move first reading of Bill No. 473, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Edam).

The division bells rang from 11:57 a.m. until 12:07 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Krawetz	Bjornerud	Toth
Boyd	Gantefoer	Hepner

Nays — 18

Van Mulligen	Shillington	Mitchell
Johnson	Calvert	Trew
Lorje	Scott	Cline
Hamilton	Stanger	Jess
Kasperski	Ward	Murray
Langford	Murrell	Thomson

Bill No. 474 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Edenwold)

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to move first reading of Bill No. 474, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Edenwold).

The division bells rang from 12:09 p.m. until 12:19 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recording division.

Yeas — 6

Krawetz	Bjornerud	Toth
Boyd	Gantefoer	Hepner

Nays — 19

Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Lingenfelter
Mitchell	Johnson	Calvert
Trew	Lorje	Scott
Cline	Hamilton	Stanger
Jess	Kasperski	Ward
Murray	Langford	Murrell
Thomson		

Bill no. 475 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Elbow)

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to move first reading of Bill No. 475, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Elbow).

The division bells rang from 12:21 p.m. until 12:31 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Krawetz	Bjornerud	Toth
Boyd	Gantfoer	Heppner

Nays — 20

Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Lingenfelter
Shillington	Mitchell	Tchorzewski
Johnson	Lautermilch	Lorje
Scott	Cline	Serby
Hamilton	Stanger	Jess
Kasperski	Ward	Langford
Murrell	Thomson	

**Bill No. 476 — The Channel Lake Indemnification Act
(Village of Elfros)**

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to move first reading of Bill No. 476, The Channel Lake Indemnification Act (Village of Elfros).

The division bells rang from 12:33 p.m. until 12:43 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 6

Krawetz	Bjornerud	Toth
Boyd	Gantfoer	Heppner

Nays — 20

Van Mulligen	Lingenfelter	Shillington
Mitchell	Tchorzewski	Johnson
Lautermilch	Calvert	Trew
Lorje	Scott	Cline
Serby	Hamilton	Stanger
Jess	Kasperski	Murray
Langford	Murrell	

The Speaker: — And with wishes to all members that they'll have an enjoyable Saskatchewan weekend at home and with your families and constituents, this House now stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

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