



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

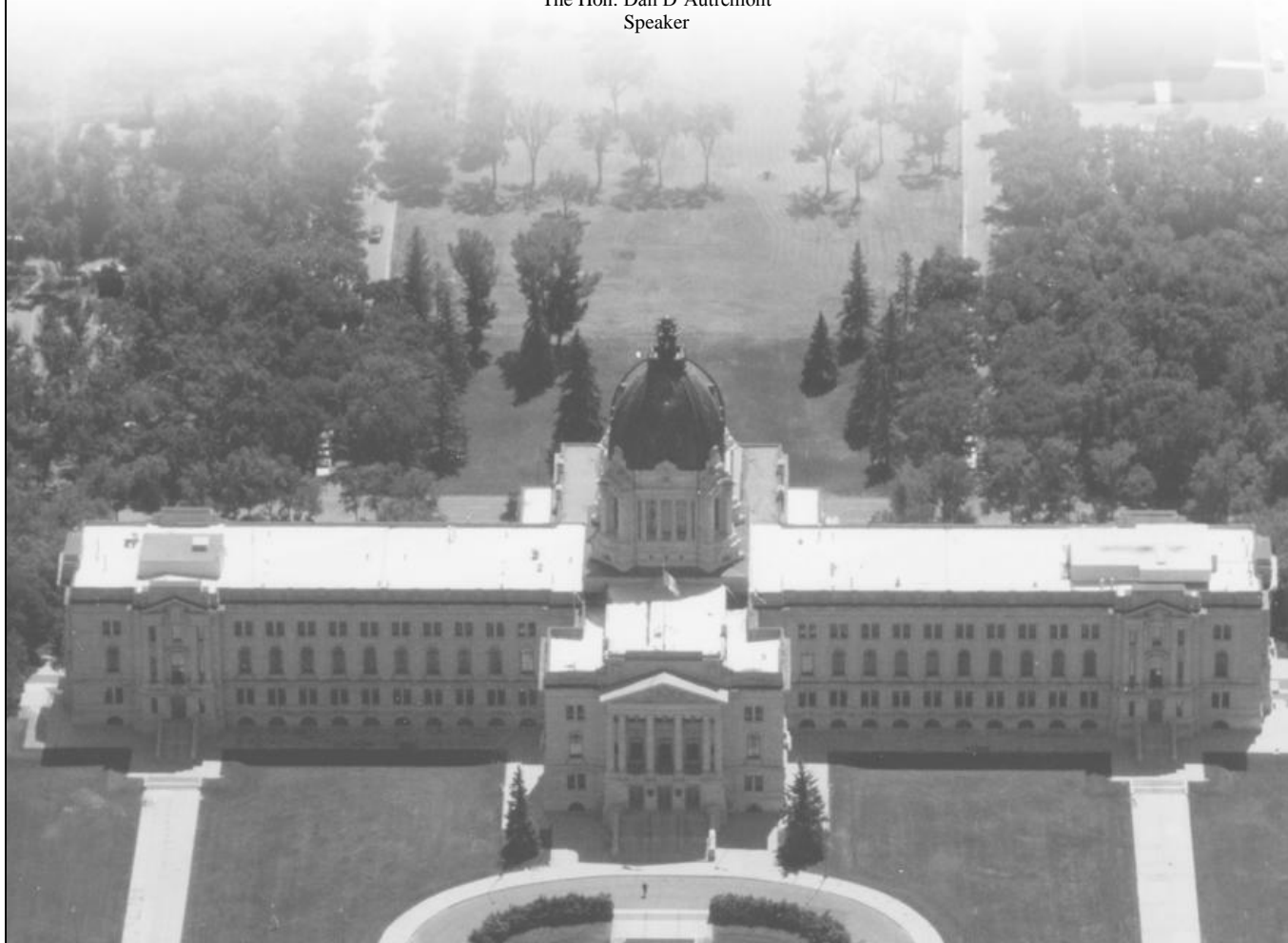
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this morning to introduce a number of individuals that are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. And from time to time, all members of the Assembly have the opportunity to introduce and welcome their constituency assistants. And all members know the important role that constituency assistants play in serving the people of our province, in serving our constituents, and allowing MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] to do their jobs, especially when we're here in Regina.

And today in the Speaker's gallery we have a number of constituency assistants from the opposition, working for opposition MLAs, Mr. Speaker. Deborah Aitken is here. Donna Rederburg is here. Erica Spracklin, Gloria Patrick, Vanessa Hyggen, and Colleen Smith. And I want to say, on behalf of all of the MLAs that these constituency assistants help out and keep in line on a daily basis, I want to say a huge thank you for the role that you serve, for the ways that you help us as MLAs, but most importantly for the ways that you help our constituents. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these CAs [constituency assistant] to the Assembly today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and all members of the House, I'd like to point out some guests in your gallery from the Saskatchewan Manufacturing Council, Mr. Derek Lothian and Ms. Melissa Fiacco. They are here to help celebrate Manufacturing Week here in Saskatchewan. Derek is based out of Ottawa, but he's from Saskatchewan originally and gets back on a very frequent basis. And of course Melissa is from Regina here as many people would know.

The manufacturing sector in Saskatchewan employs over 27,000 people and ships some \$14 billion worth of goods around the world each year. I've seen first hand, the very high regard internationally that the manufacturers of our province get. There's been some talk about eggs in baskets and I don't think it's too much of a stretch to say that these are the people that make the baskets and deliver the eggs around the world.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the minister opposite and welcome these representatives from the manufacturing industry, from the Manufacturing Council here in Saskatchewan. Certainly we're incredibly proud of the investments, the ingenuity of Saskatchewan manufacturers providing world-class value-added product to our world. And I thank Ms. Fiacco and Mr. Lothian for their leadership in representing Saskatchewan,

Saskatchewan's business interest. So thank you for being here today and I'm very pleased to welcome you to your Assembly.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you 37 grade 12 students from Winston Knoll Collegiate here in Regina. They're accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Scott McKillop and Mr. Brodie Evenson. So if everyone would please kindly welcome them to their Assembly. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater supports for anti-bullying. We know bullying causes serious harm and we know that other provinces have brought forward legislation and various tools and programs that show swift and effective government action. But we also know this government is not doing enough to create safe spaces in our schools for gay and transgendered students or students bullied because of their sexual identity. And this government must act so that students have simple, easy-to-understand information about gay-straight alliances, GSAs, in their schools, how to form a GSA, and who they should talk to in order to form a GSA today. We know that bullying is a human rights issue, one of safety and inclusion. I would 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:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to take immediate and meaningful action to protect Saskatchewan's children from bullying because the lives of young people are at stake and this government must do more to protect our youth.

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

Mr. Speaker, I do so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of very concerned residents from across southern Saskatchewan as it relates to the unacceptable potential closure of the emergency room at the Pasqua Hospital here in Regina. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to ensure our capital city has two 24-hour emergency rooms.

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

These are signed by concerned residents from Regina, Earl Grey, and Southey. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of Far Reserve Road. This road is used as the main road into the regional landfill which is operated by the tripartite agreement between the communities of La Ronge, Air Ronge, and Lac La Ronge Indian Band. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to pave Far Reserve Road, which has not been given the proper resources by this government. The dust on the road is causing respiratory problems for elders and community members. It also creates poor visibility for drivers. This is a safety issue, in that we have students walking along the side of a very dusty road to school. This road has a high volume of traffic in that it is the only road to the regional dump.

It is signed by many Saskatchewan residents. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of replacing the gym at Sacred Heart Community School. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that the gym at Sacred Heart Community School in north central Regina is now quite literally falling apart, has been closed indefinitely, and is no longer safe for students or staff. There is a temporary solution that has been arrived at, Mr. Speaker, in refurbishing the old sanctuary at the old Sacred Heart Church, but that is hardly a satisfactory solution for the long haul.

The petitioners point out that the gym at Sacred Heart has played an important role in the school's efforts to become a literacy leader, having served as a gathering place for the very successful reading assemblies and reading nights. They point out that the Sacred Heart Community School is the largest school in north central Regina, with 450-plus students, 75 per cent of whom are First Nations and Métis. And they point out that as a matter of basic fairness and common sense that Sacred Heart Community School needs a gym.

Mr. Speaker, in the prayer that reads as follows:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Sask Party provincial government to immediately commit to the replacement of the gymnasium of Sacred Heart Community School.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Celebration of Hanukkah

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday at sundown was the beginning of the celebration of Hanukkah, the eight-day Jewish festival of lights. Jewish families in Saskatchewan, throughout Canada, and around the world gathered with loved ones to light the first branch of their menorahs, to enjoy one another's company, to eat some latkes and sufganiyot, and to celebrate their rich heritage and their tremendous faith.

The Hanukkah story is the earliest recorded struggle for religious freedom. It's an incredible story of the Maccabees who rose up, liberated their people from oppression, rededicated their holy temple, and witnessed a miracle when they discovered that the oil left in the temple, which was enough to last just one night, actually lasted for eight full days. So the Hanukkah story is about the miracles that come to those with great courage and faith, about peace and perseverance, and about light shining through darkness.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join with me in sending warm greetings to all those celebrating Hanukkah. To all Jewish families in Saskatchewan, I wish peace, joy, health, and happiness throughout the celebration of Hanukkah and throughout the coming year. Happy Hanukkah. Chag Sameach.

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

Saskatchewan Employers on Top 100 List

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the 2014 list of Canada's top 100 employers has been released and Saskatchewan firms have a large presence on that list.

Three potash miners have been recognized which includes Agrium, Mosaic Company, and Potash Corp. Two Saskatchewan IT [information technology] companies have made the list as well: ISM [Information Systems Management Corporation] Canada and Solvera Solutions. And two Crown corporations, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] and SaskTel, were also recognized.

Bob Lane, who is the Solvera Solutions director of people care, stated one of his firm's main tools is a strong focus on the people in the organization, which translated into good service and ultimately profitability.

Mr. Speaker, several other employers on the list aren't based in Saskatchewan but have a substantial presence in the province and I would like to recognize them as well. They include Aecon, Royal Bank of Canada, CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce], KPMG, and Loblaw Companies Ltd.

The 2014 list was overseen by Mediacorp and evaluations were based on physical workplace; work and social atmospheres; health, financial, and family benefits; community involvement; vacation and time off.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in celebrating the great Saskatchewan employers who have been recognized on this list. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

November Supports a Good Cause

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the joy of friends, family, and neighbours, the razors will be shaving off the moustaches in only two short days. That's right. The end of November brings the end of Movember. But the fun had by everyone, as jokes have been made at the expense of our hairy upper lips, is all for a good cause, Mr. Speaker. Movember fundraising for prostate cancer and mental health is about supporting those among us who face these health challenges.

Prostate cancer, the most commonly diagnosed cancer among men, is an estimated 25 per cent of all new cancer cases. In Canada alone, more than 23,000 men are estimated to be diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2013 alone. That means Movember is not only about growing of the best 'stache around or as in my case, Mr. Speaker, the worst 'stache around. It's also about reminding the men in our lives to get checked.

Movember has also raised awareness about testicular cancers and mental health, and I'm proud to say that our team, Team Jack, Saskatchewan NDP [New Democratic Party], has been able to raise some funds for the cause. And I salute as well the efforts of members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, it's not too late for people to reach deep into those pockets and make a donation to the cause because the good news is in just two more sleeps those moustaches will see their end. Let's work together to detect, diagnose, and cure prostate and testicular cancers and address the serious issues of men's mental health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Moose Jaw Educator Honoured

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm immensely proud to rise today and share with my colleagues details about an individual in my constituency who has once again received well-deserved recognition for her work with children. Lucille Gilliland, the executive director of the Southwest Day Care & Early Learning Centre, recently received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education.

Lucille travelled to Ottawa and received this award directly from Prime Minister Harper for her facility's dedication to working with children, including those with special needs and those who are medically fragile. This award was given to only 60 early childhood educators and is truly suited to Lucille, who has an exceptional history of working with children. In 2003-2004 Lucille also received the Prime Minister's Certificate of Achievement at a regional level and now has been recognized nationally as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am very familiar with the Southwest Day Care & Early Learning Centre, having toured their facility as well as having met with Lucille, her staff, children, and the parents on a few occasions. Twenty-five per cent of the children there are high needs, and they make amazing strides due to the detailed

care, love, and support they receive.

Mr. Speaker, Lucille and her staff have a unique level of expertise with their ability to work with our kids, and I'd like my colleagues to join me in congratulating Lucille on receiving this much-deserved recognition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Collaborative Emergency Centres in Rural Communities

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government is following through on its commitment to improve access to health services for residents in rural areas.

As of today, a new collaborative emergency centre is now open and operating in the community of Shaunavon. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Cypress Hills health region, community partners, health providers, and STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] for this outstanding initiative. Through the CEC [collaborative emergency centre], residents in Shaunavon and surrounding areas will have access to extended hours of primary health care and 24-7 emergency care.

Collaborative emergency centres use an innovative approach to health care delivery. They provide access to stable, reliable health services for patients, particularly in rural areas. CECs are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Mr. Speaker, earlier this fall we marked a milestone for our province when Saskatchewan's first CEC was launched in Maidstone. In the coming months, several other communities will open CECs. Mr. Speaker, our government is pleased to support this very important initiative. We believe CECs will improve access and stability of health care services in a way that's unprecedented for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to patient- and family-centred care. We'll continue to put the patient first in all that we do in the health care system, and we'll continue our efforts to provide the best quality care for people in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw North.

Improving Access to Housing

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Wednesday I, along with construction company representatives, city dignitaries, and ministry officials, gathered in the snow to do a sod-turning and the announcement of a new housing project in Moose Jaw. This housing project is the first of 91 new social housing units being built in Moose Jaw, with construction of the first 36 units expected to be completed by next fall.

Mr. Speaker, with the unprecedented growth of Saskatchewan, along with a growing economy there are challenges. One of these challenges is meeting the need for safe and affordable housing. In our growth plan, plan for growth, our government committed to addressing housing challenges. We're meeting those challenges by transitioning close to 300 older single-family housing units in Regina, Prince Albert, and

Moose Jaw, and reinvesting the proceeds into new housing.

Our government is also investing \$18 million into the Moose Jaw housing project. We're saving taxpayers' money by creating more affordable, modern, and energy-efficient social housing. By doing so, this will make housing less expensive for the tenants. Current renters will also have the first option to purchase the home they are now renting if they so choose.

Mr. Speaker, it's a win-win situation. The Moose Jaw housing project supports our government's goal of improving housing affordability and availability right across this great province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Growth Plans

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all session we've been calling on the NDP to release their so-called smart growth plan, and they still haven't released it. But earlier this week, the NDP member for Athabasca admitted what their plan would mean for Saskatchewan. He said, and I quote, "Smart growth from the NDP perspective means . . . you're going to have some great years . . ." He also said, and I quote, ". . . you also have to anticipate some tougher years and some really bad years."

Let me repeat that, Mr. Speaker. According to the NDP, smart growth means some really bad years. And he's absolutely right. When they were in government, the NDP had lots of growth plans and they had a lot of really bad years.

Mr. Speaker, in 2000 the NDP released *Partnership for Prosperity*; Saskatchewan lost 8,000 people. In 2001, Mr. Speaker, the NDP released *Partnership for Prosperity Two*; Saskatchewan lost 5,000 people. In 2002 the NDP released *A Strategy for Rural Saskatchewan*; we lost 2,500 people. In 2005 the NDP released *The Saskatchewan Action Plan for the Economy*; Saskatchewan lost another 4,000 people. Mr. Speaker, the member for Athabasca is absolutely correct. A smart growth plan from the NDP perspective means some really bad years.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, those years are behind us. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has grown by 100,000 people in six years. We can't afford any more smart growth plans from the NDP.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Emergency Medical Services in Regina

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe just moments ago the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region put out a news release indicating that the Pasqua emergency room would indeed be open this evening, Mr. Speaker. I believe the news release was put out in the morning prompted by media reports, Mr. Speaker, to that effect. If this is the case, Mr. Speaker, of course we are relieved that this is occurring, as are people in

Regina and area because it's simply unacceptable that our capital city would only have one emergency room available 24 hours a day.

So my question to the Premier: could he please provide an update to the House with respect to what will be occurring at Pasqua ER [emergency room] this evening? Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] will be releasing a full press release here, perhaps even as we're meeting here this morning, and if not, then immediately after proceedings here in the legislature.

But I can report to the Assembly today that the RQHR emergency department physicians have agreed to work additional shifts, Mr. Speaker, until a reliable and effective locum service is available for the operation, obviously at the Pasqua ER.

Mr. Speaker, I can also report to this House that we now have a deal, we have an agreement with ER docs across the province. They have ratified an offer. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of the people involved to solve this problem today so the ER indeed will remain open regular hours, 24 hours. I want to thank the senior management at RQHR. I want to thank the ministry, Mr. Speaker, and I want to acknowledge the Minister of Health, who has made it his top priority to deal with this issue.

Mr. Speaker, there's an interesting comparison here. When the ER in our Royal University Hospital was in crisis in 2004, here's what *The StarPhoenix* reported: "Saskatchewan Health Minister John Nilson [I'm quoting] told reporters on Thursday that the region was responsible for settling the dispute with the emergency room doctors and that he wouldn't get involved," Mr. Speaker. We take a different approach on this side of the House.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we've talked about, looked at the potential closure of the Pasqua ER, a reason identified by emergency room physicians, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that there were not enough ER docs, that they were working longer hours and that it wasn't sustainable.

So my question: with the approach that has been arrived at in order to allow for the Pasqua ER to stay open this evening, are more ER physicians actually being added to the mix, or is the agreement simply for the existing ER doctors to work longer? Because what we've seen, the cause for the problem, the cause for the possible closure of the ER was because the doctors were stretched too thin and there weren't enough of them. So are more ER physicians being added with the agreement that has been reached?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Mr. Speaker, the doctors currently working in ER have agreed to provide full coverage for the ER.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note what we're confirming today is that we're going to continue to work on locum coverage because, Mr. Speaker, what we've been saying all along is indeed the case, that there is a shortage of ER docs right across this country. The shortage has not changed in the last 24 hours obviously. And so the answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question is we're seeing coverage provided by the existing complement today. We're working now on locum coverage, Mr. Speaker.

But here's something more important that we've been doing since 2007 when we were first elected. When we were first elected, we inherited a situation where this province was training only two ER doc residency positions or providing those positions. We're now up to eight, Mr. Speaker, up to eight in just those number of years. That's an important development. Additionally we're now training two additional Royal College ER doc residencies in the province of Saskatchewan, something that's never happened before.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, if it's the same number of ER docs providing service tonight, the same pool of about 20 physicians providing service tonight, which has been the case for the months leading up to the crisis that we've seen at the Pasqua ER, obviously increasing the supply of the ER physicians is what is needed to have a sustainable solution in this case.

The Premier has mentioned the prospect and plans under way for locum relief physicians with respect to ER coverage. So what is the timeline with respect to securing these locum docs to cover the ERs so that we have a solution that is at least more sustainable than what we have seen to date?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the date that we're looking at is 15 December. We have until that time to identify locum coverage.

Mr. Speaker, I would point out that this is not significantly different than from what happens actually every year around Christmas where obviously there's going to be scheduling difficulties, those difficulties exacerbated by the shortage that we've already discussed. But around about the middle of December, we're working for locum coverage. Until that point, then we will be working with, the region will be working with the doctors to ensure appropriate coverage through the season, through the Christmas season, the holiday season.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that the agreement that now has been ratified by the ER docs ensures that we are compensating at a rate comparable to the province of Alberta, I believe comparable to the province of British Columbia and also Ontario, and a bit a better frankly than some other provinces. So will we be recruiting? Yes, we already are. We have been now for a number of years through the new Saskdocs agency that's resulted in 300 more doctors practising in the province than when we were first elected. And additionally, Mr. Speaker, we're training more ER docs, as we pointed out, providing dollars to be ready for growth, providing dollars to

fund more residency training for ER docs. And that's going to continue under our government as well, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the locums, how many relief physicians are being pursued in order to complement the ER docs that are already stretched thin, and from what jurisdictions are discussions occurring with respect to where the locum physicians are coming from? Are these other cities within the province or are these from other provinces or is this an international recruitment?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are looking outside of the borders of Saskatchewan, working with other medical agencies, associations that do have locum pools as well as outside of the country, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the out-of-country, we also have the ability through a special licence to be able to license locums, emergency room locums. So that is an option that we're looking at. As well Saskdocs has reached out to the Alberta Medical Association that has quite a significant emergency physician locum pool, Mr. Speaker. We've already made contact with a number of physicians that have expressed interest to coming to Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is the route that the region is pursuing, knowing that while a contingency plan had been put in place, Mr. Speaker, all during this time we had not given up on the Pasqua. And we're very pleased with today's announcement.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Premier's response he talked about a December 15th date as a target for having locum physicians secured for the emergency rooms. Of course over the Christmas season, it's a very important time to ensure that the ERs do remain open.

In the past few days as we've talked about this crisis situation and the potential closure of the Pasqua ER, it has been very difficult, Mr. Speaker, to receive timely information from the government on this problem, on this huge concern. Unless questions were being asked on the floor of the Assembly, information was not readily available. My question to the Premier: will he commit today to do a better job of keeping Saskatchewan people and keeping the media in the loop, Mr. Speaker, especially as we approach the December 15th date and the Christmas season?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the Leader of the Opposition, several weeks ago when the region was first putting in place a contingency plan, they released that to the public, not as a result of any question asked in this House, Mr. Speaker, but in the sake of public safety and public awareness and public notification, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as we've been describing over the last number of days, the plan has been evolving as they've been working on

the contingency, Mr. Speaker. And through the government and through the health region, we have done our best to communicate these changes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the region will be notifying the public, as they have this morning with a full news release now that we can confirm, Mr. Speaker, that the emergency room will remain open at the Pasqua 24-7 so that the city of Regina will have two fully functioning emergency rooms 24-7. And we will continue to inform the public of this situation going on into the future, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As locums are pursued in order to secure coverage for the ERs, the December 15th date is coming and not that far away, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Premier: can he guarantee that the Pasqua ER will remain open over the Christmas season?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, what the region is now going to be doing is working to secure locums that can be brought into the province, into the city of Regina in a very short matter of time, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the region will also ensure that those locums are able to practise under existing physicians here within the city before going out and taking a shift on their own, Mr. Speaker. That's why this window of two weeks is a pretty important time, Mr. Speaker, to identify those numbers.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region is able to extend services to the 15th, Mr. Speaker. And I think, with a lot of hard work that we've seen over the last number of weeks by the region and by the ministry and this government, Mr. Speaker, and the emergency room doctors, Mr. Speaker, we'll be working very hard to ensure that we can continue services beyond the 15th.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it's important that this government is not just simply punting the issue down the road. So to the Premier: can he guarantee, can he guarantee that the Pasqua ER will remain open after December 15th?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a pretty rich question coming from members opposite. Because when they faced ER hospital rooms in crisis, ERs in crisis around this province, what was their response?

In 2004 when the Royal University ER was in crisis, here's what the then NDP Health minister had to say as reported in *The StarPhoenix*, and I quote: "Saskatchewan Health Minister John Nilson told reporters on Thursday [and there he is right over there] that the region was responsible for settling the dispute with the emergency room doctors and that he wouldn't get involved," Mr. Speaker.

Here's why I am very hopeful, very encouraged that beyond the 15th, that on a permanent basis, Pasqua ER will be opened 24-7, Mr. Speaker. The reason I'm hopeful is that this minister is very much involved. This government is involved, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to make, we're going to continue to make this particular situation and health care in general a top priority of the Government of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last few days as this government has scrambled to try to address this crisis, Mr. Speaker, we have seen poor communication with the general public. And without questions, Mr. Speaker, without pushing of this government, the information has not been readily available.

Mr. Speaker, it's also other health care professionals who have been concerned about the approach that this government has taken with addressing this crisis. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses said, "It would help if nurses were included in the conversation of plans because what we're finding is that we're being told what's happening rather than being involved in the conversation at the front end."

My question to the Premier: why is it that the nurses have not been involved in addressing this crisis that we have been dealing with?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, they were involved. They were involved and they have already been involved this morning as well, as a result of the agreement that's been in place.

And so, Mr. Speaker, now we say to the Leader of the Opposition again, let's make sure we're dealing with facts on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. Because notwithstanding the comments that he's quoted, the minister's informed me that nurses indeed were involved up until today's events and developments and then even earlier this morning.

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

Public-Private Partnerships and Provision of Schools

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to private P3 [public-private partnership] school schemes, we've shared real and wide-ranging concerns from school board members, community groups, auditors, the tax federation, the construction industry, parents, and teachers. Those concerns have been arrogantly brushed off by that government. Now all the opposition parties in Alberta — the Wildrose, the Liberals, the NDP — have come together to fight against that government's P3 school scheme.

This week the Leader of the Official Opposition in Alberta, Danielle Smith, said, "... taxpayers are going to end up paying much more for these projects because they are debt financed by private companies." What's the minister's response to that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The ministry's response is, quite shocking that the NDP keep quoting the Wildrose party from Alberta. That's my response, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's a typical opposition, I guess perhaps in Alberta. We certainly see it in Saskatchewan. Any time we see growth and a government taking action to address that growth, Mr. Speaker, we see them oppose it. We see them beg and read petitions for schools, and when the government builds schools and commits to schools, they oppose it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know that in Alberta they have seen great savings. They've seen savings in bundle number one. They've learned from them. Bundle number one, they've learned. And they have a stronger bundle on the second bundle, on the third bundle, Mr. Speaker. They are going forward because they have seen real savings, Mr. Speaker.

And talking to the Minister of Education in Alberta, they have saved millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, and it would be only the NDP that would be against that here in Saskatchewan. We're going to move forward. We're going to deal with the growth here in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, again we see here today more brushing off of real concerns from across the entire political spectrum, across community, and across business interests, Mr. Speaker. The minister always likes to point to Alberta as the model for his P3 school scheme and holds it up as some sort of shining example, although in that province the province is up in arms, including school boards, the tax federation, the construction industry, parents, community groups, and yes, all opposition parties.

Alberta opposition leader Danielle Smith also had this to say, "All around, these . . . deals are absolutely the wrong way to go." How does the minister respond to this statement, and why is this government ramming forward with a scheme seen by so many as absolutely the wrong way to go?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we know that parents and students have seen some of the growth issues and some of the crowding issues that we see in especially some of our urban schools in Saskatoon, Regina, Martensville, and Warman. Mr. Speaker, we know that parents have seen it. We know that teachers have seen it. We know that the school boards have seen it. In fact Prairie Spirit School Division, Mr. Speaker, is in favour of this moving forward. They know we need these schools, not only in Saskatoon, not only in Martensville and Warman, but also here in Regina, Mr. Speaker.

It would be only the NDP that has a record of closing hundreds of schools, Mr. Speaker, that would oppose a party and a government that is building schools, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker, for the people of this province. And most would know, if they'd been watching the debate, we've been calling for new schools to be built for years in this province, Mr. Speaker. That's not the question.

But people aren't gaining confidence in this government's scheme, Mr. Speaker. In fact the more the people of Saskatchewan hear and learn about this government's P3 school scheme, the less it makes sense. They've learned from the experiences of other jurisdictions that P3 schools cost more. They forfeit community control, and they delay getting shovels in the ground. Simply, P3 schools have too many risks and are too costly. They don't make sense.

My question to the minister: why is he unwilling to show some decency to Saskatchewan people and shine a light on his P3 school scheme and support our call for upfront, independent accountability and transparency?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, it would only be the NDP that would claim they're building new schools when, year after year after year, we saw population decline and student decline within our system, Mr. Speaker.

And the NDP are claiming that they were the saviours of the education system. That is not the case. We have quote after quote, whether it's Janice MacKinnon, whether it's the politicians in Manitoba of the same stripe that are completely in favour. In fact, Mr. Speaker, even their famous leader in Ottawa, Mr. Mulcair, is in favour of P3s. It's only the NDP across the way that's opposed to growth and opposed to dealing with the issues, Mr. Speaker.

This government is dealing with the issues. This government is getting schools built, Mr. Speaker. We aren't going to listen to the NDP that just want to go back to the dark old days of decline. We're building for growth. We're ready for growth, and our education system will be too.

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

SaskPower Rates and Investment in Infrastructure

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that public debt is supposed to increase a total 1.3 billion since March, and most of that new borrowing is for SaskPower. People are asking why. Why are huge rate increases needed, up to 40 per cent? And how much of those rate increases are going towards slick advertisements aggressively running on all sorts of different media across the province? And let's not forget that another rate increase will hit hard on ratepayers, just to pay for the cost overruns at Boundary dam.

To the minister: when one adds up the costs of these ads and the cost overruns at Boundary dam, what will be the total pocketbook hit to ratepayers for SaskPower?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question, particularly coming from this member, who when asked in the rotunda whether she supported the fact that SaskPower was reinvesting \$9.8 billion in infrastructure, she said yes, she certainly does support it.

The province of Saskatchewan is under incredible growth we are seeing across the province right now. We are seeing that the number of hookups at record levels here in Saskatchewan. We're seeing the demand for power at record levels here in Saskatchewan. We're also seeing that \$9.8 billion deficit that was left by the members opposite in terms of infrastructure in SaskPower. So of course we are reinvesting through SaskPower into the infrastructure of our province.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course the minister is skewing what was said. Of course infrastructure's important and that is always something that makes sense, Mr. Speaker. But when we have cost overruns and huge rate increases, we have to really question what's going on.

Yesterday we found out that after only six months after an increase of almost \$1 billion in debt this year alone, we see an additional unbudgeted \$230 million in debt. Mr. Speaker, that's 23 times more than what they allocated to their seniors' care urgent fund, and they spend it like it's candy in a candy store. How could this government budget so poorly while ratepayers have to pay up to 40 per cent rate increases?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, just as an example there are over, there are more power poles in Saskatchewan than there are people. A number of years ago under the NDP, I remember seeing this, they went around the province. They had teams of people from around, I think they were from Alberta. They were contracted, if memory serves, from Alberta. They went around and they checked the soundness, they checked the soundness of those poles. And they checked the soundness of what they called the head mass at the top of the pole. And so they put a big X on them if they failed.

Well the weather over the years wore those Xs off before they replaced the poles. And not only that, I remember the people of Saskatchewan saying when it came to the poles not only . . . They were NDP poles — hollow in the middle and absolutely nothing in the head.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's an interesting response and maybe an entertaining response, but it just shows how little with regard this member and this minister has for the impact that this corporation's decisions are affecting the people of Saskatchewan.

If SaskPower's latest rate increase is approved, it will mean

power rates have gone up 40 per cent under this government. So no wonder people are frustrated when they see SaskPower ads on heavy rotation. We know the \$150 million of cost overruns are not even included in the power rate increase, but we don't know if the cost of this aggressive ad campaign are included.

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: how much is this expensive and aggressive advertising campaign going to cost Saskatchewan ratepayers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, through SaskPower, we are making sure that the people of Saskatchewan know that SaskPower is taking the infrastructure needs across the province very seriously. They want the people of Saskatchewan to be informed that they are growing and they are replacing infrastructure, the very aged infrastructure, that we inherited in Saskatchewan.

There's \$9.8 billion of reinvestment that's going to take place in Saskatchewan over the next number of years. And I'm pleased, I was pleased to learn that the member at one point at least supported that infrastructure reinvestment. There's a cost associated with this. We'll get the information for the member opposite with respect to that.

But the fact remains is that there was a huge infrastructure deficit here in Saskatchewan in SaskPower. SaskPower is undertaking through this government to make those replacements.

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

Emergency Medical Services in Regina

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the earlier exchange in question period when we talked about the Pasqua ER and we talked about the involvement that nurses have had in the planning and in the discussions that occurred, the Premier in one of his responses as I heard it, Mr. Speaker, suggested the nurses have been involved all along in the discussions.

From yesterday's paper, Mr. Speaker, on A3, a quote from Tracy Zambory, president of Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, said, "It would help if nurses were included in the conversation of plans because what we're finding is that we're being told what's happening rather than being involved in the conversation at the front end."

My question to the Premier: why would he suggest that that is . . . that nurses have been involved from the very beginning if in fact the president of the nurses' union is stating otherwise? Who's correct, the president of the nurses' union or the Premier's analysis of the situation?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, over the last, over the past few weeks, there have been many discussions with front-line staff with respect to this particular issue. In fact on the 21st of

November, the SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] local affected was part of the discussions, part of the planning, part of the contingency planning for what has happened. Mr. Speaker, RQHR has certainly reported that nurses were involved. The local executive met who were involved on the 21st of November and have been part of the process since.

Mr. Speaker, part of the reason, part of the reason we're able to provide some good news today is due to the efforts of the region and the minister and the front-line staff that are involved. Mr. Speaker, part of the reason we're able to see shorter times for surgery, shorter wait times for surgery in this province, part of the reason why we've been able to make some successes in health care is because our government has consistently used the proceeds, the dividends of growth to be ready for further growth: to hire 300 more doctors seen practised in the province, or to have them practising here; 1,000 more nurses, Mr. Speaker; \$1 billion in capital, Mr. Speaker, in health care; millions of dollars each and every year for the surgical wait times initiative. Mr. Speaker, this government has made health care a priority.

The reason we've seen an expansion in these things is because this province is growing. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country, Mr. Speaker. We're solidly, and will be on into the future, a have province — record investment, great manufacturing reports. Mr. Speaker, this province is leading the country and because of that, we can ensure quality of life for the residents of the province of Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 125 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)*

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 125, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read for the first time.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I assume the minister moved what was on the order paper because it was impossible to hear. The minister has moved that Bill No. 125, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to order the answers to questions 198 through 209.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered questions 198 through 209 inclusive.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Emergency Medical Services

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks, I will be moving a motion which was a very crucial motion when this was set up on Tuesday because it addresses that this Assembly should condemn the government for its failure to address the urgent health care issues in this province as it relates to Pasqua Hospital. But, Mr. Speaker, the Premier just gave me a reason to stand up here and explain why everybody that I talked to over the last seven days has said, what's going on in this province? The Premier can get up and say the economy's doing well, different things are happening, but our health care system is in disarray.

And, Mr. Speaker, what happens is every Grey Cup event I went to, people recognized me as a former Health minister, and they're saying, what's going on with the health system in this province? Why are seniors not getting proper care? And they would tell me stories about their grandparents, their aunts and uncles, and others. And they're saying something is wrong here because this government has had more money than any government in the history of this province. And the Premier gets up and he makes comments like he just did at the end of this question period, crowing about how things are going here, when there are so many people that are being neglected.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's why the Premier got himself involved in this because he knew, and he was getting the same comments all week. And practically, Mr. Speaker, when the Premier doesn't listen to the public, then that's when there's big trouble. We could see by the red face of the Premier and the Finance minister all week in question period that this was getting to them. And, Mr. Speaker, our motion today is another piece of the public's response to what's happening in this particular situation.

So, Mr. Speaker, when you're marching after the Grey Cup is won on Sunday night, and people walking down the Green Mile are coming up to me and saying, what's going on with our Pasqua Hospital and the emergency room, you know that there is a concern. What happens if there's some kind of an injury here tonight? Where do we go? And I know, Mr. Speaker, that what we will continue to have is this disconnection between what's going on there and what kind of policy decisions they're making. And, Mr. Speaker, emergency room care is a symptom of how they're responding to the . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I know it's getting close to the weekend and people are anxious to get out of here, but please allow the member to present his arguments. I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I talked with people at various of the Christmas receptions that we've been going to this week, the first topic of conversation was, what's going on with the closure of the Pasqua emergency room? You end up talking to media people just in conversation, and they're saying, what's going on here? Why is the government so much bungling what's happening here?

And, Mr. Speaker, I know that the Premier and the Health minister and all the members on that side were getting the same kinds of comments as I was — you know, what's going on here? We've got a booming economy, things are happening well in many, many areas. But there's something wrong with how they're managing what's going on in health care, Mr. Speaker, whether it's the communications issues where we've had to extract information about what was the announcement around Pasqua, to all of the discussions that happened.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we're in a province where we have resources, they need to be used appropriately to meet the needs of the people. We know that there are a whole number of people, especially those people on fixed incomes, who are very concerned about utility rate increases, whether it's SaskPower or SaskTel, SaskEnergy. We know that we have people who are having a great deal of difficulty dealing with their housing issues and the rental issues, and they get concerned when they're put in a corner.

So when this announcement came last week, after we were out of the session, that they were going to close the emergency room at Pasqua Hospital in a week, it was kind of like the final straw for many people who normally wouldn't get too involved in making political comments. And, Mr. Speaker, we have seen the pressure building up all week, and that's why I'm pleased that we've got a temporary resolution.

The Premier and the Health minister would not give us a guarantee past December 15th, and we need to keep pressing them on that particular point. Because, Mr. Speaker, it's part of an overall sense of, well we're going to try to control the costs of our health care system and let other people try to make some decisions to get the whole thing to work; and well we're going to try to see how we can do things in a way that is supposedly leaner, cleaner, with better service. Well here's a situation where we've got a service that the public expects and needs being challenged.

And, Mr. Speaker, the announcement today is important as a step in solving this. But the confidence of the public in the Health minister and in the Premier in managing our health system has suffered a serious blow. Now we in this legislature know that there have been a number of issues where the government has not been very clear on how they're going to manage the situation. And we've raised those issues, whether it's the seniors' care, whether it's providing sort of personal care situations, and whether it's providing services across the

province. But this decision and this announcement around the emergency room at Pasqua Hospital has hit a nerve in the public, and clearly the Premier reacted. We can see him all week, as these questions were being raised, getting more and more agitated.

And I'm not sure exactly what they've done. Now one of the questions here is whether they've provided some more money for this situation or what other accommodations they've made to deal with this particular thing. I think we'll eventually get some of that information, maybe in the third quarter report from the government. But practically what we and what the public wants to know is that they will have the ability to go to the Pasqua emergency and get appropriate treatment.

And so who are the people that were raising questions about this? It was people like young mothers with children, who would end up having to take their child to emergency for breathing problems in the middle of the night. And the sense that they would have to go over to the General and be part of that whole situation, which everybody knows has been overwhelmed in the use of, that scared many, many people. Others have, because of some of their chronic diseases, ended up in the night going to Pasqua emergency room on a relatively regular basis, and they knew the staff there. They knew the people there that could help them deal with some specific problems and keep them out of the hospital, hopefully. And, Mr. Speaker, it's those kinds of people who were all of a sudden confronted with the possibility that there would just be one facility in the province, and it's a facility that they knew was overwhelmed.

It was quite curious to see that the response around what kinds of services were going to be provided in addition at the General when there was only one emergency was one additional staff, and that didn't seem very plausible, along with a number of the other comments that were made.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this government's been here for six years. I think we turned over the reins of the government in 2007 right around the 1st of December, maybe a few days later. And, Mr. Speaker, there are choices that they have made on spending dramatically more money than was available when we were in government, and the public is starting to question those choices. Because government is always about choices. It's about setting priorities and using money where it's going to serve the people. And, Mr. Speaker, there are a whole number of areas where that choosing, or that making of a choice, has been called into question.

We know that there must be pressures on the Finance minister because he's figuring out every way he can to borrow money in the long term and try to have it be hidden away on some of the things that he's doing and the financing. They've been selling off some of the assets to try to balance the books. And we see that announcement yesterday. We know that they're concerned about how the prices of resources are affecting their budget because unfortunately I think we're now pushing up to 30 per cent of the money that we spend on a regular basis in providing the services of the government are coming from one-time resource, non-renewable monies.

[Interjections]

So, Mr. Speaker, I can see that the Minister of Finance is getting a bit excited about this. Because one of the things that's always an interesting challenge in this legislature is when the Minister of Finance gets excited, there's two things that happen. His face gets very red and none of us can hear what we're talking about.

[11:00]

Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Finance will come forward and tell us exactly why he's using a P3 system to build new schools when the public expects open transparency around how we can build schools . . . And, Mr. Speaker, I think that if the minister is borrowing money to build new schools, why doesn't he do it in the cheapest way possible rather than going through some scheme that he won't even tell us what the scheme is?

So, Mr. Speaker, what we're also seeing is that because of how they're running the books, they've cut back 45 million on the budget in health care. And guess what? That's the place where people are saying, why are you cutting money back in health care when my parents or grandparents are not getting care, when the emergency rooms are being threatened, when there's doctors who are wanting to work here and they can't get places and positions in this system?

And so, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately for the Premier and for the government, this decision around the Pasqua emergency room has sent a chill right across the people of southern Saskatchewan. It sent a warning to people right across the province that there are certain basic services which we all assumed would be covered and dealt with in an appropriate fashion, that those services are going to be threatened and that the management of this government is unfortunately not fulfilling what they said, that they were ready to manage growth.

All we are hearing is excuses. We're hearing excuses. And at times when they should be stepping up and saying, look, we haven't managed this appropriately, it's very clear they are pointing all over the place at other people and blaming them for what's going on.

So, Mr. Speaker, when this announcement around the emergency room happened last week after we were out of the legislature, there was a sense of, what's going on here? Who's in charge? What's happening? Why, in an economy that is doing very well, with a government that has lots of money, why are these kinds of announcements being made? And, Mr. Speaker, I think that the Minister of Finance has a lot of explaining to do. We'll get a chance to deal with him when he goes into his budget, but I encourage him as we go forward into the next few months that this former teacher, this former school board member, this former minister of Education, that he should go ahead and tell us completely what he's doing with the P3 system because it maybe will take a lot of questions just like it has around the emergency room . . .

The Speaker: — I would recommend to the member to talk to the subject matter, not something else. You may move your motion now.

Mr. Nilson: — So, Mr. Speaker, my motion is:

That this Assembly condemn the government for its failure to address the urgent health care crisis resulting in the closure of the Pasqua Hospital emergency department from 7:30 p.m. to 8 a.m., leaving just one 24-hour emergency department in our province's capital city.

I so move.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member:

That this Assembly condemns the government for its failure to address the urgent health care crisis resulting in the closure of the Pasqua Hospital emergency department from 7:30 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., leaving just one 24-hour emergency department in our province's capital.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Moose Jaw North.

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start off by saying, what are you talking about? Mr. Speaker, our government holds health care as a priority. How dare they question the integrity of this side of the House, as the government, to handle the health care regards in this province. From a party that had such a dismal record in health care, both in facilities and for the care of the health care providers, how dare they question what we're doing here when they've got such a dismal record, Mr. Speaker. They had the longest wait-list in Canada, the longest wait-list. They had critical shortages of nurses. They had the worst doctor and worst nurse retention rate in the country.

Mr. Speaker, they closed 52 hospitals including the Plains. Why they would close the Plains hospital? At the time it was the newest hospital in Saskatchewan, and they closed it. Well they could have, if they wanted to close a hospital, closed the one that has a very priority real estate value instead of adding on to it, making it one of the most inefficient hospitals in the province with all the connections. But they closed that and went on to make massive renovations in a place that has no parking and is hard to get to.

Mr. Speaker, our government holds health care as a priority. We've reduced surgical wait times with a goal that no one will have to wait longer than 30 . . . three months rather for surgery. We've hired over 800 nurses, led by a hiring mission by the member from Regina Qu'Appelle right after we were elected. The retention rates have improved, and there are more than 300 more doctors practising in Saskatchewan. And they dare to question our record on that. Health care, Mr. Speaker, is a priority of this government.

Historically Saskatchewan had trained two medical, family medicine, emergency medicine positions per year, just two. In 2008 we increased that to four, then in '09-10 to six. And in the '10-11 year, we increased that to eight. That's just one section of the increase in surgical training we did, of this government.

Our government added 40 medical training seats at the College of Medicine. We doubled the medical residency positions. We created Saskdocs to work with regional health authorities for physician recruitment, created an immigration program specifically to facilitate integration of internationally trained

doctors into practice in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we have 91 more doctors because of that initiative.

We've increased the list of countries where we get the recruitment from. We've added 300 new RN [registered nurse] and RPN [registered psychiatric nurse] training seats in the post-secondary institutions, adding 28 operating room nurses training seats this year through the Saskatchewan surgical initiative. How dare they question what we're doing in health care.

Mr. Speaker, our government, health care is a priority. Improvements are continually being made, Mr. Speaker. We go on and try and do better and better every day. We continue to improve the work and the workplace for the health care providers. We've . . . [inaudible] . . . a patient-first priority concept in this province — something that they never looked at, something that they never did. That is why we invested even more in capital projects. We've announced the new psychiatric hospital in North Battleford, the new children's hospital in Saskatoon.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm so proud to talk a little bit about the new hospital in Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, if I could take you back into the spring of 2007, when they were still in government, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Miller, who is very highly regarded as a health care professional in Moose Jaw, in the Five Hills Health Region, addressed the staff at the Moose Jaw Union Hospital and said the two members, the two NDP members, the two NDP cabinet members at that time couldn't convince the Health department and the government to do an addition to the hospital. Mr. Speaker, they wouldn't even give a paint job to the Moose Jaw Hospital when they were in government.

When we took over in 2007, we started . . . And that was one of the priorities that I said in my campaign, that I would work with my colleagues and make this a priority. Mr. Speaker, early in 2009, the government publicly committed to replacing — it wasn't a wing; it was replacing — the regional hospital in Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, I can remember that day. It was a proud day for the people of Moose Jaw when this government said, we are going to replace the Moose Jaw Hospital with a brand new hospital.

This new hospital, Mr. Speaker, has 115 acute care rooms and treatment spaces. This is going to be designed . . . It's the first of its kind to be facilitated through a lean 3P [production preparation process] design. Mr. Speaker, when they started designing this, when they talked about it, they talked about the lean process and the 3P process.

When they started talking, they rented a warehouse to start setting up all of the aspects of this new lean hospital in Moose Jaw. What they did was have professionals from the design concept. They had architects. They had doctors, nurses. They had patients that had come in and help give them advice on this as well as people from the public. What would work best? And they would set it up in this warehouse of the fashion of how the process of bringing patients in would work, where they would stay, how the medication would be given to them in a quick order so that the patients aren't moved from all over the hospital. It's the medical services come to the patient.

Mr. Speaker, when you design a regular hospital, you may have 40 beds in pediatrics. You may have 20 in ICU [intensive care unit], 40 beds in women's health, and so on and so forth. But of those 40 beds in pediatrics, if only 20 of them are used, you've got 20 beds that are of little value to you. With this new design, that doesn't happen. The beds can be rotated throughout wherever the need is, and that's why it's going to be so much more efficient.

All the design has gone into this hospital and it's started construction. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that it's in a spacious area on the north side of Moose Jaw. A lot of design has gone into it, a lot of improvement.

The other thing this government did was change the ratio of payment for the hospital. Going from what they had as a 35/65 split, we lowered the amount so now the government provides 80 per cent of the cost, and the other 20 per cent is brought to you by the local health region. And the city of Moose Jaw, the health region of Five Hills has made a commitment that they will have the money there, and the project is progressing. Right now it's on budget. It's on schedule. It's fully enclosed as winter has approached. The hospital is going to be worked on. All the interior work can be started, and it should be open by I do believe it's 2015 is when we're looking at opening this.

Mr. Speaker, this government cares about health care. This is a big project for the province. And we're doing this all over with health care facilities all over as well as looking after our nursing staff, our medical staff, and all that goes with it. I'm so proud to be sitting on this side where we look at the province as somewhere that is growing, to be looked after rather than closing hospitals and laying off doctors and letting them move out of the province like we saw under the NDP for years, Mr. Speaker.

This is where we're going. This is what we're looking at as far as the future of Saskatchewan. And the Moose Jaw Hospital is a prime example, a shining example of lean, well-constituted, with lots of consultation, transparency from all sides of the public to come in together to put this all together to have a new facility in Moose Jaw and the Five Hills health care.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I would like to make an amendment to the opposition motion:

That the motion be amended to delete the words after the word "Assembly" and the following to be submitted:

recognizing the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region's continued effort to address the situation of emergency department care at the Pasqua Hospital and further supports the government's actions to address the number of doctors in the province over the long term.

Mr. Speaker, this is the amendment to the motion. I'm so proud to present it on behalf of this government. Thank you.

[11:15]

The Speaker: — The member for Moose Jaw North has moved an amendment that reads:

recognizes the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region's continuing efforts to address the situation of emergency department care at the Pasqua Hospital and further supports the government's actions to address the number of doctors in our province over the long term.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I guess a disappointing motion that needs to come forward here today on an issue that's really a huge concern to Saskatchewan people right across our province, certainly in southern Saskatchewan.

The challenge and crisis facing emergency rooms in this province are unacceptable. The potential closure, the planned closure of the Pasqua Hospital here in Regina is nothing short of a massive failure on behalf of this government in meeting the needs of Saskatchewan families.

Now today we understand that there might be a plan that's been put together. Certainly we would commend any officials, any of those individuals that are working to maintain and ensure support and to ensure that that emergency room remains open, because it's absolutely unacceptable for any closure of the Pasqua Hospital's emergency room for southern Saskatchewan.

Now government has been scrambling on this front, on an issue that they've known for months, Mr. Speaker, an issue that they should have seen coming down the pipe but hasn't taken it upon themselves to make this a priority. And it's absolutely incredible and a massive failure of this government to get to this point and to piecemeal together a plan to ensure the emergency room here in Regina at the Pasqua Hospital is able to remain open. But beyond that there's a . . . which I'll continue to speak to about the importance of that emergency room, the unacceptability of any closure of that emergency room here in Regina at the Pasqua Hospital.

But what I find really strange, what I find really strange is that a plan that was put together here today, which we're pleased to see a plan being put together to ensure that that Pasqua Hospital emergency room doesn't close, what's strange is this is an issue that is so critical to the safety and security, peace of mind of Saskatchewan families, that this government takes this crisis — and this crisis isn't over yet — takes this crisis and turns their plan that they've put together into a great big back-slapping, back-patting episode in this Assembly of self-congratulation, political spin, political attack on an issue so important to the people of this province.

Now when this announcement came out last Thursday, this was no surprise to government. Government knew the information. They knew the challenges that were there. And the failure of that government to be able to step up and make this a priority, to provide some peace of mind and security to Saskatchewan residents and Regina residents is incredibly, incredibly disappointing. We know that Saskatchewan . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Premier wants to shout across here. I'll let him. Okay, say what you want to say.

This is an issue. I wanted to hear . . . This is an issue, this is an issue that is of critical importance to the people of this city and of southern Saskatchewan. The Premier can heckle as long as he wants, and the rest of the crew can laugh and guffaw, as I say, Mr. Speaker, but the point of this is, this is an unacceptable crisis in our emergency rooms in this province. The potential closure of the emergency room at the Pasqua Hospital is unacceptable, and that Premier and that government will have known about this for some time.

We've been raising the issues about the pressures in emergency rooms and in health care and in our hospitals, and we will not tolerate to see in our capital city the closure of one of our emergency rooms. Now we welcome a potential plan here today, as late as it is. We welcome that, and we thank any individuals that played a role in bringing together that plan. That's important. But what we're unwilling to do is to enter into the goofiness that we see from members opposite who go on to political attack and go into this self-congratulatory sort of back-patting that we saw here today and that we see here today on an issue that we've been raising day in, day out as the number one priority in this city and in this province.

The lack of this government's attention to deal with the pressures in health care, the shortage of emergency room doctors, the pressures of overcrowding that our hospitals and our emergency rooms are facing are a great disappointment to Saskatchewan people. This is a time of tremendous opportunity in our province, with a booming growth within our population, with a strong economy. And the fact that this government can't secure the important services and supports and peace of mind that Saskatchewan people deserve is nothing short of disappointing. And this needs to become the number one priority for this government. And we see it right across health care. We see the challenges and the crisis in long-term care. We know the pressures and challenges where so many families can't access a family doctor. And now we have the circumstances where families, in facing a crisis, may not be able to access the emergency services that they so deserve and that they need.

And when we think about what this means and when individuals are going and when families are going to an emergency room, they're going there in a state of crisis. They're going there at a moment in their life when seconds matter, when seconds matter. And the kind of stuff we heard from the government this week about shuttling around patients and certain bits of triage . . . And dismissal of the importance of the issue from the Health minister yesterday was completely offside with the reality of how Saskatchewan people view the importance of emergency services.

To not be able to operate the two hospitals we have in our Queen City at a time where they're overcrowded, at a time where they're overcrowded and they can't keep those two emergency rooms open, Mr. Speaker, is, as I say, nothing short of unacceptable. I know that the health care workers have been speaking out, emergency room doctors have spoken out, health professionals have spoken out about the chronic shortage of professionals to fulfill these roles and the chronic understaffing by this government.

And it's interesting as well, Mr. Speaker, to look at the context

of the mid-year report and the actions of this government, Mr. Speaker. That despite a strong economy, despite growth in population, and with the current crisis in emergency rooms here in Regina, the potential closure of the Pasqua Hospital's emergency room, the crisis in long-term care, the failures in education, that what this government's actually choosing to do is to slash tens of millions of dollars directly out of front-line health care, millions out of education. That's wrong-headed, Mr. Speaker. Instead of dealing with the crisis that has been built and that they've . . . had played a role in, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You know, members opposite can shout and heckle, Mr. Speaker, but Saskatchewan people deserve confidence in the emergency rooms that are there to protect their families.

And it's not good enough to have piecemeal communications throughout a week, to see a government that's scrambling because it never should have got to this point. It never should have got to this point. Had this been so important to the Premier, that government, the Health minister months ago, this would have never been the case. Had they listened to the warnings from those that are working on the ground in those emergency rooms, had they listened to patients for interfacing with the emergency rooms, they would have been able to address this. So it's a massive disappointment and represents a massive failure of this government to get to this point.

Certainly when we have the opportunity that we have as a province from an economic perspective, when we have growth within our province, we need to see a government that has the wherewithal to make the critical investments where they matter, and few places matter more than an emergency room in a hospital in our Queen City. And you know, we're getting heckled from one of the members from Regina. I hope that members from Regina, who are elected for Regina, are going to be speaking here today. I hope that the members are going to get up and speak, and I hope they're not going to just shout from their seats. Because it was strange to some extent. So far we've seen the member from Moose Jaw speak. I hope to see that some Regina members will get up and speak to an issue that's critical to this city and that's critical to southern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there's little more important in the life of a community than ensuring the peace of mind for families and people that they can receive emergency services when they need it. At a time when they're going . . . they're in crisis, when seconds matter in the lives of a loved one, a son or a daughter, a mom or a dad, a spouse or a loved one, a grandma or grandpa, a mushom or a kohkom, we need to make sure that those environments, those emergency rooms are open and able to respond with the health professionals in all the services that are required. The fact that we're in the crisis that we see here today is a . . . represents a massive failure of leadership, a massive failure of management on behalf of this government, and we're going to continue to make this a priority to ensure that Saskatchewan people can count on the services that they deserve and that they require.

Now we see a plan that's been put together here today. As I say, we give credit to all those that have played a role in piecing this together and ensuring a provision of supports and services. But as it relates to government, that's not good enough. We need the

confidence for Saskatchewan people that they can access those emergency rooms with the services they need. And that's going to require this government to wake up to the realities on the ground and make the critical investments . . .

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it's a pleasure for myself to join into a debate talking about something that is very important to the constituents of Regina, to people in southwest Saskatchewan, and that's the ER, emergency room, in the Pasqua. And, Mr. Speaker, I think I speak for many people that say, I want to thank the Minister of Health, the hard-working team in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, the ER doctors, everyone that was involved to coming to an agreement to ensure that the emergency room at the Pasqua Hospital will be open for the immediate future.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's interesting that they brought this motion forward, and it was brought forward by the member from Regina Lakeview. I don't know what they promised him to make him stand up for 15 minutes and talk about health care when he did an absolute terrible job as the minister of Health when he was the minister, Mr. Speaker. And I think for him to stand there and talk about all the things that they were going to do — We were going to do this. We were going to do that. We just didn't have the money — Mr. Speaker, it really flies in the face of them. And then saying, oh, we left so much money in the bank account, why didn't you do this? It's because we had economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, especially when it comes to ERs in particular. And I'd like to quote from *The StarPhoenix*, Mr. Speaker: "When the ER in Royal University was in crisis, the NDP passed off the responsibility to health regions." And I quote, Mr. Speaker: "Saskatchewan Health minister, John Nilson, told reporters on Thursday that the region was responsible for settling the disputes with the emergency room doctors and he would not get involved."

Mr. Speaker, and I understand that they're a little upset today, Mr. Speaker. And I think there's only nine people in Saskatchewan that are upset that the Pasqua ER is open. Because, Mr. Speaker, they stand in their spots right there and they talk about how important the ER is, how important the Pasqua ER is to people in Saskatchewan and people in southwest Saskatchewan, and then they stand up and give speeches and talk about how mad they are that that Pasqua ER room is open. So I think there could be a bit of contrition.

You know, they had to have their motion in three days early, and things change, Mr. Speaker. It's kind of a fast-paced world in politics. And things are changing for the better. So why couldn't they just stand up and say, you know what? We don't do it often but congratulations to a government that got the Pasqua emergency room open, and we thank you guys for doing that.

I don't think that would have been too hard from the member from Lakeview or the member from Rosemont to do. It's a fantastic thing that we have care for people in Regina and southwest Saskatchewan. And I think, I know it's not very

common where the opposition say thank you, but this could have been one of those cases.

Mr. Speaker, I know that we're going to have conversations back and forth. And the member from Rosemont hasn't talked enough so he's still trying to talk from his seat. But I think we need to hear of the records of our government and when they were in government because, Mr. Speaker, when . . . And I'm pretty comfortable if the member from Rosemont and Lakeview want to have an election based on health care. I'll have that fight every day, Mr. Speaker, because I'll put our record against their record any day of the week.

And, Mr. Speaker, and I think they get angry when we want to talk about their record. We talk about them closing 52 hospitals across Saskatchewan when they were in government. And I for sure when I'm in Regina want to talk about the closure of the Plains hospital, Mr. Speaker, because when I was knocking on doors — and this just isn't from me, Mr. Speaker — when I was knocking on doors, one out of five doors go, you know what was a really bad idea? Closing that Plains hospital in 1999. And, Mr. Speaker, that's coming from constituents of Regina Walsh Acres. That's coming from people that . . . I think the NDP just thought people were going to forget about the Plains hospital. It's SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] now. I think it always was SIAST actually. That's not the case, Mr. Speaker.

And they want to talk about us not having the job done in health care, and I think that that's something where we're going to have to correct the record right now, Mr. Speaker. And I think records are very important. And the member opposite talked about not consulting nurses, not consulting health care professionals, which last night I had a fantastic talk with a lot of people in the health sciences reception, which was fantastic to talk to front-line workers and see how they feel.

But here's some interesting quotes from SUN, Mr. Speaker. And this isn't a quote from 1986. This is from April 2006: "It's frustrating to see a profession you love so much in the communities you care for be disrespected by your own government." Mr. Speaker, from Rosalee Longmoore on nursing shortages under the NDP: "There's no light at the end of the tunnel unless it's a train. These staffing levels are dangerous."

Mr. Speaker, that's their record: "There's no light at the end of the tunnel unless it's a train." And they're going to come and stand in their spot in this legislature and say we have done nothing for nurses, Mr. Speaker? We've had 1,000 more nurses start working in Saskatchewan since 2007. I think that speaks to our commitment, the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley who went on the nurse recruitment trip, our commitment to bring in nurses and improving health care for people all over our province.

[11:30]

Rosalee Longmoore, president of SUN, said in September 2007, September 26th, "Staggering workloads and excessive overtime are driving our nurses away." And obviously, Mr. Speaker, we saw that in the NDP's nurse recruitment records, Mr. Speaker. Nurses were leaving the province in droves under the then NDP

government.

Mr. Speaker, and I think it's very interesting that they're quiet over there now. They don't want to talk about their record. And I think we saw some very angry people speaking about the Pasqua ER being open, Mr. Speaker. And there's only nine people that are mad about the Pasqua ER being open today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about a few of the things that we've done in emergency care because the member from Rosemont talked about emergency care and when seconds count. And I agree with him on that. When seconds count, emergency care should be there, and that's why we brought STARS to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, probably one of the best emergency care initiatives brought forward in this province, Mr. Speaker. That's when seconds do count. And they looked at bringing in air helicopters a couple of times, and they said it couldn't be done because they didn't need it. And we thought the people of Saskatchewan deserved to have the best medical services available in a timely manner. And I think STARS is one of the great initiatives brought forward by a government that cares about the health care of their people, to make sure that they have timely access to emergency and critical care.

Mr. Speaker, I think we show every year during budget time our investment and how much we care about health care in our province. Over the last six years, we've invested one point . . . \$1 billion in health capital, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's pretty important.

And when we want to talk about hospitals, I think we want to do a compare and contrast between our record and NDP, Mr. Speaker. We build hospitals. They close hospitals. We recruit nurses. They lose nurses. We recruit doctors. They lose doctors. In a nutshell, Mr. Speaker, that's pretty much how our record has played out in the last five, six years. We have STARS. They don't, Mr. Speaker.

And also, Mr. Speaker, we're committed to building a couple more hospitals. My friend from Moose Jaw North talked about the Moose Jaw Hospital coming online, Mr. Speaker. It's very exciting for south Saskatchewan patients. My friend from North Battleford, we're looking at the new psychiatric hospital in North Battleford. That's approximately \$110 million. The new children's hospital in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, which I think was a wonderful initiative brought forth by this government, my friend from Saskatoon Northwest enjoys that. Mr. Speaker, we're committed to a new Plains surgical outpatient centre in Regina.

So speaking about the Plains, Mr. Speaker, I think it will be something that I'd be remiss if I didn't talk about it a couple more minutes, Mr. Speaker. And they want to talk about southern Saskatchewan's need for emergency care. Well that was one of the reasons the Plains hospital was built, Mr. Speaker, to create access coming in from Estevan, from Weyburn, Mr. Speaker. That was a jewel of a hospital. There was first-class care coming in, Mr. Speaker. And I think that they don't realize how much that hurt southern Saskatchewan, rural Saskatchewan . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They didn't care. That's right, Mr. Speaker. I think almost they cared more about the Plains Hotel shutting down than the Plains hospital, Mr. Speaker.

And I think when it comes to it, Mr. Speaker, that they closed the Plains hospital strictly based on politics. They wanted to keep a hospital in downtown Regina, and they wanted to keep a hospital at the Pasqua. Politics played a huge role in that decision. I don't think so much good public policy there, Mr. Speaker.

In door knocking in 2011, as I said, the constituents said, you know what's bad public policy? Closing the Plains hospital. And I would wager, I would wager that I'm going to have some more comments on the Plains hospital in the 2016 election, Mr. Speaker. And I think people don't forget bad, bad decisions. And I think that's why the member from Lakeview and the member from Rosemont don't enjoy talking about their record because it's chock full of really bad decisions, Mr. Speaker.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there's a couple more, a couple more numbers I'd like to throw out before my time's done, and that's the opposition's record when it comes to doctor, nurse retention in our country when they were in government, Mr. Speaker. Between 2001 and 2006, the NDP's last five full years in the province, we lost 1,160 total health care workers — 455 RNs and RPNs, 117 physicians, 155 pharmacists, and 95 physiotherapists. Mr. Speaker, that's the record of decline. That's the record of stagnation, Mr. Speaker. And I'm proud to be on the side of a government that has a record of growth, a record of retention, and a record of health care being moved forward. And I'm happy to say that the ER, Pasqua ER is open for business.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's been with a considerable deal of alarm that I've watched the proceedings around the question of the Pasqua emergency room unfold, Mr. Speaker, and I say that from a number of perspectives. This is a service that is provided that benefits the whole of southern Saskatchewan, but something I'm very proud about, in terms of the constituency that I represent here in this legislature, is the fact that it's the home of the Pasqua Hospital.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's not the crisis that is under way in the emergency room at the Pasqua Hospital. This isn't something that's been, you know, acute for weeks. It's not something that's been boiling for months. This is something that you pick different points over the past year, Mr. Speaker, and this has been . . . It's plain that this is a health care facility that's been under crisis.

And I guess I'd take some encouragement from the fact that there's a temporary solution that involves not closing the emergency room. I think the message brought forward today by this government is a vast improvement over what we've seen over the last week where the minimizing that's gone on, the deflecting from the importance of the issue that's gone on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the way that this government seems to point the finger every which other way but in the mirror at themselves in terms of who is in charge as this crisis has unfolded and as it carries on, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And we see further proof of that here today where it seems that it's not so much about patients first, Mr. Speaker, it's about politics first from this government. And you see that in the

reaction from again the guffawing and the backslapping, self-congratulatory party that they've thrown for themselves on the eve of this announcement. And it's a special kind of arrogance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a special kind of arrogance to preside over a crisis and then to declare yourself worthy of congratulations when there's a temporary solution arrived at. It's a special kind of arrogance involved, Mr. Speaker.

So we're glad to see that there is a temporary solution in place that does not involve the partial closure of the emergency room in the Pasqua. We're glad to see that there is at least some semblance of better communication being made to the people of Saskatchewan. But again, Mr. Speaker, if past is indeed prologue, if the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour, what we've seen over the weeks and months preceding this, Mr. Speaker — where the crisis has been referenced in different forums, in different media, and certainly by different of the constituents that I have the privilege to represent in this legislature — the overcrowding that takes place in the emergency room, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's against this backdrop that that government has come forward with a pledge in the growth plan to eliminate emergency wait times, to eliminate emergency room wait times.

And again, Mr. Speaker, you see them come forward with a goal like that and you think, okay are they on a different planet or something? Because the constituents that I talked to that have experience directly with the emergency room at the Pasqua, the family members that I talked to that have direct experience with the emergency room at the Pasqua tell a very different story from the kind of bravado that would seem to be entailed in that goal.

And again if this was something that indicated, you know, they were making real progress towards it, Mr. Speaker, then there's a different speech that comes forward at this moment. But they come forward with a goal like that, and then the next sort of checking-in point in terms of the emergency room — for, you know, one of two emergency rooms in the second largest city in this province, in the capital city of this province — is the fact that they can't keep it open overnight.

They bring it to the brink of this crisis. They preside over this crisis. And again, Mr. Speaker, there's a special kind of arrogance involved in then trying to congratulate themselves for a temporary solution being arrived at. It makes me shake my head, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I can't believe it.

And then in terms of the way that the debate carries over across the way, you hear the member from Walsh Acres, Regina Walsh Acres, who you wonder how he's been serving his constituents in the city of Regina in terms of this crisis unfolding, Mr. Speaker. And you wonder about the fact, that again instead of some kind of spirit of contrition or spirit of, you know, we've obviously gotten something wrong here, or the fact that . . . I think of the old adage that the first, the first step towards solving a problem, Mr. Speaker, is recognizing that there's a problem, and recognizing that if you've got a role to play in that, what is your role in that?

And again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, something we've seen no end of in this Assembly is the way that that government, you know, points the finger every which way but at themselves, in terms of

the people that make the decisions, in terms of the role that the Health minister has to play, in terms of the role that the cabinet has to play, in terms of the role that the Premier has to play, but in terms of the role that MLAs from southern Saskatchewan and MLAs from Regina have to play in this argument.

And that it came to the brink of this, Mr. Speaker, and their response is not one of contrition or recognition that they've made some kind of less than adequate contribution to solving this problem, you know, it's something else, Mr. Speaker. The way that they're laughing and back-patting and congratulating themselves, it really takes a special kind of arrogance.

An Hon. Member: — Why are you so mad?

Mr. McCall: — The Premier heckles from his seat, why am I mad? And I'll tell you why I'm mad, Mr. Speaker. Because this is a government that said they're going to put patients first. This is a government that said they were going to put patients first. And over the last week in particular, Mr. Speaker, in the way that they've chosen to communicate with the public, it's been very plain that it's been politics first, not patients first.

So if I'm mad, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm mad because the people of Saskatchewan deserve that government to keep its word. The people of Saskatchewan, you know, deserve something better than this government coming forward and saying, you know, it's not our fault. It's somebody else's fault.

You know, Harry Truman used to have a sign on his desk that said, the buck stops here." Apparently the Premier's got a sign on his desk that now says, the buck stops somewhere else. You know, something else, Mr. Speaker.

And again the way that this crisis has unfolded and their inability to communicate straight with the people of Saskatchewan . . . One of the first rules of crisis communications, Mr. Speaker, is be available, be clear, and make sure that people have the information that is required by them. And over the past week we've seen this government, you know . . . Last Thursday after the House closes, you know, just before supertime last Thursday is when the final word came out on the then closure plan for the ER

And then we've seen different members of that government add additional bits of information in terms of what the . . . you know, the emergency room is going to close. Well then what's the plan? You know, the people, surely to goodness, have every right to expect that if they can't manage to keep the emergency room open, then they should be able to know what the plan is.

And again, Mr. Speaker, as this situation changes from day to day . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And I hear the Health minister congratulating himself from his desk. You know, it was just yesterday in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, just yesterday in this Assembly where the Health minister's response to this, again reminiscent of the response made around concerns being brought forward around seniors' care where that Health minister said, "It may not have as much of an impact as one may think, Mr. Speaker . . ." It may not have as much of an impact as one might think, Mr. Speaker. From yesterday's *Hansard*.

[11:45]

And again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the deflection, in terms of the buck passing that goes on with that government, and now the way that we see them congratulating themselves when they arrive at a temporary solution, having presided over the crisis, Mr. Speaker, it's a special kind of arrogance that has them doing that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My hope is that in the days forward they pay attention to the people like Tracy Zambory, the president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, who's raised very serious concerns about the way that this government has so badly handled this file.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I'd hope that they'd remember all of the good speech they've given themselves about putting patients first. Because when you look at how the handling of this has unfolded, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty plain that it wasn't patients first. It's pretty plain that it was politics first.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's a true honour for me to enter in this debate here today on access for the people of our province to emergency services, in this case with this motion in the community of Regina and the surrounding area, Mr. Speaker. And I'm a little bit disappointed when I sit here and I listen to some of the anger and the comments that come from the members opposite. Because, Mr. Speaker, with the announcement of the agreement that came together here this morning, it's truly a good thing for, and not a political thing, but a good thing for the people of Regina and the surrounding areas that they'll have access to their emergency services.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time in this House or across the province, this is not the first time, whether it be temporary or otherwise or the discussion of coming of breaks in emergency services in different communities across the province, Mr. Speaker. There's many communities that have had this discussion in years past. And it's been true that our government since 2007 has very definitely in the past, and we continue to take steps to improve the number of available emergency, emergency facilities and the medical professionals involved with delivering those services across the province, Mr. Speaker, in all communities including Regina.

Mr. Speaker, it's this government that formed the Saskdocs, Mr. Speaker, which has worked very hard with communities and health regions alike on different physician recruitment and different retention plans with physicians. Many of these are new and innovative methods that haven't been tried before. But quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, what was working . . . what was in operation before was not working. Mr. Speaker, it was this government that created the SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] program, the Saskatchewan international physician practice and practicum assessment, which was to facilitate the integration of internationally trained doctors and to integrate them into practices in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And to date there's been 91 physicians that are now practising in this province that were through that program.

Mr. Speaker, it was this government that looked at our training

contingent of 60 seats at the College of Medicine and were quick to increase that to 100, Mr. Speaker. We increased the medical training seats by 40. We doubled the amount of medical residency positions, Mr. Speaker, as well as increasing the premium on earnings for rural physicians that will practise in the full scope of practice, Mr. Speaker.

We've looked at different ways to deliver health care such as primary health care, Mr. Speaker, with eight innovation sites, I believe, are in operation across the province, as well as a new program delivery for health services, it's known as collaborative emergency centres. One most recently opened a number of weeks ago in the community of Maidstone, Mr. Speaker. And it's my understanding that there's another one that is opening on this day today, which makes it all the more special of a day, in the community of Shaunavon later today, Mr. Speaker.

As others have alluded, Mr. Speaker, and I did, we increased the medical training seats from 60 to 100 or medical, the medical residency seats, pardon me, from 60 to 120, Mr. Speaker, and that's allowed us to increase the number of emergency physicians that we've been able to train. I think we started with two when we came to government, Mr. Speaker, and have brought that up to eight with an additional two Royal College residents, which the first of those will be graduating very shortly, Mr. Speaker. And Saskdocs, the physician recruitment agency, is working very hard to retain those graduates to work in this province and quite likely in this city.

Mr. Speaker, I've been no stranger in my area to struggles with emergency room and lack of physicians, Mr. Speaker, in rural Saskatchewan. That's been going on for a number of years up in our area. We lost emergency services in one community in 2006. There's another community that lost it a couple of years before that. And it's through the hard work, I might add, of community members partnering with their health regions, working under some of the new and innovative opportunities that this government has provided, that those communities now are being able to offer some of their services back to the residents, not only in the community hosting it but the surrounding communities as well.

And, Mr. Speaker, I go back to the collaborative emergency centres. We have the community of Spiritwood, which is one of the first five that has been announced to have a collaborative emergency centre. And I was back in that community this weekend and I can assure you that the residents there are thankful and they're working very hard, as we speak, with their health region to ensure that that will come to fruition sooner rather than later, Mr. Speaker.

I can also speak to other challenges. And the member for Rosemont talked about challenges in our health care system. And, Mr. Speaker, the community where I lived, our challenge was the facility. It was built in the early '50s and it could not handle efficiently the amount of volume that was going through its ER department and its acute care, Mr. Speaker, as well as the long-term care facility was aged. Well, Mr. Speaker, it was this government in 2009 that announced 13 facilities to be replaced at that point in time, that facility included. Mr. Speaker, it's a \$26 million facility, originally announced that 65 per cent would be the government's share, 35 per cent the community

share. It was increased to 80/20, Mr. Speaker.

That facility is now open. I had the opportunity with our Premier and our two Health ministers and the member from Sask Rivers to attend the opening. It's paid for, Mr. Speaker; it's open — 34 long-term care beds, full community services, 20 acute care beds, Mr. Speaker, and a fully functional emergency department. That's this side, that's this government's commitment to health care in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Just to contrast a little bit, Mr. Speaker, we've been discussing access to health care in this province, Mr. Speaker. And when the members opposite were managing this file and they came to a struggle, what they did, Mr. Speaker, is they didn't try to work through the struggle and keep the facility open. They closed it 51 times in Saskatchewan and one more time with the Plains hospital in Regina here, Mr. Speaker. There's members on this side that are working to keep these facilities open as well as replace them: for instance the hospital in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, one in North Battleford, and a new children's hospital in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

It's members on that side, Mr. Speaker, that closed 16 long-term care facilities as well as pulling 1,200 beds from the provincial complement, Mr. Speaker. It's members on this side, Mr. Speaker, and the government of today and our Health minister that are replacing 13 of those facilities. I believe it's 14 now with the one in Swift Current, Mr. Speaker.

All in all in a nutshell, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP managed this file, they spent \$325 million in their last six years of government. And this government in their first six years of government has tripled that, Mr. Speaker, with \$1 billion of investment in our infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member of Rosemont talk about the challenges with regards to health care and I would just remind him to ask some of his caucus members because there's one of them in there that very recently said that when he was Health minister and had a challenge with health care, Mr. Speaker, he explicitly said that he wouldn't get involved.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health care services and infrastructure, thankfully the people of Saskatchewan have elected a government that make the access to our health care system the highest priority. And we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The time for debate has expired. Questions? I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the dark days of the NDP, they sadly eliminated 1,200 long-term care beds and 16 long-term care facilities. They closed 52 hospitals, the Plains hospital and other facilities across our province. The member from Regina Lakeview, when he was the Health minister, refused to step in when emergency services in Saskatoon were in crisis. Our ministers and members stand up for health care.

Under the NDP's last five years in office, the province lost 455

RNs and RPNs and 173 doctors. Former NDP cabinet minister Pat Atkinson even admitted that when it came to seniors' care, the NDP government was focused elsewhere. To the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre: why did your party simply ignore health care and create issues by closing facilities and ignoring crises?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, in my remarks I said that it's no longer patients first with this government. It's politics first. And I can tell by that question, Mr. Speaker, that it's not exactly just politics first. It's apparently politics first; it's apparently politics last; and it's apparently politics always.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the crisis with the ER, the potential closure, represents a massive failure of that government. This is something that's been coming down the line for some time, something that will have been known by the Premier and government as an issue and a crisis for some time. My question to the member from Walsh Acres: when was he informed of the unacceptable planned closure of the emergency room at the Pasqua Hospital?

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we've been working to ensure that there's good health care in Saskatchewan all across, in not just Regina, Saskatoon — rural Saskatchewan as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I want to say that we've been working hard to make sure that there's a plan in place to ensure that emergency rooms are open to our public, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I guess to compare that and contrast that with our opposition, Mr. Speaker, they closed, they eliminated 52 hospitals. Who do you guys talk to? You guys eliminated 16 long-term care facilities. Who'd you talk to before you guys did that? You guys spent \$325.5 million a year on health capital. Who did you say that's enough money for, John . . . member from Lakeview? Who did you consult when you closed all those hospitals? Who did you consult when you closed the Plains, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

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

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've heard from several of my colleagues, the Premier included, about the former minister of Health, the current member from Lakeview, when he abdicated responsibility when he was minister. He told reporters in 2004 in the midst of the dark days of the NDP, he told reporters that the Saskatoon Health Region when the RUH [Royal University Hospital] was experiencing crisis, they were responsible for settling the dispute with the emergency room doctors, and he wouldn't get involved. This is his chance to answer right here, right now, answer, why did you pass the buck in that situation?

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the issue today is, why did this Premier allow this kind of uneasiness, the feeling of fear to exist for a whole week in this province when they announced the closure of the ER? Now, Mr. Speaker, we don't know when the members from Regina, we don't know when the Premier knew that this decision was going to be made. But, Mr. Speaker, it's totally unconscionable that a leader or a quote leader allows this kind of upheaval to happen in the city of Regina around a service that's so crucial for this province.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In terms of the question that was asked to the member from Regina Walsh Acres by my colleague, the member from Regina Rosemont, it wasn't answered. And the question is very seriously, very simply this: in terms of the crisis that the city of Regina and southern Saskatchewan has been subjected to, when did that member find out, when was he notified that the emergency room was going to be closed at the Pasqua Hospital?

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To answer my colleague across the way, Mr. Speaker, we talk about health care in our caucus all the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have conversations. We talk about what we're going to do. We have a platform. We have a plan for growth, Mr. Speaker. We do plans all the time in our caucus, Mr. Speaker. And I'm very happy to be a part of a team that talks about all the issues they're taking forward and all the initiatives we're going to bring forward, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know how decisions were made over there when they were in government, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how they . . . what their rural MLAs felt when they closed those hospitals. I know what Lewis Draper felt when they closed the hospitals, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know Lewis Draper didn't feel very good when they made the decision to gut health care in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I think on our side, we take all of our conversations very seriously, and I'm proud to be part of a team that accepts everyone's input in decisions that are made.

[12:00]

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

Mr. Phillips: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me get this straight. In the dark days of the NDP government, dark days, they closed 1,200 long-term care beds, 16 facilities across the province. Now we're working hard, and we've opened or have funded 14 new long-term facilities. And we've added \$10 million to the Urgent Issues Action Fund.

Under the NDP in the last five years of their government, the five years that the member from Athabasca likes to say the good

years — this is the good years — they lost 455 RNs and RPNs and 173 doctors. In fact it got to the point . . . It was so bad that the NDP cabinet minister, Pat Atkinson, even admitted when it came to senior care, the government was focused elsewhere.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member's time has expired. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Walsh Acres never answered the other question. Maybe he can help us out with this. We know that there's a potential, following December 15th with this crisis, that the emergency room may no longer be open. That's unacceptable. To the member: what's the plan, and can he guarantee Regina residents, Saskatchewan residents that it will remain open all through the holiday season and well into the future?

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much. I appreciate the question coming from the member from Rosemont. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll guarantee one thing. I'll guarantee our Health minister will work a lot harder than the member from Lakeview did when he tried to keep Regina General Hospital emergency open or when he . . . [inaudible] . . . washed his hands of keeping the Royal University Hospital emergency room open, Mr. Speaker. I guarantee you our minister will work hard with the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and our Regina health board to ensure that we have the best care possible for the members of, for the constituents of Regina and southwest Saskatchewan. And I guarantee you he's going to work very hard to get that job done, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, any decline in service is a serious issue, and our government works hard to find permanent solutions. The members opposite cannot say the same. The closure of the Plains hospital in Regina had a substantial effect on health care within Regina and surrounding area. Mr. Deputy Speaker, aside from driving more health care workers out of the province — to the member from Regina Lakeview — why did your government take no steps in preventing the permanent closure of the Plains hospital?

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the issue today is will there be emergency care at the emergency room at Pasqua Hospital after December 15th. The Premier won't answer that. The Minister of Health won't answer that. People are asking all kinds of questions around a whole bunch of things that happened a long time ago, but the issue today is what's going on right now in the city of Regina in southern Saskatchewan, and we don't have good answers at all from this Premier. The Premier's laughing in his chair. He's laughing at the people who are concerned around southern Saskatchewan about care, and this is unfortunately how we see this man.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, a question for the member from Regina Walsh Acres. I'm quoting from yesterday's *Hansard* wherein, discussing the crisis around the emergency room at the Pasqua, the Minister of Health stated, "It may not have as much of an impact as one may think, Mr. Speaker." And then from yesterday's *Leader-Post* from the president of the nurses' union, Tracy Zambory, who states, "It would help if nurses were included in the conversation of plans because what we're finding is that we're being told what's happening rather than being involved in the conversation at the front end."

Mr. Speaker, does the member from Walsh Acres agree with the nurses' president or with his Minister of Health?

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 605

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Wotherspoon that **Bill No. 605** — *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I couldn't really hear from above the shrieking of the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, whether the debate is really on the P3 bill, and I'm assuming that it is and I rise in my place to offer some comments about the particular bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to say once again, here we go again. The conservatives are back, Mr. Speaker, and this is another example as I sit here in the Assembly and I listen to some of their debates on their plan to privatize health care, Mr. Speaker. I look at the plan that they have to bring the P3 model to the province. And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are becoming more and more confused as to what the Sask Party's agenda is, Mr. Speaker.

We hear them every day brag about the money they have, Mr. Speaker. They brag about all this money they have in the bank and that they have a balanced budget; they're moving forward on this initiative and that plan. Mr. Speaker, they brag every single day on the dollars that they have, Mr. Speaker. And then you look at the mess. All the money that they have, the booming economy, the growing population, and you look at the mess in health care, Mr. Speaker. A good example was the debate today. The mess in health care, Mr. Speaker, was created by the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker.

And then you turn around and you look at the debt in the Crowns. The debt in the Crowns, Mr. Speaker, when the

government is raiding SaskPower, raiding SaskPower of their money and their savings and all the hard work of the SaskPower employees and management to try and make sure that they can use that money for infrastructure development, Mr. Speaker. But no, instead of allowing SaskPower to keep that money in savings and to reinvest in SaskPower's infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, what happens is the Minister for SaskPower reaches over and gives the money to the Minister of Finance and says, here's a bunch of money from SaskPower. Go ahead and try and balance your books with our money with the profit of SaskPower because the ratepayers or the people that subscribe to SaskPower, well they'll pay all that bill anyway and we'll turn around and we'll blame the NDP whenever we get questioned, Mr. Speaker.

So right now the debt in the Crowns, the debt in the Crowns are primarily being placed on there by the Sask Party government because every cent of profit within SaskPower is going down to balance the . . . so-called balance the books. And, Mr. Speaker, every single day I wouldn't mind seeing the Minister of Finance reach over and shake the Minister of SaskTel's hand, the Minister of SaskPower's hand, saying thanks for helping us try and balance the books by raiding your savings, Mr. Speaker. So the problems in health care, the problems in the Crown, and now their latest . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I would ask the Deputy Premier to come to order. If members want to enter into the debate, there will be opportunity for them to enter into the debate. Currently the member from Athabasca has the floor and I would ask the other members to respect that as his right to speak. I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, very much, Mr. Speaker. So what happens is the mess in health care created by the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, all the debt within the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. They had the choice. The government had the choice to leave the earnings in SaskPower to allow SaskPower to strategically invest those earnings so that they're able to keep the rates low for the people of Saskatchewan. But they chose not to do that. They raided SaskPower's savings to try and balance the books and, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what is happening now.

And now their latest scheme, the Sask Party's latest scheme is the P3 scheme where what they want to do, Mr. Speaker — and we see it clear as day on this side — is they want to be able to get the credit for announcing these nine new schools. And then what they're going to do, Mr. Speaker, is they're going to punt that debt down the road. So they get the credit under the school construction. But guess what? Our children and grandchildren will be paying that bill. Make no mistake about it.

It's the same principle behind their bungling of health care, Mr. Speaker, where many of those costs are going to be paid later on. It's the same way that they're dealing with the Crowns. They're breaking the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. They're breaking the Crowns. They're breaking the Crowns on a regular basis, hoping that the people of Saskatchewan don't know this. But the people of Saskatchewan are finding out about this, Mr. Speaker.

And now the latest scheme by the Sask Party is to punt debt

down the road under the P3 model. So they get all the credit for building these schools, but they don't pay the bill. Our grandchildren will pay those bills, Mr. Speaker. And that's the fundamental reason why the opposition, the NDP opposition are asking for accountability and transparency through this bill. We want to know. We want to know, what the heck are we paying for those P3 models? We want to know, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan want to know.

So the people of Saskatchewan are sitting here, the people of Saskatchewan are sitting here saying, well what is this P3 model about? What is the P3 model about? They have a right to know, Mr. Speaker. They have the right to know. And the worst thing about some of the arguments that we're hearing, Mr. Speaker, is some accountants are debating whether this is a good model or not. It's not clear-cut from their point of view.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is that the worst thing I think, the worst thing under the P3 model is that there's a lot of control lost to the local organizations and school boards and groups that use these schools. Many of these groups and organizations that use the schools now, Mr. Speaker, they're allowed access. But when a private company owns that school, guess who decides who has access to that school? Not the government, not the school board, not the parents' organizations. It is the person that owns the school, Mr. Speaker, their corporate friends, Mr. Speaker. So once again you see, you see how we sit here as an opposition . . . And I think today is going to be the turning day, Mr. Speaker, when people of Saskatchewan realize the Sask Party are bungling everything from health care to the management of the Crowns, and now how we build schools in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the NDP are asking for one thing on P3s, one thing on P3s. We're asking them to come to the public and show the public exactly what they plan on doing. They want to see the deal. And, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what this bill is about. We are asking the Sask Party government to come clean on their P3 model. Show the people of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers, exactly what you've been saying to this Assembly, that you're going to save money. Show us, prove to us that you're going to save money. And, Mr. Speaker, they absolutely refuse to do that.

So today I tell the people of Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan this: this government wants to build nine schools through a P3 model. This government wants to get companies that are probably from other parts of the country to build these schools, and these companies will own those schools. And not only will they own those schools but the taxpayers will be paying for those schools. And you're going to be denied access by those schools unless you have a compelling reason — or the cash — to access that school for a lot of community functions, Mr. Speaker.

Now the member from Martensville laughs. The member from Martensville laughs, Mr. Speaker. And what we say today is that one of the schools that's going up through this P3 model is going to be in Martensville. Its going to be in Martensville, Mr. Speaker. So we are very happy that Martensville is getting a new school, Mr. Speaker. But people ought to know what they're paying for. People ought to know that they have access to that school. People have to know, what's the plan? What's

the cost?

We have a right to know. And the Sask Party is sitting there and they're not sharing any information. All they're telling the people is P3s are good and we're going to support them. Mr. Speaker, the people have the right to know. Taxpayers have the right to know, and the Sask Party has stubbornly refused to let the taxpayers look at this deal, Mr. Speaker. And on our side of the Assembly, on our side of the Assembly, given the mess that they've created in health care, the absolute mess that they've created in health care, Mr. Speaker, given the facts that they're raiding our Crowns to balance their books, Mr. Speaker, and now their latest scheme to hoodwink the taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, is the P3 model.

And what is the NDP asking today, Mr. Speaker? We're asking for a very thorough review of what the P3 model would look like. We're asking the minister to come forward with his argument to put all the information on the table. What is wrong with that proposal? To let the people of Saskatchewan, the school board association, the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], the taxpayers' association, the different groups and organizations that are out there that are involved in the education file, they have a right, Mr. Speaker. In fact every taxpayer has a right to be able to look at this deal and determine whether these guys have a right or not, and they refuse to even allow the taxpayers that opportunity. And I say, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the opposition, shame. Shame on that proposal to not share information with the people of Saskatchewan on how they can justify their P3 model.

[12:15]

Now, Mr. Speaker, under the P3, we know that they're punting debt down the road. We know they're doing that, and people out there should know. And I hope I can do this justice. But what they want to do is have a private company build the schools and they, the private company, will of course put the money in. Then every year the government will pay a certain fee, or the people that use the school pay a certain fee, and we'll be paying for that for the next 20, 30 years.

And, Mr. Speaker, they're also going to control access. Any kind of modifications to the school, any program that wants to be put in that school, any group that wants to access that school, has to go through this private company, Mr. Speaker. So anyway to have all these deals set up . . . And all the experience they talk about is in Alberta, and they talk about this in BC [British Columbia] as well.

And many groups that are involved with the P3 model are sounding the alarm bells to this government. They're sounding the alarm bells in their own province. And the weird thing about this all, Mr. Speaker, the really weird thing about this all is that all the bragging that the Sask Party does, that they have all this money to do all these wonderful things, why is it now we're going down this path of P3s where we're punting debt down the road? That's what confuses the people of Saskatchewan. They don't know what the heck this P3 model is. Why are we punting debt down the road? Aren't we paying down our debt? People are asking. Don't we have record job numbers? Don't we have population growth? Don't we have a good economy? How in the earth can you have all those assets in place and yet you're

still insisting on punting debt down the road so our grandchildren and our children will pay for that debt? The grandchildren and children will pay for those nine schools. Make no mistake about it. It's not going to be us. It's not going to be us. It'll be the children and grandchildren that'll be paying for their schools.

And I say today the reason why they're embarking on this P3 model is, number one, is they have mismanaged the finances of the province. That we know on this side of the House. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, they've also squandered a lot of the opportunity that they inherited from the past NDP, Mr. Speaker. They have squandered that opportunity. And the third thing that's really confusing, Mr. Speaker, is that despite the fact that they had all these assets, they still have to punt debt down the road. And the only reason that we can see that, Mr. Speaker, is that they want to be in front of the cameras cutting the ribbon, getting the photo op. And who pays the bill? Mr. Speaker, it's not those people in the photo op. It's going to be the children and the grandchildren of this province that's paying that bill.

And yet you look at some of the actions happening, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister of Finance says, oh, we still have a balanced budget. They're hiding that debt, Mr. Speaker. They're hiding that debt. And let me assure the people of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers, that not only are they going to pay more for that debt but their children and their grandchildren are paying for that debt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I sit here and I listen to some of the members talk about some of the tough choices that the NDP had to make when they assumed government in the '90s, Mr. Speaker, 1991. There, Mr. Speaker . . . And a lot of the conservatives over there don't like to hear this. This is the real history, when you have interest, interest, not debt payment but interest on your debt alone, almost \$1 billion a year that the government had to pay at that time, almost \$1 billion a year we had to pay in interest alone, Mr. Speaker, just in interest, when this province couldn't make payroll because the conservatives broke this province and we couldn't make payroll to our own employees, Mr. Speaker, when we had to go to the federal government cap in hand, cap in hand to tell them, we need some help in rebuilding Saskatchewan because the conservatives nearly killed the province. They nearly killed the province.

And those people across the way never talk about that. They say, oh the NDP done this, the NDP done that. Well, Mr. Speaker, history will not be rewritten by the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. History will speak for itself. When your interest payment on debt alone is almost three times your education budget, almost three times the education budget, then, Mr. Speaker, we say across the way here, every time you chirp about some stat, every time you chirp about some money that you're saving, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House where they try and portray the NDP as being bad, Mr. Speaker, they talk about the dark days, those were the death days of the Conservatives that we had to struggle through and that we had to fight for and to rebuild our province, Mr. Speaker.

And no matter how much the right wing likes to chirp across the way, Mr. Speaker, \$1 billion in interest every single year that we had to pay just on the debt, never mind repaying the debt, just to pay the interest alone, Mr. Speaker. And you can

imagine the huge financial burden on the government at the time, the huge financial burden of the government at the time. And not only did they put us in debt of \$15 billion, Mr. Speaker, but they cleaned out the Crowns. They cleaned out the Crowns and they made these long-term deals that forced the NDP to keep some of their deals so some of their rich friends could benefit, Mr. Speaker.

So you look at all those examples, and that's why I tell people, learn from history of the Conservatives because today they're repeating the same practice they did in the '80s. Because not only are they raiding the Crowns . . . So everybody paying their SaskTel bill and everybody paying their SaskPower bills, guess what? You didn't have to pay those increases if the Sask Party would've left the earnings in SaskPower to reinvest in the much needed infrastructure.

And perhaps, Mr. Speaker, perhaps we couldn't do the things that we wanted to when the NDP assumed government from the Conservatives. You know why, Mr. Speaker? There was a little problem. There was a little problem that we had when we took over from the Conservatives. The province was broke, flat broke, Mr. Speaker, flat broke. That's the lesson of the Conservatives of the '80s.

So when I sit here and listen to some of the backbenchers chirp about what the NDP done, they weren't even here, Mr. Speaker. They didn't even know what choices were being made to be able to balance the books to bring back Saskatchewan from the brink of bankruptcy.

Now we fast-forward to 2013, and here we are again. They're raiding the Crowns. They're raiding the Crowns out of all the profit, and people are expected to pay that. They even want to sell the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. They're selling a Crown right now as we speak. They're making a mess out of health care, Mr. Speaker. And now through the P3 model, they're punting debt down the road. So who pays for it? Not you and I, not them, but our children and our grandchildren will pay for these schools. Our children and grandchildren will pay for these schools, and the community groups that are out there, the community groups will also pay because accessibility will be denied under these new P3 models.

And, Mr. Speaker, all the NDP are asking for today, under this bill, is transparency and accountability. But they stubbornly refuse. They dismiss those concerns. And I tell every person in Saskatchewanland today, whether you live in Weyburn or whether you live in Buffalo Narrows, Beauval, or whether you live in Saskatoon, that these P3 models . . . Be very wary because we're asking a bunch of questions on how these deals are structured, and all the evidence that we've got, all the information we've got from school boards associations, from governments, from some of the opposition parties, not only in our neighbouring province but BC as well, they are telling us you've got to make sure that the deal is in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, if the government doesn't come forward with that information and share the information publicly, then on this side of the House we have absolutely no confidence, no confidence in that minister when he talks about how well the P3s are going to work, zero confidence in their assertion that

this is a good deal for Saskatchewan. Why? Because they refuse to share the information with the people of Saskatchewan, something that the NDP believe they have a fundamental right to know what kind of deals that this government's making under their P3 models, Mr. Speaker. Under their P3 models, they refuse to bring the information to the people of Saskatchewan and that's a fundamental problem that I think the people of Saskatchewan are going to quickly realize.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you look at some of the points that are raised earlier. And I'm not going to use quotes today. But I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan this: when the Sask Party assumed office, they had money in the bank. They had a growing population. They had a booming job market. Things were going really well. And, Mr. Speaker, just by the blessing of good timing, they were put in government. Just good timing, Mr. Speaker. It's not good management.

So what happens, Mr. Speaker, is that through all the years, the rebuilding the province, after all the years of struggling through massive debt, massive debt, Mr. Speaker, the NDP worked very close with the people of Saskatchewan to rebuild our province, to rebuild our province. And the conservatives over there know it. They know it.

What really upsets conservatives, Mr. Speaker, what really upsets PCs [Progressive Conservative], Mr. Speaker, is the fact that (a) they know their history. They know their history. And secondly what really upsets the PCs, Mr. Speaker, is that the booming economy, the great province that we have, Mr. Speaker, it was not created by the right wing. It was created by a pragmatic, forward-thinking New Democratic government alongside the people of Saskatchewan. That's our history, Mr. Speaker, and we're very proud of it.

Now today, now we sit here in opposition and we're telling people of Saskatchewan, well, Mr. Speaker, once again, here we go again. The conservatives are in charge over there. There's no liberals over there. They're all conservatives. They're all conservatives. Because the conservatives over there are in charge. They're in charge on that side of the Assembly. Liberals, there's no liberals over there. They're all conservatives.

And the reason why I say that, Mr. Speaker, because they sit in their chairs and they're willing, they're willing to raid the Crowns. They're willing to put this province into debt. They're willing to get the credit. But the kids and the grandkids will pay that debt for many, many years. And, Mr. Speaker, they still claim that the books are balanced when the auditor has clearly said no, they're not.

So the people of Saskatchewan, I'll leave you this final point, on this final point. They made a mess, a mess of health care. We've seen evidence of that today. And they'll continue making a mess of health care.

More and more cases are coming forward, Mr. Speaker. People are wondering why the mess, despite all the economic promise of the province. Because the Saskatchewan Party does not know how to govern at all. We have zero confidence in their ability to manage this boom properly so everybody benefits, including the future generation, including the future generations. Instead

through this model under P3s, they're punting debt on to the future of our province. And I say shame on them.

So despite the bragging that they do and despite the chirping and the back-patting that they do, they've made a mess of health care. They're raiding all our Crowns of any profits and putting the bills on your power bill, on your phone bill. And, Mr. Speaker, now through the P3 model, you're punting debt on to your children and your grandchildren. And from our perspective, that's not how a government should do business in light of the good times that the province of Saskatchewan enjoys today. That's not how they should do business.

So, Mr. Speaker, once again we're going to have a lot more to say on this Bill and many other bills. And I think that today, Mr. Speaker, has been a very good day for the NDP because we have hammered home the fact that there's health care challenges. Wake up to it. People of Saskatchewan aren't going to sit back anymore and listen to your excuses.

Now they're raiding our Crown corporations. We've exposed that, Mr. Speaker. And now their latest scheme, their latest scheme is to punt debt down the road to the P3 model. And we say shame. Shame on that.

We have the ability. We have the economy. We have the strength. We have the people to do many of these things on our own. And this government refuses to listen. They stubbornly dismiss those concerns by the people of Saskatchewan. And I say, come election then, the people of Saskatchewan will not forget that. They will not forget that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 605.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 605, *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — That's carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Plans for New Schools

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Marchuk.]

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

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask my colleagues to please bear with me. We have an unfortunate list that I'm going to just read off, and I would like to just . . . If you can keep your heckling down:

1996, Weyburn; 1995, Riceton; 1994, Fenwood; 1996, Rama; 1997, Tisdale; 1999, Biggar; 2000, Tramping Lake; 2002, Battleford; 2004, Radisson; 2005, Saskatoon; 2002, North Portal; 2001, Norquay; 2000, Lloydminster; 1999, Moose Jaw; 1998, Yorkton. These are all towns that had their town, their

school closed by the NDP. And that's just the first page, Mr. Speaker. I have the rest, but we won't go through them.

It's a dark chapter in the province. But there's one personal one here that I left off that I need to mention and that was 1997, Esterhazy. East School Elementary School was closed by the NDP, and that's where I went to school, Mr. Speaker. Our slogan for the school was Rise to the Top at East School. That was our school motto. No one is rising to the top at East School anymore because of the NDP. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the many of the over 170 schools that the NDP closed.

[12:30]

Mr. Speaker, I think the province, the people of the province should remember this and it's a quote that I think is fitting for the people in rural Saskatchewan and all throughout the province is, "Forgive your enemy, but always remember their name." That's the NDP, Mr. Speaker. Thankfully those dark days are behind us.

Today in Saskatchewan, new schools are opening up. Mr. Speaker, 20 new schools have opened since the government changed in 2007. Today in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, people are moving to our great province. We just celebrated, the province grew to 1.1 million people. And that 100,000 people that voted with their feet on where they would like to live and raise a family, Mr. Speaker, is Saskatchewan. And that took six years to grow that 100,000.

As we all are aware, it took 77 long NDP years to grow the province last time by 100,000. Mr. Speaker, this speaks to the lack of a plan for growth under the NDP, and it speaks to the growth plan that we have. And why we see growth in Saskatchewan is that it affords us to repair some of the damage the NDP did to our province.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there's challenges that come with growth. One of the ones that are felt by everyone in the province and by families are the lack of the investment in schools that the NDP did over 16 years. And, Mr. Speaker, it's not just the schools that they closed. It's the lack of maintenance that they provided the school divisions, and were really now put in a pretty good deficit when we took over by the lack of the capital that the school divisions had to provide a safe working environment for our teachers and for our children to learn in.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to do things differently than the NDP. With the schools that we have just announced under the P3 bundling, we're getting nine new buildings, which is 18 new schools throughout the province. This is going to go a long ways to address the urgent need for school space in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this approach is not meant to fit all the new capital requirements in the province. We're going to do it where it makes sense. We're going to bundle schools, and that's where we've seen the major announcements in Regina and Saskatoon and Martensville and Warman. It makes sense. We're still going to do the traditional build. We're still going to be out there where it makes sense. But to listen to the NDP, their approach would have us still living in sod houses, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP would have the public believe that the path that we're deciding to go with this bundle of schools is wrong. And, Mr. Speaker, that is the old way of thinking in Saskatchewan. And it's a way that growth is a bad thing, that growth is something that they don't want. And, Mr. Speaker, I have a little story to share on why I . . . It's obvious why the NDP doesn't want growth. And I was talking to an NDP supporter and she had a very astute comment. And I don't often give compliments to the NDP, but this is an interesting comment that sheds light on how the NDP are and their policies that they support.

And it was her view — and we were talking about the growth in the province and what's happening and it's exciting — and it was her view that neighbourhoods that had new trees or in her words, short trees, were a lot less likely that they would support the NDP. Mr. Speaker, she shared with me, and she's a senior NDP supporter, that it was their policy that if they had short streets . . . Think about that. That's the new neighbourhoods. It's part of the 100,000 people that have moved into Saskatchewan. And her observation is they are less likely to vote NDP.

And that sums up what the NDP policy was for 16 years, to hold back this province, Mr. Speaker. By holding back the province, it was good policy for the NDP, but bad policy for the people of Saskatchewan. We welcome growth and even the challenges that come with it, Mr. Speaker. And in education, this is one of them, that we're going to rise to the challenges. And we've announced these nine new buildings, or 18 new schools, that are going to be completed in the P3 mode.

And one of the simplest reasons why we are going to go down this road is cost certainty, Mr. Speaker. We know that there has been overruns in the past in education. And 2002 to 2006 in northern Saskatchewan, the Rossignol High School, estimated original cost was 6.8 million. Actual cost, Mr. Speaker, 15.6 million. That's unbelievable what that school was going to cost and what it was going to come in at.

Mr. Speaker, we're not going to have that with a P3. We're going to know for a certainty that the cost of that school, what we sign on that contract is what it will cost, Mr. Speaker. And I have a couple other examples. In Meadow Lake from 2000 to 2003 the estimate was 9.5 million. It came over budget again, 10.8 million. 2004 to 2006 in Saskatoon, Centennial Collegiate, estimate was 15 million, and it came in at 18.8 million.

Mr. Speaker, this is the problem that we have in Saskatchewan, is that a lot of these large projects go over budget unless you use innovation, unless you use modern structures to make sure that the project is completed on budget. And another, I think the most important part, or important part for me of P3s — and, Mr. Speaker, you would appreciate this — I was talking to a pretty impartial person and he was talking about why he's very supportive of P3s. And he brought up the important fact that with P3s, the maintenance, you know it's going to get done, Mr. Speaker.

Now when the NDP was in government, they neglected maintenance throughout our province, throughout our education system. And that right now is what we're facing is the backlog of maintenance that has to be done. Now, Mr. Speaker, we

know with the P3 the maintenance will get done because we'll sign the contract and it will get provided.

Mr. Speaker, it's important, this P3 discussion, it's about policy, and it's about policy decisions from this side of the House versus that side. And, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the NDP is trying to run and hide from their party's record, and his own record, Mr. Speaker, and I'm speaking about the Leader of the Opposition. The NDP has removed every bit of their policy from its website. The NDP platform from the last election is gone. All the NDP policy resolutions are gone. Even the NDP policy review book, the tree book, written by the NDP leader, even it's gone. And why is that, Mr. Speaker, why does that NDP leader stand for . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Exactly.

For instance, he's been talking about a smart growth plan for months now. Where is the so-called smart growth plan, Mr. Speaker? We can't find it on their website. But, Mr. Speaker, this is what I'm talking about with the P3 and bundling the schools. It's the policies that we bring forward and, you know, it's the opposition's role to take a different view of it. But they're not just taking a different view, they're not putting any new ideas forward, Mr. Speaker.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the debate that's going to be forthcoming around P3s.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join in this debate around P3s and building infrastructure for our education system. And I'm going to have a lot more to say further down the line, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to discussing our plan versus no plan from the other side. And eventually they're going to lay something forward on how they intend to mix education and education infrastructure in our system right now, Mr. Speaker. And I look forward to seeing their platform and their policies coming forward. And with that, I'd like to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:40.]

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Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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Minister Responsible for The Global
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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

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