



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

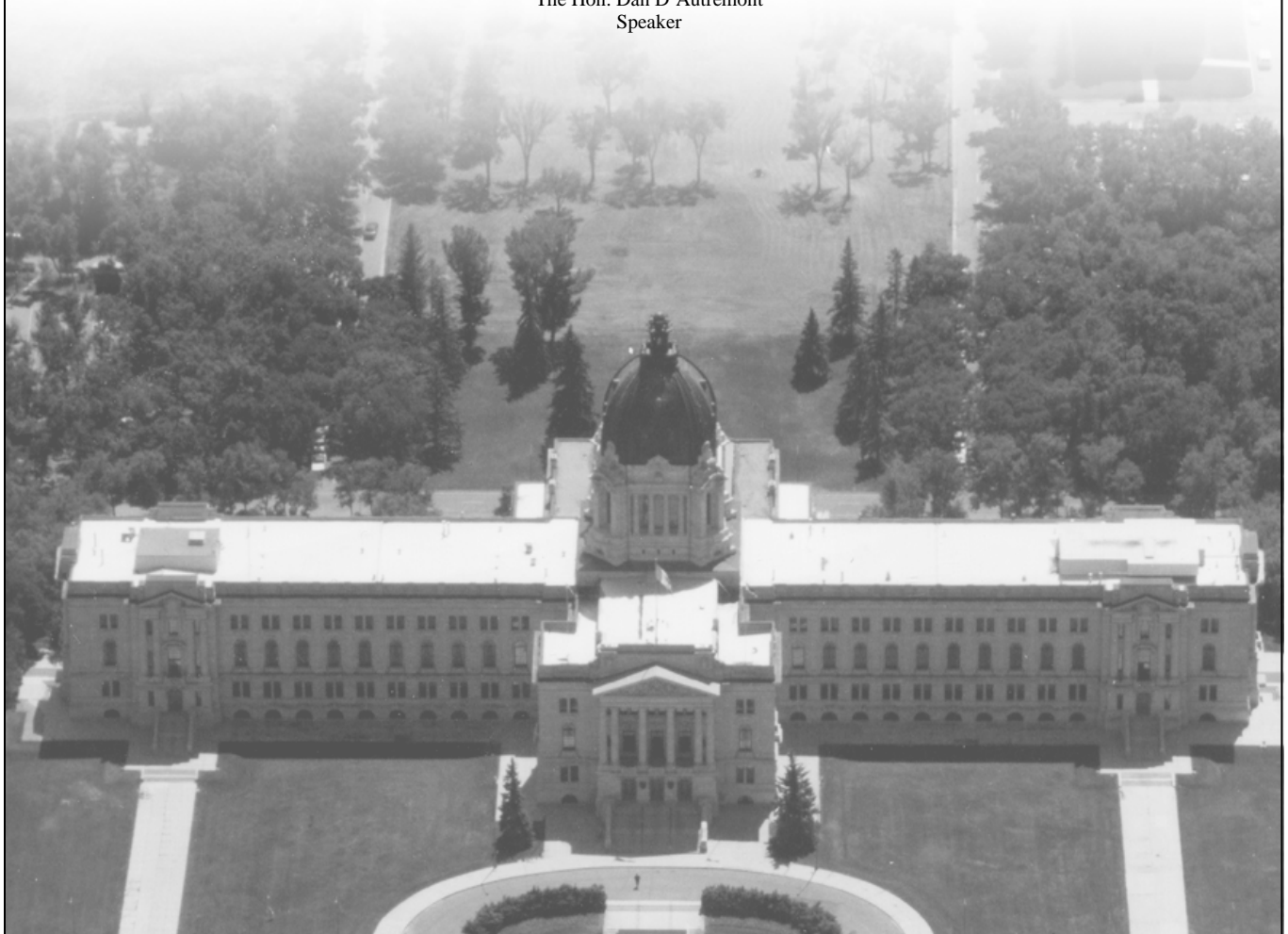
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Young, Colleen	SP	Lloydminster
Vacant		Prince Albert Carlton

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for support for better schools here in Saskatchewan. We know that far too many of our classrooms are overcrowded and under resourced and that the Sask Party government eliminated hundreds of educational assistant positions, that students often don't get the one-on-one attention they need and that the condition of our schools are rundown, unsafe, were uninspected, and this government has refused to release information on the \$1.5 billion of known repairs that are needed in our schools, and the government's plan is to rent schools from private corporations which is expensive and reckless.

None of this is acceptable, Mr. Speaker, given the record revenues this government has had over the last eight years. I'd like to read the prayer now:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on this government to immediately stop ignoring schools and start prioritizing students by capping classroom sizes, increasing support for our students, and developing a transparent plan to build and repair our schools.

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again to present petitions to call this government to act to ensure safety on Dewdney Avenue. Of course this government acted to create unsafe conditions on Dewdney Avenue, inundating it with heavy-haul truck traffic, not planning a safe route for that traffic. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — I rise today to present a petition. Homelessness is a major problem in La Ronge and other parts of the North, and getting worse. Shelter is a basic need for everyone, but under this government it's getting harder and harder for people to find adequate housing, especially families, seniors, women, and children who face abusive situations. The problem is getting worse because of the rising level of poverty and skyrocketing home ownership cost. The prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Saskatchewan government to build a homeless shelter in the Lac la Ronge area to meet the needs of addressing homelessness in the Lac la Ronge area.

It is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise again to present a petition in support of safe staffing levels in long-term care.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that many aspects of long-term care are deteriorating under this government. The petitioners point out that the Government of Saskatchewan actually recognize the need . . . they need to recognize the need for safe staffing levels to provide hands-on care to residents. They point out that the government removed the regulations requiring a minimum standard of care for seniors, which has resulted in neglect. And the petitioners talk about how chronic understaffing in long-term care facilities results in unacceptable conditions, including unanswered calls for help, infrequent bathing, and a rise in physical violence amongst residents. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the government to commit to the creation of safe staffing levels for all valued members of the health care team and to re-introduce actual numbers of staff to match the level of care needs and the number of residents under their care in long-term care facilities.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed from residents of Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition in support of retaining Yarrow Youth Farm. The people who have signed this petition wish the following: that Saskatchewan currently offers a variety of facility options to

house youth offenders according to an assessed level of risk to their communities, and that Saskatoon had Yarrow Youth Farm, a facility for low-risk teens who benefit from an open-custody home with a caring, supportive environment and programs to help the residents live more productive lives.

The government is planning to close Yarrow Youth Farm and create an open-custody wing in Kilburn Hall, and the provincial Advocate for Children and Youth declares he cannot endorse such a rationalization as low-risk teens could be influenced and pressured by close proximity to high-risk youth.

The prayer reads as follows:

They respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the government to keep Yarrow Youth Farm open to ensure a caring home environment for youth who have committed minor offences, and provide support to help these young people redirect their lives by setting more positive goals.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by people from Saskatoon. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

2015 Paragon Awards

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last week I had the opportunity to bring greetings on behalf of the government at the 2015 Paragon Awards hosted by Regina and District Chamber of Commerce. This award ceremony celebrates the hard work and success of local businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that Harvard Development took home the prestigious Business of the Year award. The Young Entrepreneur award went to Tara Bokitch of Solitude & Soul Home Decor & Gift Studio. Mr. Speaker, St. John Ambulance, Fries Tallman Lumber, CanMar Grain Products, Harley-Davidson, the Regina Food Bank, Potash Corp, ManpowerGroup, Delta Hotels, Cobs Bread, Dr. Shirif, and Dr. Henni also took home awards.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to encouraging job creation and capital investment. That is why the 2015-2016 budget included new growth tax incentives. The new manufacturing and processing exporter tax incentive will provide tax credits to eligible exporting corporations that increase their number of full-time employees. The incentive will also apply to corporations involved in the commercial development of new products, including interactive digital media and creative industry products.

As we know, Saskatchewan is a great place to own and start a new business. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the winners of the prestigious Paragon Awards and commend the Regina and District Chamber of Commerce for hosting such a fabulous event. Thank you very much, Mr.

Speaker.

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

Tribute to Saskatoon Music Community Leader

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, it's with great sadness that I rise in the Assembly today to recognize the passing of an important leader in Saskatchewan's music community, Dr. David Kaplan. David Kaplan was well known in Saskatoon and across the province as a composer, a music educator, an orchestral conductor, a band director, and he died last Monday at the age of 91.

David Kaplan moved to Saskatoon to teach music at the University of Saskatchewan in 1960 and only planned on staying for a few years. But like so many others who have come to Saskatchewan, he never left. He spent nearly 40 years at the Department of Music where he composed a number of works for band and orchestra, and founded the University of Saskatchewan Wind Orchestra, an ensemble that continues to perform across our province and around the world.

David Kaplan was also a key leader at the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra. He served for many years as the orchestra's music director and continued to give engaging pre-concert talks well into his senior years.

He was also committed to helping our province live up to its motto, "from many peoples, strength," through his music and volunteerism. His compositions brought together many different musical styles, and he was a founding member of Saskatoon's Festival of Faith.

A short list of his awards and accomplishments includes the Order of Canada, the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, and the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal. It is hard to imagine how anyone could have been more deserving.

And so I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in recognizing the remarkable life and contributions of Dr. David Kaplan, a man whose music and life truly embodied the Saskatchewan spirit. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Melfort Team Wins Provincial Basketball Championship

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it seems like just three short months ago I was standing in this House to bring attention to the Melfort Comets football team who won the provincial 4A championship. Well, Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, the Melfort Comets basketball team won the 4A provincial championships at Hoopla 2015.

The first game for Melfort at Hoopla was against Moose Jaw Central, and the Comets won that game 71 to 47. Comets' high scorers were Alex Linnell with 20 points and Troy Taylor with 13. The next game was a gold medal game against Meadow Lake. Melfort won that 73 to 65, and again Alex and Troy led the way with 21 and 20 points respectively. It was an exciting

game from start to finish, coming right down to the final buzzer. In the last 40 seconds, Alex hit six critical free throws to seal the game for Melfort, six in a row.

Mr. Speaker, the memories of winning a provincial title is something that will last for a lifetime with these students. But for some of these students, to win two in the same school year is absolutely incredible. I would ask that all members join me in congratulating the Comets on their second title. And, Mr. Speaker, it is only April. Thank you.

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

Ehrlo Outdoor Hockey League

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, although the ice is retreating from many ponds and lakes across Saskatchewan, I'm pleased to announce that the great Canadian tradition of outdoor hockey was very much alive and well here in Regina this past season. The outdoor hockey league, also known as the OHL, is a very successful program that has been run by Ranch Ehrlo's sport venture for more than 20 years. This program ensures that kids from all walks of life have the opportunity to take part in our country's national pastime.

I volunteered for many years as a coach in the OHL, and I have so many great memories of young people growing and building relationships through hockey. This year was no different. More than 300 young people from all across our city take part in this program in nine different rinks each and every year.

But like all things in our community, the OHL relies on the hard work and dedication of donors and volunteers. I'd like to specifically thank Amanda McConnell, Kelly Buchinski from Ehrlo sport venture; two of the Rosemont coaches, Megan Johnson and Cole Kowalyk; two of the Rosemont shack keepers, Dennis and Judy Zawryucka; and the generous supporters, sponsors including RBC [Royal Bank of Canada], The Co-operators, the Access children's fund, the town of Pilot Butte, and Weston Ltd.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me to recognize and to thank all of those that make the outdoor hockey league such a meaningful and successful program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Labour Force Survey Shows Saskatchewan's Growth

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is growing, and I'm happy to report that more and more citizens are finding opportunity here. The Labour Force Survey report was released last week and Saskatchewan continues to remain strong. Saskatchewan again has the lowest unemployment rate among all provinces at 4.4. This marks 18 consecutive months of lowest unemployment, well below the national average of 6.8. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we had beaten our old record from last month with a further decrease of 0.6 per cent.

There is an all-time high of citizens 15 years of age or older, some 859,000 individuals living in Saskatchewan. This means

more people working, contributing to their own families' success. Labour Force statistics also reported an increase of 400 jobs for Aboriginal employment. Youth unemployment rates also saw a decrease, is now sitting at 8.6, well below the national average of 13 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, we realize that Saskatchewan is seeing some recent economic challenges, but these numbers truly attest to the diversity of our economy and the people who work hard to keep their own families strong and secure. With a robust economy, Stats Canada predicts not only that Saskatchewan will continue to grow in 2015, but our province's current and future job prospects remain robust. We truly do have what it takes to keep Saskatchewan strong. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

[13:45]

Honorary Ambassador for Autism Speaks Canada Event

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently Jayden Johnson, the son of Lee and Kerrie Johnson of Margo, was named national honorary ambassador for Walk Now for Autism Speaks Canada. As the most important funding event for Autism Speaks Canada, the Walk Now for Autism will support scientific research, services, advocacy, and awareness. Mr. Speaker, Jayden will be the ambassador for over 100 walks that'll take place this summer right throughout Canada.

Jayden, now five and a half years old, did not speak until he was three years old. Since his diagnosis, he has improved immensely in the areas of communication, socialization, and behaviour. Jayden enjoys swimming, fishing, and riding along in the tractor and the combine on his family farm, and he started to play hockey this year. Team Jayden, including his parents and his brother Gavin, will walk in Saskatoon on June the 21st. As well the family is planning a fundraiser in Wadena on April the 22nd.

Mr. Speaker, an avid blogger and a parent of an autistic child writes that autism means, and I quote, "I accept my child wholly. I celebrate his differences and his quiriness. I do not think he needs fixing." But, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't mean that each of these children and their families doesn't need our help. Autism now affects 1 in every 68 children, a 78 per cent increase from six years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this Assembly to join with me in congratulating Jayden for being chosen the honorary ambassador for this year's Walk Now for Autism Speaks Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Project Heroes Exhibit

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to our country's fallen heroes. April the 9th marked the 98th anniversary of the beginning of one of the greatest military victories in our country's history. The Battle of Vimy Ridge lasted three days, but on April the 12th it was

Canadian troops who held the high ground. They accomplished what others could not do.

From Europe to Afghanistan, almost a century later, Canadians have led the fight for freedom. Though these battles are almost a century apart, the stories of heroism and sacrifice from both conflicts touch us deeply.

A stirring tribute to our fallen soldiers in Afghanistan, the Project Heroes exhibit was launched at Government House last Thursday on Vimy Ridge Day. Mr. Speaker, working from family photos, the three artists behind this ongoing tribute have completed oil paintings of 78 of the 158 Canadians killed in Afghanistan. They are accompanied by each soldier's personal story. These moving portraits line the halls and corridors of Government House. Shoulder to shoulder, they stand on guard. In addition, a maple tree with yellow ribbons representing all Canadian soldiers who served in Afghanistan stands as a sentinel in the foyer.

Mr. Speaker, this is a tribute not to be missed. I encourage everyone to visit Government House where the exhibit runs until June 21st. We will remember them. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Provision of Hyperbaric Treatments

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dr. David Amies sent me a letter late last week which says this government clearly doesn't have its facts straight when it comes to the hyperbaric chamber in Moose Jaw. Dr. Amies is the expert on this. My question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker: will he agree to meet with Dr. David Amies so he can finally get his facts straight about the hyperbaric chamber in Moose Jaw?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I'll answer that question in the absence of the Premier on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to meet with Dr. David Amies in the past in my office here in Regina. He had the opportunity to talk about the service that has been provided. I would be happy to speak with Dr. Amies at any time, Mr. Speaker, as we look to how we're going to provide the service into the future. But if Dr. Amies would like to meet with me, I'd be happy to, more than happy to meet with him again.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government shouldn't simply meet with someone, they should listen to what the physician is raising, Mr. Speaker. And if they had been listening, you wouldn't see the approach that this government has taken when it comes to the hyperbaric chamber in Moose Jaw.

Dr. Amies is especially frustrated that this government claims that the hyperbaric chamber could simply be moved to a clinic. He talks about the need for a special conductive flooring, a controlled high-humidity atmosphere, the ability to pipe in large

volumes of oxygen, and the need for an auxiliary high-pressure oxygen tank. He also talks about, Mr. Speaker, the physicians and the respiratory therapists at the Moose Jaw Hospital who have travelled to South Carolina for the specialized training in order to provide this hyperbaric treatment. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. How can he possibly dispute these facts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again in the absence of the Premier, I'd be happy to take that question on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is information that we are certainly aware of in terms of what would be required in order to operate, whether this be in a in-patient acute care facility or whether it be in an outpatient facility like a clinic, Mr. Speaker, which happens in many parts of North America. In fact we contract some services for hyperbaric services out of an outpatient clinic in Alberta, Mr. Speaker.

So whether it's an in-patient or whether it's an outpatient, yes it does have some costs. We don't dispute that. In fact that's a part of the calculation and the analysis that we're doing, Mr. Speaker. So again to the Leader of the Opposition, that is a part of the work that we are doing. We don't discount that.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, they do discount it because they're actually moving in the opposite direction. They're taking this important service out of the hospital setting into a clinic potentially or not at all. That's the plan right now. No plan whatsoever when it comes to the future of the hyperbaric chamber, and it's causing confusion and concern among patients and residents in this province.

According to Dr. Amies, there's absolutely no alternative to hyperbaric treatment for acute cases like severe carbon monoxide poisoning. This is what he writes:

Emergencies arrive at the ER, are assessed by one of the three doctors on call 24-7 for the HBO unit, and transferred there immediately. For carbon monoxide poisoning, three treatments are given within 24 hours and the subject then goes home.

Dr. Amies says that 30 per cent of treatments in the hyperbaric chamber in Moose Jaw were in-patient treatments, and he says the remaining treatment for outpatients are best provided in the hospital setting. We know that the hyperbaric chamber saves money because it reduces the need for amputations, and it allows those with severe wounds to heal more quickly.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. Is he listening to these arguments being made by Dr. Amies, and will he finally commit to save hospital-based hyperbaric treatment here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

again on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan in the absence of the Premier, I'll take that question.

Mr. Speaker, this is information that certainly we are aware of, that the vast majority of treatment in the hyperbaric unit over the last 16 years has been of an outpatient nature, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we certainly know the information in terms of the treatment, the type of treatment that's provided by a hyperbaric unit, as well as the alternative treatment, Mr. Speaker, that can be provided.

I am also aware, Mr. Speaker, that not every single case of somebody using the hyperbaric services in this province is treated in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. Some people do go outside of the province for treatment. Mr. Speaker, that may be part of the solution going forward.

Mr. Speaker, we are doing our analysis on whether or not this will be housed in an in-patient unit or whether or not we'll look towards a clinic type of setting. Mr. Speaker, we know that there are a variety of different reasons, for radiation, for other reasons, Mr. Speaker, why somebody uses hyperbaric. That's all going into the decision of how we're going to provide hyperbaric services in the future.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely bizarre and head-scratching why this government would insist on taking us backwards when it comes to the treatment that many patients need in the province. We have a properly functioning hyperbaric chamber in Moose Jaw where patients can receive the training, where the professionals are, where the infrastructure is there now and should have been planned for properly, Mr. Speaker. We know that 30 per cent of hyperbaric treatments in our province are in-patient treatments. Many require acute care for carbon monoxide poisoning.

When 36 per cent of hyperbaric treatments in our province are for non-healing wounds, when 46 per cent of hyperbaric treatments in this province are for cancer patients — cancer patients who require treatment for the severe side effects of radiation — this government ought to recognize the tremendous value of hyperbaric treatment here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier: why does he dispute the facts presented by Dr. Amies? Or will he finally admit, finally admit that this treatment is incredibly valuable and it needs to be saved in a hospital setting?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of our analysis, we're looking at all the uses of the hyperbaric services over the last 16 years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the use of the hyperbaric services, the vast majority of that has been on an outpatient basis over the last 16 years, Mr. Speaker. I believe the numbers, I don't have them in front of me, but I believe the numbers that the ministry and the region have presented over the last 16 years is over 90 per cent of services have been on an outpatient basis, Mr.

Speaker, whether that be for a healing of wounds, whether that be for follow-up after radiation treatment, Mr. Speaker, or other concerns.

Mr. Speaker, this is something we are looking at in terms of how we're going to provide this. For the Leader of the Opposition to stand in his place and say that an in-patient setting is the only way to provide hyperbaric services in the province, is the only way that any other jurisdiction provides hyperbaric services, is just not correct, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a variety of options that we're looking at, and we're doing our analysis now.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, they are reducing services for Saskatchewan patients. We have a physician, Mr. Speaker, in the province, Dr. Amies, who points out that 30 per cent of hyperbaric treatments in our province are in-patient treatments, many of whom require acute care for carbon monoxide poisoning.

You know, Mr. Speaker, at the end of March the Premier stood and he said this: "Its presence in the new Moose Jaw Hospital is potentially [still] an option . . ." That was just at the end of March. The Health minister said they're looking at possibly adding on and expanding to the still-under-construction Moose Jaw Hospital, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier: will he admit, will he admit that his government made a mistake, that it shrunk the Moose Jaw Hospital too much, that it was a mistake to leave out the hyperbaric chamber? And will he commit to fixing that mistake today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, what I will commit to is that later this day, Mr. Speaker, again on behalf of, in the absence of the Premier on behalf of the government, what I will confirm today, Mr. Speaker, is that the new hospital in Moose Jaw is going to be opening later this year, Mr. Speaker. This government has committed to, that this government has invested, along with the foundation and local communities, Mr. Speaker, nearly \$100 million to build that hospital.

And what they've also committed to, and what we've committed to, Mr. Speaker, is providing the operational dollars for a new MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] to serve the people of southern Saskatchewan, the people of Moose Jaw, and the surrounding areas in the Five Hills Health Region.

Mr. Speaker, we are looking at, in terms of how we're going to provide that service going forward in the future, Mr. Speaker, continue to rely on out of province, which we have in the past, Mr. Speaker, whether or not there is an opportunity for in-patient or outpatient, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that outpatients versus in-patients — this is the utilization of the chamber from 1997 to 2012, so yes, I am missing a few years at the end — but for the vast majority of that time, 94 per cent was on an outpatient basis, 6 per cent on an in-patient basis, Mr. Speaker. Those are the actual

numbers, that utilization for that particular chamber. But we're going to continue to work with the region to find how we're going to provide services into the future.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, once again we see a track record from this government of just dismissing what people in the province are saying, like Dr. Amies coming forward, Mr. Speaker, with the actual facts, not this spin from the minister.

At the end of March, Mr. Speaker, we know that the Premier stood in the Assembly and said that they are still looking at the option of having the hyperbaric chamber in the new Moose Jaw Hospital. The Health minister said that they are looking at adding on to the Moose Jaw Hospital, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier: does he stand by the remark that was made earlier? Does the Health minister stand by the remarks that he made earlier?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Again, Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier, I'd be pleased to take that question on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we're doing our analysis in terms of what it will cost on a capital basis, on an operational basis, to provide it in an in-patient unit, Mr. Speaker. We're also doing our analysis in terms of on an outpatient basis, Mr. Speaker, in a clinic type of setting, what type of capital costs it would require to do the outfitting that would take place.

Mr. Speaker, it's important though that I put on the record that hyperbaric therapy is generally used as an adjunctive therapy to assist the primary medical treatment after emergency stabilization of a patient, Mr. Speaker. Hyperbaric oxygen therapy may be considered as a part of the secondary treatment after primary treatment takes place.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's also important to note, to put on the record, this is an important service, Mr. Speaker, but let's put it in perspective. In 2009-2010, the number of patients that went through the hyperbaric services in Moose Jaw, 13; 2010-11, 13; '11-12, 20; '12-13, 19, Mr. Speaker; and '14-15 year-to-date, 12 patients, Mr. Speaker.

So it's an important service, but for a very small number of people. Mr. Speaker, that's why we decided to invest with the foundation in an MRI because that's . . . we know where the most use will be made.

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

Usage of Foreign Workers and Relationship With Developer

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, does the Premier agree that temporary foreign workers should never displace Saskatchewan workers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we've said that we take an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to our labour market here in the province. Of course we would like to see Saskatchewan residents hired first for available jobs, Canadians as well. And if we need to go abroad, Mr. Speaker, then we definitely need to look at that. And that's why we have been bringing in newcomers at a record pace here in the province, Mr. Speaker — 5,500 nominees this year, a record amount — far more than the NDP [New Democratic Party]. And we believe that that's an important part of our province going forward.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the minister maybe didn't hear the question for the Premier. The question was whether foreign temporary workers should ever displace Saskatchewan workers. Certainly on this side of the Assembly, we believe that should never be case, Mr. Speaker.

Troy Jessop is here today. He was a painter with Deveraux Developments, but he has shared with us that he was displaced by temporary foreign workers and laid off. Does the Premier agree that this entirely inappropriate and unacceptable?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the absence of the Premier, I'll be taking that question. As I've said, we take an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to our labour market. That means that we want to see Canadians and Saskatchewan residents hired first for available job opportunities. And we've seen that, Mr. Speaker.

Just on Friday, we saw new job numbers released by Statistics Canada showing Saskatchewan having the lowest unemployment rate in the country by far: 4.4 per cent, Mr. Speaker, national average nearly 7 per cent. We saw as well record numbers of folks working here in the province, Mr. Speaker.

We do, like I said, want to see Canadians and Saskatchewan residents first in line for jobs, but we do know as well that our economy has been creating such a volume of opportunity here in the province that we need to look abroad as well for skilled labour particularly, Mr. Speaker. And we've done that through our nominee program: very, very successful, I think generally regarded as the most successful nominee program in the entire country, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to do that.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, why is it so hard for that minister and government to say that Saskatchewan workers should never be displaced, full stop, period? Troy had his own painting company. He started working for Deveraux in January 2014 as an employee. In May 2014, Deveraux hired three foreign or temporary foreign workers.

Troy helped train those foreign workers and helped settle them here. And then on January 19th of this year, Deveraux laid off

Troy. And it laid off two other Saskatchewan workers, but Deveraux kept the temporary foreign workers employed. So three Saskatchewan workers lost their jobs and three temporary foreign workers are still working, Mr. Speaker. Does this Premier agree that this should not be happening at all, and will he actually commit to doing something about it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the temporary foreign worker program, we know in December 2013 the temporary foreign workers made up only about 2 per cent of our workforce here in the province. We also know, Mr. Speaker, of the immigrant nominee program, approximately 50 per cent of our nominees through the immigrant nominee program started out as temporary foreign workers.

I would be very interested to know if the position of the official opposition is that the temporary foreign worker program should be shuttered.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's pathetic that the minister won't even come close to addressing the actual issue and the displaced Saskatchewan worker that's in the Assembly here today.

This is the same company that was handed a health region contract in Prince Albert. This is the same company that walked away from a low-income housing unit contract in Regina with this government's blessing. In fact this government let them scrap the contract and keep the 48-unit housing project. The Social Services minister said, "I think our relationship with Deveraux warrants the fact that we don't thump on them." And we've heard from Troy that the Premier himself may have a pretty cozy relationship with Deveraux, as apparently the VP [vice-president] of Deveraux brags that the Premier has stayed with him at his condo, the VP's condo, down in Mexico.

Now the Premier knows about these facts, about Deveraux laying off Saskatchewan workers and keeping temporary foreign workers. Will this government actually do something, or will the Premier let his special relationship continue to cloud his judgment?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite, if he's making a specific allegation with regard to the Premier, he needs to do it, put it on the floor right now. Make that allegation outside; let's hear what it is.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, if you think that minister can get up and scare us away from doing our job and standing up for displaced Saskatchewan workers, that minister and that government has another think coming. We have a displaced worker that's in this Assembly here. That worker has shared this other piece around the very special relationship that the Premier has, and time and time again this Premier and this

government has showed that this very special relationship has clouded their judgment.

So today, not to the minister: will the Premier explain his special relationship with Deveraux and why his government has given this company special treatment, and really finally do the right thing and stand up to this company?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in the very obvious absence of the Premier, I will be taking that question.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we see some very, very serious insinuations being made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about knowledge that the Premier may or may not have had, refusing, refusing on the floor of the Assembly — protected by privilege, mind you — to put on the floor what those actual allegations are. I think he has an obligation, Mr. Speaker, that if he has specific allegations, he puts them on the floor of the Assembly. He knows he's protected by privilege in here. He's not out there. I challenge him to do it out there as well. He should do that, Mr. Speaker.

He's asking economic questions. Let's talk about the economy, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about job creation here in this province: 4.4 per cent, the lowest unemployment rate in the entire country by far, Mr. Speaker, 18 consecutive months of the lowest unemployment rate in the entire country.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the allegations that have been brought forward of displaced Saskatchewan workers, and a cozy relationship with the Premier, Mr. Speaker, you bet we'll go out into the rotunda and we'll stand up for Saskatchewan workers.

This minister's all over the map, Mr. Speaker, but hasn't answered a single question here today, hasn't stood up for Saskatchewan workers saying it's wrong to displace them, Mr. Speaker, and hasn't spoken to this very special relationship that this Premier and this government has with this developer, the same developer that they gave a housing project to, Mr. Speaker. Why won't this minister, why won't this government, why won't this Premier stand up for Saskatchewan workers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Again, Mr. Speaker, in the very obvious absence of the Premier, I'll be taking that question on behalf of the government.

You know, again the member is alluding to or making certain allegations against the Premier, about the Premier, about some sort of special relationship that the Premier apparently has. He refuses though to put any semblance of detail onto the floor about what that supposed special relationship is, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the economy, in terms of the economy, which they guffaw about this over there, Mr. Speaker, they take every chance they can to talk down the economy over there. We know that, Mr. Speaker. We had some spectacular job numbers on

Friday, showing Saskatchewan leading Canada in a whole bunch of categories with regard to our labour market, Mr. Speaker: 18 consecutive months, the lowest unemployment rate in Canada; the lowest youth unemployment rate in Canada by far, by nearly 5 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

We don't hear anything about that from them. They have nothing to say about the economy other than Buy Local Day, which you know, that's fine. We'll be happy to do that, Mr. Speaker. That's the only economic policy they have over there. We have a serious plan for our economy, Mr. Speaker, laid out in the plan for growth, which we've been delivering on.

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

Conditions at Health Facility

Ms. Chartier: — After a vulnerable senior with dementia ate detergent pods and died late last month, the CEO [chief executive officer] of Providence Place facility in Moose Jaw said there was no sign of any unresolved issues from residents or staff. The CEO and a health region vice-president said there were no issues with short-staffing. And the Health minister said, "I take the region at face value."

But then we learned that the union representing front-line workers wrote to that particular care facility and the health region back in January, raising major concerns about short-staffing putting residents at risk. Does the Health minister still stand by the facility CEO and the health region vice-president, or will he admit now that the government knew about major problems at Providence Place but ignored them?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the House and what I can tell the public is Providence Place in Moose Jaw, the number of beds at that facility haven't changed under this government. Same number of beds as it was under the NDP as it is today, Mr. Speaker. What has changed though is that funding to that facility is up 46 per cent in the last seven years and staffing levels are actually up 9 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

So when the member opposite presents petitions asking the government to re-establish, Mr. Speaker, the staffing numbers that they had in the past, Mr. Speaker, we don't want to do that, because what that would mean, Mr. Speaker, it would have to mean that we'd have to actually reduce staff in long-term care all across this province. We'd have to reduce nearly 800 full-time positions to get back to the staffing levels of the NDP.

What I'm also not going to do, Mr. Speaker, in any of these cases, is I'm not going to jump to conclusions as did the members opposite when they issued a news release about a serious situation, Mr. Speaker, that was riddled with mistakes, inaccuracies, speaking about an individual, Mr. Speaker, in circumstances that actually weren't factual to that individual. I'm not going to do like the NDP and jump to those conclusions.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon

Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — The letter sent by SEIU [Service Employees International Union] West to the care facility and the health region talked about having "... cause to be alarmed that chronic unsafe staffing levels can lead to serious consequences for residents, family members, and workers." It said, "Workers within Providence Place cannot be expected to work in an environment that is regularly and continuously short-staffed." It said, "Workers and residents should not have to carry the burden of managing more with less on a constant basis." And the letter warned that a major incident could happen because residents are being put at risk.

This warning letter was sent in January. Two months later a vulnerable senior in the facility ate detergent pods and died. When did the Health minister become aware of this warning letter?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to put on the table, in terms of what is actually taking place at Providence Place, I know that there had been accusations that had been made, I believe, by members opposite when this case first came up, Mr. Speaker, that alluded to the use of not filling shifts at that particular facility and the heavy use of overtime at that facility, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell the members opposite, over the first quarter of this calendar year at Providence Place, 8,365 shifts, Mr. Speaker, only 46 of those shifts went unfilled. Mr. Speaker, that is 0.54 per cent. And the amount of overtime of those 8,365 shifts, Mr. Speaker, 142 were filled using overtime. Mr. Speaker, that is less than 2 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to ensuring that we know the facts, Mr. Speaker, I think that's very important. In the case that the members opposite raised, knowing what exactly happened, finding out what exactly happened, I'm not going to, as members opposite have done, jump to conclusions and issue a news release that is factually incorrect, Mr. Speaker, where a family actually learns things that aren't true about their own family member, Mr. Speaker, about themselves through the news report, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to do that.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, to the minister: when did he learn about the warning letter?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously the health region will have conversations with their union leadership, with their staff, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask of the member opposite, who actually issued the news release on the 10th, last week, when did she actually learn, Mr. Speaker, that the senior didn't actually have dementia or Alzheimer's, but then put it in a news release, Mr. Speaker, for that individual to actually read in the news?

Imagine the trauma of that, Mr. Speaker, asking your family member, why is the media saying this about me when this actually isn't true, Mr. Speaker? [The Assembly adjourned at 14:17.]

Or saying that the police had to locate somebody, Mr. Speaker, when actually in fact what happened was it was a staff member that found the individual a block away, who decided to go out on a nice day, Mr. Speaker, after going out for church. This individual didn't have dementia, Mr. Speaker. I think he had the love of the Lord in his heart and wanted to go to church and then enjoy nature afterwards, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is irresponsible for the members opposite to issue a news release like this, but it's not the first time they've done it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to raise a point of order regarding statements made by the Deputy Leader during the question period just previous. He made certain allegations regarding a special relationship that the Premier has, and certainly those are unfounded allegations. He was asked to elaborate on them and did not, Mr. Speaker.

We would ask that you look into this matter and rule on a point of order.

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, certainly the member in question substantiated what he had to say. And if you review the records, Mr. Speaker, you'll certainly find that to be the case, and you'll find that the allegation by the member opposite is not well taken.

The Speaker: — Thank you. I listened during question period. There were insinuations put forward, but there was no accusations of impropriety or criminal activities. If there are issues of criminal activity, then it's incumbent on the member to bring that forward to the proper police authorities. Therefore I rule the point of order is not well taken.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn to accommodate the work of committees this afternoon and this evening.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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