



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

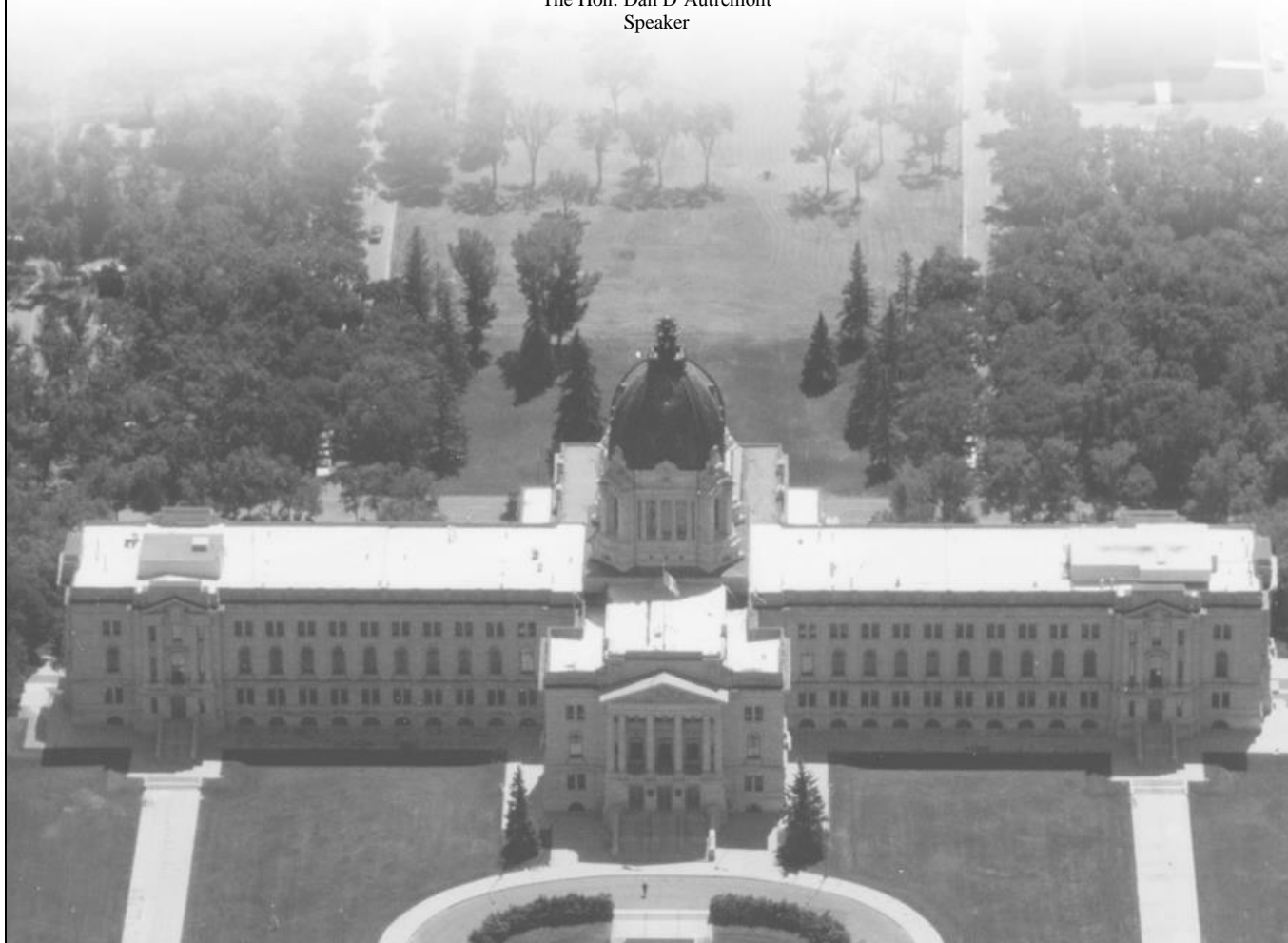
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(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, Hon. Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Hon. Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, 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
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, 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
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Hon. 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, 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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Corrections and Policing.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — I request leave for an extended introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in our legislature and to you and through you to all members of this Legislative Assembly, I wish to introduce His Worship Mayor Michael Fougere, Chair of the Board of Police Commissioners, city of Regina; Regina police chief, Troy Hagen. Also in attendance, the team from the province's Internet child exploitation unit, more commonly referred to as ICE. From Regina we have Staff Sergeant Ron Weir, provincial coordinator; Inspector Darrin McKechnie; and Constable Peter Froh. From the Saskatoon office we have Sergeant Deb Altrogge, Sergeant Darren Parisien, Constable Lindsey Wall, Constable Shannon Parker. From the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] we have Corporal Cory Patterson, Corporal Paul Fischer, Constable Dennis Wildbore. And from Prince Albert we have Constable Chris Lair.

They are all here today, Mr. Speaker, because we are confirming the funding this government provides to targeted policing initiatives in Regina. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister opposite and certainly welcome these leaders to their Assembly here today. To His Worship, the mayor of Regina, Michael Fougere, to Police Chief Hagen, thank you for joining us here today. And to those members and leaders within police forces, the civic polices, the Regina police, and the RCMP who are engaged in the work around child exploitation and engaged in ICE, thank you so much for your leadership and your work. Every parent in Saskatchewan thanks you for what you do. That work is critical, and any work we can provide or any way we can be supportive, certainly we're prepared to do so. So thank you for being here. We're proud to welcome you here today.

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery there are 22 students along with their teacher Mrs. Carrie Kiefer from A.E. Peacock Collegiate in Moose Jaw.

Mr. Speaker, A.E. Peacock Collegiate is a remarkable school of great staff and even better students. They've got great scholastic programs, as we'd expect, including their welding program, which I'll talk about a little bit more in a member's statement a little later on. But also they have excellent programs in their sports programming, their theatre, their track and field, and much more. So welcome to the students, and we'll be meeting later this morning. I ask all members to welcome Mrs. Kiefer and the grade 12 students of A.E. Peacock Collegiate to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join the member from Moose Jaw in welcoming the folks, the students from Peacock, and my own nephew up there. He's here to see the proceedings, and so I welcome him and all the students here to the Assembly. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to introduce the executive director of SaskMusic, Michael Dawson. Give us a wave. Michael was appointed to the position of executive director at SaskMusic in February of this year.

Mike has been an excellent addition to the team at SaskMusic. He's had extensive experience across Canada with tour booking, artist management, sponsorship management, and marketing and promotion. In addition to his behind-the-scenes work in the music industry, Mike is also a lyricist and multi-instrumentalist with the band Library Voices. Library Voices has a new album coming out next Friday called *Lovish*, and I'm looking forward to listening to it.

We're lucky to have such knowledgeable, dedicated leaders at SaskMusic, and I know that Michael, the board, and staff at SaskMusic will continue to do exceptional work supporting and promoting Saskatchewan artists. I ask, Mr. Speaker, that all members please join me in welcoming Michael to his legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join in with the minister to extend the opposition's welcome to Mr. Dawson here to his Legislative Assembly. Certainly he's no stranger to Saskatchewan stages in his role as a musician, and I know he's been up to Ness Creek a few times, Mr. Speaker.

He's also taking on the important leadership of a very important organization in Saskatchewan music scene. And SaskMusic has been doing this job for many years very, very well and certainly serves a very important role in the representation of Saskatchewan artists in Saskatchewan and beyond our borders, Mr. Speaker. So again on behalf of the official opposition, welcome to your Legislative Assembly and congratulations on the good work.

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all the members of our legislature, I'd like to introduce three very special constituents from Moose Jaw Wakamow: Trina Nicolson and her two children, Tye and Taysia. Trina's actually my CA [constituency assistant], and we all know the great work that our CAs do back at home so we're able to do our work here in the legislature. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like all members to welcome them to their legislature.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I had the opportunity to introduce my wife in the legislature. She must have enjoyed the question period so much that she's back here today, and she brought her CEO [chief executive officer] with her as well.

I'd like to introduce Prabha Vaidyanathan. Prabha, if you would stand and be recognized. Prabha is the CEO of Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan. She was born in India, moved to Canada to Ontario, then to Manitoba, and now calls Saskatchewan home. She found out that this is the place to be, and we welcome her. I know Women Entrepreneurs had an excellent meeting in Moose Jaw yesterday. The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow had a chance to attend.

Thank you, and welcome to your Legislative Assembly. I ask all members to do the same, to welcome them.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to join with the House Leader opposite to introduce and welcome these two members to their Assembly. We very much appreciate when the guest that's here today again, Trish Cheveldayoff, is here because the House Leader sort of has a level of decorum that's different, and we appreciate that.

But we very much appreciate both Prabha's and Trish's leadership for Women Entrepreneurs. Certainly the support you provide across Saskatchewan is important in providing support to exceptional entrepreneurs in this province. And certainly when we look to entrepreneurs, we need to recognize that they're key drivers in this economy.

So it's my pleasure to welcome Prabha and Trish to their Assembly. And it's noteworthy to also thank Prabha for her leadership to the accounting profession in this province over the past number of years as well. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your contributions to Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you, seated in the west gallery, Muhammad Fiaz. Muhammad is our candidate in Regina Pasqua for the Saskatchewan Party. So I know that Muhammad and his team have been out knocking on doors, meeting with people, working very hard to ensure that he is going to be a

sitting MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in the next election. So welcome to the Legislative Assembly, Muhammad, and I know I look forward to having you become one of us on this side of the House. Thank you very much.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of GSAs [gender and sexuality alliance] in Saskatchewan schools. And we know that this government is not doing enough to create safe spaces in our schools for sexually diverse students or students being bullied because of their sexual identity or sexual orientation, and that gender and sexually diverse students are four times more likely than their heterosexual peers to attempt suicide.

And we know that GSAs offer opportunities for gender and sexually diverse students to assert their needs and have their voices heard, and that these alliances offer opportunities to improve attendance, retention rates, generate meaningful relationships at schools, and reduce homophobic and transphobic bullying. And this government must act so students have simple, easy-to-understand information about gender and sexual alliances in their schools, how to form GSAs and who they should talk to in order to form their GSAs. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on this government to take immediate and meaningful action to pass the respect for diversity, students' rights bill and enshrine in legislation the right of Saskatchewan students to form GSAs within their schools in order to foster caring, accepting, inclusive environments and deliver equal opportunities for all students to reach their full potential.

And [Mr. Speaker] as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Moose Jaw and Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again today to present a petition in support of better seniors' care. The petitioners point out that it was this government that removed the regulations requiring a minimum standard of care for seniors. And the petitioners also talk about short-staffing that's resulted in their loved ones often going out with the care, going with the care they . . . They could use much, much better care, Mr. Speaker, is the bottom line. That chronic understaffing in seniors' care facilities has led to unanswered calls for help; people sitting, left unattended on the toilet for hours on end; and infrequent bathing, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government

to immediately undertake meaningful steps to improve the quality of seniors' care, including creating more spaces and more choices for seniors; ensuring higher standards of care in public facilities, private facilities, and home care; ensuring appropriate staffing levels in seniors' care facilities; restoring regulations that provide minimum standards of care; and providing more support to help seniors remain independent in their own homes for as long as they desire.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Cupar. I so submit.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to present a petition by residents in the province of Saskatchewan concerned with the high cost of post-secondary education, particularly around tuition levels. The petitioners point out that the average Canadian student in 2014 graduated with debt of over \$27,000, not including credit card and other private debts. In the prayer that reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to immediately increase the funding for post-secondary education in this province, with a legislated provision that this increase in funding be used to lower tuition fees.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by individuals from Preeceville, Lumsden, Raymore, and Regina. I so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

#### University of Regina Alumni Awards

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. On October 1st I had the pleasure to attend the University of Regina's Alumni Crowning Achievement Awards Dinner. Each year these awards recognize University of Regina alumni who have made significant contributions in academia, sports, and the community.

In the order that follows, Mr. Speaker, the winners were: Outstanding Young Alumni Award to Cherish Jean-Baptiste, who does tremendous work in the public sector and in the community, Mr. Speaker. Barry Clarke was recognized with the Dr. Robert and Norma Ferguson Award for Outstanding Service to the University for his many years of helping to support Cougar athletics on the campus.

Dr. Kristian Baker was recognized with the Distinguished Professional Award for her cutting-edge contributions to the world of science. And the multi-award-winning Jim Hopson was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for his many years of work in education and of course at the helm of our beloved Saskatchewan Roughriders.

Rob Deglau received the Distinguished Humanitarian and Community Service Award in recognition of his many years of

service as a city councillor here in Regina and for his work over the years at the North Central Community Association. I've known Rob for more than 20 years, and I know that our community is richer because of his tireless work in the fight against poverty, crime, and racism.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing and thanking all of the award recipients for the work that they do to make Saskatchewan even better. And I want to say thank you very much to the University of Regina administration and the alumni association for providing this excellent opportunity every year to celebrate the success of the University of Regina graduates. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

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

#### Funding for Regina Police Service and Internet Child Exploitation Unit

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2007 this government promised 120 police officers in the province, and our government delivered on that promise. Since '07 this government has invested over \$95 million in targeted policing grants and initiatives throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, our government has reconfirmed this commitment to community safety once again with our municipal policing grant of \$4.6 million for the Regina Police Service. These funds will be invested in initiatives like enhanced community policing, enhanced investigative policing, missing persons, the combined forces special enforcement unit, serious habitual offender comprehensive action plan, and the Internet child exploitation unit, which is here with us today.

The ICE unit, which will receive just over \$1 million in funding for all units across the province to ensure that the most vulnerable in our communities, our children, are kept safe. Over the last five years, the ICE unit has been able to rescue six children in Saskatchewan, six children who without the ICE unit would not have had the opportunity to grow up and live full lives.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking Regina Police Service and the ICE unit for all the hard work they do in keeping our communities safe and our children safe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Writer Wins Governor General's Award

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my great pleasure today to rise in this Assembly to recognize one of our province's most prolific and decorated authors. Earlier this week, Saskatoon's own Guy Vanderhaeghe was named as the winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for his short fiction collection, *Daddy Lenin and Other Stories*. This is the third

time he has won this award, and when he travels to Ottawa in December to receive the award from Governor General David Johnston, he will join an elite group of only three other Canadian authors who have won this illustrious award three times. Guy Vanderhaeghe's previous two awards were given for his 1982 collection of short stories, *Man Descending*, and his 1996 novel, *The Englishman's Boy*.

The jury for this year's award praised *Daddy Lenin and Other Stories* as "the work of an assured writer who needs no pyrotechnics to keep us reading. Each story is superbly crafted, razor-sharp, wickedly funny. The reader is carried along in the hands of a master, a seasoned professional at the top of his game."

And I would certainly encourage all members and those watching today to stop by their local libraries and bookstores and grab one of Guy Vanderhaeghe's books. They truly are the best of the best when it comes to Canadian literature.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Guy Vanderhaeghe on his well-deserved award and in wishing him many more years of awards, success, and world-class storytelling. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

#### Youth for Christ Hope Dinner

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to stand in this House today and acknowledge another successful Youth for Christ annual Hope Dinner fundraiser. I had the privilege to once again attend this great event with several of my colleagues, including the Minister of Rural and Remote Health and the members from Biggar, Moose Jaw North, and Cypress Hills.

This year's theme was Not Alone and emphasized how the various programs that Youth for Christ offers are impacting the lives of young people from across the province in a positive way. Some of the programs they offer include school programs impacting an average of 150 youth per week, housing for vulnerable youth, serving of healthy meals, and their Gymblast program.

At the dinner, several young people shared their stories of how these programs have changed their lives and given them hope. Mr. Speaker, the one story that particularly stood out to me was that of a First Nations young man who had lost his parents at a young age and had been subjected to bullying and abuse most of his life. It was through one of the housing programs offered by Youth for Christ that he experienced hope for the first time. This young man felt that he had no purpose in life and he was close to giving up, yet through the YFC [Youth for Christ] program and its volunteers, this young man's life was transformed.

Mr. Speaker, I would invite all members of this house to join me in congratulating Youth for Christ on another successful banquet fundraiser and thank them for their hard work in our communities.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

#### Rescue Squad Celebrates 30th Anniversary

**Ms. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 17th, I was pleased to speak at the Sirens & Sapphires Gala, honouring the Lloydminster Rescue Squad's 30th anniversary. The 620 well-dressed guests walked the blue carpet, celebrating the efforts of past Rescue Squad celebrities. It was a great night, and the event raised at least \$100,000 for the Rescue Squad, which will go towards training and equipment as well as ensuring they have a home. This is a great indication of how much our community values and appreciates the great work they do.

Mr. Speaker, since its founding in 1985, this organization has grown in the number of volunteers who are committed to providing emergency services to Lloydminster and the surrounding area. The Rescue Squad has responded and given their expertise to vehicle collisions, water rescues, snowstorm searches, and local fires. It takes a special kind of person with great passion and commitment to their community to do this type of work.

I also had the distinct honour to present Chief Norman Namur with the fire service's Exemplary Service Medal, a 20-year service award. Norm is one of the founding members of this squad, and his outstanding leadership has guided the growth and success of the squad for the past 30 years.

All the members of this volunteer squad demonstrate the best of Saskatchewan. I ask all members to join me in thanking all the organizers and volunteers on such a fantastic event and congratulating the Lloydminster Rescue Squad on a fantastic 30 years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Donation to A.E. Peacock Collegiate

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the students and staff of A.E. Peacock Collegiate in Moose Jaw. Earlier this week, Peacock Collegiate was selected as one of ten schools across Canada to receive funding from the Canadian Welding Association Foundation.

The funding is a donation of \$50,000 over 10 years to enhance the school's welding program. Welding teacher Martin Holzer was very pleased with the funding donation and said, "This opens up other opportunities . . . now we're going to get a piece of equipment in that's the latest technology in welding." Mr. Speaker, what an honour it is to have a school from our province be recognized and selected to receive this funding, funding that will advance our students' learning and lead to greater outcomes for them in the future.

Ms. Deborah Mates, director of the Canadian Welding Association, was also very supportive and had this to say, "We wanted to be able to build on their programs, because the more they could offer to students the better the experience is at secondary, making it more likely they're going to move on to do an apprenticeship."

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating A.E. Peacock Collegiate and thanking the Canadian Welding

Association for their generous investment gift and the support of our students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Batoche.

### Pharmacists Provide Free Flu Shots

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to note in this House this morning that my hon. colleague the Minister of Health will receive his flu shot early this afternoon at the Medicine Shoppe on Grant Road in an event put on by the Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan and chamber of commerce. This vaccination is a simple way to protect yourself, your family, and others from influenza.

Public health staff have been busy making sure our residents have easy access to the free flu vaccine. Starting this year, Saskatchewan residents also are able to get their free flu shot at participating community pharmacies. It makes it easier, especially for busy families, seniors, or people living in rural and remote areas who may not be able to attend traditional flu clinics on scheduled dates.

We're pleased that pharmacists will provide this important service and support our dedicated public health staff in protecting our residents' health as they play a key role in a patient's health care experience. Our government is proud to work with pharmacists to provide this great care. I want to thank them for their expertise and the great work they do each and every day. I would encourage my colleagues in this House, as well as the people of Saskatchewan, to get vaccinated this fall.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Carbon Capture and Storage Project

**Mr. Broten:** — Yesterday the Premier continued to say that the carbon capture plant was operating at full capacity on day one, back when he had his big celebration out at Boundary dam last October. But we need to compare what he said to what the internal documents show. Here's a note from a month and a half after that big grand opening: "Capture plant has yet to achieve full load." The capture plant has yet to achieve full load. So not once, not once in that month and a half did the plant capture 90 per cent of emissions. Not once.

So the question for the Premier is this: should we trust what he says or should we trust the internal briefing note from SaskPower's head of carbon capture?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, what the member has just stated is incorrect. Mr. Speaker, even if the plant is running at some level of operation overall for the year less than 100 per cent, when it's running, when it's turned on, it's capturing at 90 per cent. For all of the CO<sub>2</sub> that goes through the amine, that goes through the technology, 90 per cent of the CO<sub>2</sub> is captured. That's how we know the technology works.

There are some challenges around mechanical issues at the plant. There have been, Mr. Speaker, since the start-up. When it starts up again, I'll repeat, it runs at 90 per cent capture, Mr. Speaker, which would put us on track to capture 1 million tonnes a year which will be sold to Cenovus. Mr. Speaker, we know that it works because 400 000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> have already been captured and sequestered and sold and, as a result of that, this year we'll even turn a profit.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP [New Democratic Party] were instrumental in the province of Saskatchewan — and I give them full credit for this — in bringing the Canadian Light Source to the University of Saskatchewan. But when it first went into operation in September of '03, it didn't work perfectly. In fact progress was delayed several months. They called it the commissioning year. Here's the reasons why. It was difficult to correct the orbit. Injection efficiencies were poor. It was giving the wrong polarity, and there was a large obstruction across the centre of the chamber. That's pretty straightforward I guess, Mr. Speaker.

The point is this, though. The point is on these major research and development scientific projects, on these major projects, the first year is the commissioning year. It's going to operate. It's going to ramp down again for the adjustments to be made, for the improvements to be made. And while it's operating, it captures 90 per cent of the CO<sub>2</sub>. The CO<sub>2</sub> that goes through the technology is captured at 90 per cent. We know this because we've already captured 400 000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> and sold them to Cenovus, and there'll be a profit frankly of \$5 million at the end of the year.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier has got a lot more explaining to do based on answers like that when what he is saying is in complete contradiction to what internal documents show time and time again, Mr. Speaker. Briefing materials prepared for the 2015 spring session, 2015 spring session, clearly say that the project should be able, should be able to operate at full capacity by March. Should be able to operate at full capacity.

But you know what's interesting, Mr. Speaker? That was after, after the mid-February news release which says the project was exceeding expectations. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? You know what the Premier said yesterday? Well he was adamant as we hear again today, Mr. Speaker, adamant that the project was operating at a full capacity, capturing 90 per cent of emissions when that news release went out, Mr. Speaker.

So either we believe the briefing materials prepared by SaskPower for the 2015 spring session or we believe the Premier. We can't trust both, Mr. Speaker, because they tell very different stories. To the Premier: which one is right?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well we'll try this again, Mr. Speaker. When the plant is turned on — as it has been through the commissioning year and it has been ramped down as well — when it's turned on and CO<sub>2</sub> is passing through the technology, through the amine, 90 per cent is captured. That's the fact.

Cumulatively over the year, 40 per cent has been captured, and that's why we have the 400 000 tonnes that have been sold to Cenovus.

So these are the facts, and I think officials that have been here from SaskPower have reiterated that these are the facts, Mr. Speaker. Moreover we know that in a number of days the mechanical problems at issue, not an issue with the technology but mechanical problems, will be addressed. They are being addressed currently by the engineers and the plant is going to move to full operation again in November.

I hope members will support it, because you know what, Mr. Speaker? In our province we rely almost 50 per cent on coal. The member will know this. We rely 50 per cent on coal to generate electricity in the province of Saskatchewan. And we have two choices now: we can either clean it up or we can shut it down. The NDP in Alberta have said they're going to shut down coal. Kathleen Wynne has said she's shutting down coal in Ontario. We would like to know what members opposite have planned. What's their position on coal? Because if they're not in favour of this technology to clean up coal, there's only one other choice vis-à-vis federal regulations, and that's to shut it down.

So the member should stop laughing, because there are jobs at stake. What is his position on coal? Does coal have a future should he ever be the premier of this province of Saskatchewan?

[10:30]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, what is at stake is a \$1.5 billion project that is not working, and a complete lack of transparency, Mr. Speaker, from this government. And, Mr. Speaker, it's ratepayers that will be digging out of this hole because of the failure of this government to get it right, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier said several times yesterday that whenever the unit is turned on, it's capturing 90 per cent. And unbelievably, he's saying it again today, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday he said, "When the unit is running, it captures 90 per cent from the outset." And he repeated that many times, and we've heard it again.

But, Mr. Speaker, that contradicts, that contradicts what the Sask Party president said two days ago, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the Sask Party president said the absolute best, the absolute best, Mr. Speaker, that they've been able to achieve is a 78 per cent capture rate — the absolute max. That's what the SaskPower president said, Mr. Speaker. So again to the Premier: who are we supposed to believe? Should we believe him or should we believe SaskPower's president?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, we're going to watch the member opposite's rhetoric again and correct the record, because he just stood up and inferred that there would be costs borne by ratepayers as a result of any of this. And I want to be very clear. All costs associated with the fixes that are required,

Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the members want to hear the answer to the question that they've asked. And they'll want to know that all costs associated with the fixes required are covered under warranty, Mr. Speaker, or will be submitted as a result of the legal process that's under way. So the taxpayers, the ratepayers will be kept whole, Mr. Speaker.

We've indicated, I've indicated that when the capture plant is turned on, it operates at 90 per cent capture. That's the target. That's what we'll achieve. As the engineers notice any kind of drop-off in that, there are repairs made; there are adjustments made. That's completely consistent with what the original goals were, Mr. Speaker.

But this is an important question. And this technology is, it's transformational. It's world-leading technology. We have every confidence it's going to work. The engineers do. And it's important that it work. There are jobs at stake, that it would work. The federal government has provided regulations that would shut down our coal industry in this province. We know other NDP governments are shutting down their coal industry rather than cleaning it up.

There are 500 people working in Boundary dam in 3, 4, and 5 today. There are 400 people mining coal in this province.

We have two choices. We either clean up the coal with this technology or we shut it down and we say goodbye to those jobs and watch electrical rates go up. Is that his position? His critic has said she wants to move away from coal. We have it on record. Is that his position? Does he want to abandon coal? Is he going to pay for it in jobs, and will Saskatchewan people pay higher power rates as a result?

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, hilarious to see the Premier in full flight here and completely skirting, Mr. Speaker, whether or not we should be trusting what he said or what the SaskPower president said, Mr. Speaker, because two different stories.

Here's exactly what SaskPower's president said just two days ago, Mr. Speaker, when they put him out in the rotunda. And perhaps we'll hear more today, Mr. Speaker, about that as well. But this is what the SaskPower president said two days ago: "The plant was designed to capture 90 per cent of emissions. At peak capacity it will remove 3240 tonnes a day." He went on: "We've had that plant operating at 26 to 2800 tonnes per day for periods of time. So we're up at that 80 per cent capture rate or close to it."

A max of 2800 tonnes per day, Mr. Speaker, is 78 per cent capacity, which isn't anywhere near what the Premier just said in this House and what he has said, Mr. Speaker, previously outside. In fact he, over and over and over, said that this unit has been capturing 90 per cent of emissions from the outset whenever it's turned on. So again to the Premier: who should we believe? SaskPower's president or the Premier?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, the SaskPower president, Mr. Monea, the president of CCS [carbon capture and sequestration]



division at SaskPower have . . . consistently say, and say today, that this technology is going to capture 90 per cent of the CO<sub>2</sub>, Mr. Speaker, and . . . Well the Leader of the Opposition's yelling from his seat now and we're trying to provide him answers to his questions.

Here's another question he might want to ask. When he ran for the leadership, when he ran for the leadership and became leader of his party on March the 9th, he said this, and I quote, "wants to make our province a world leader in safe, environmentally friendly, and economic viable carbon capture and sequestration by equipping our current power plants with mechanisms to safely capture and sequester CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, permitting SaskPower to profit from its knowledge." That's what he said in March when he became leader. Three months later, in May, the critic for SaskPower in the *Melville Advance* said, "At one point the NDP supported carbon capture, but has since moved away from it, while the SaskParty still supports it."

So what's the position of the NDP? Are you committed to trying to clean up the coal? Because if you're not, the only option that we have is to shut down the power and to shut down the mining, costing 1,000 jobs and driving up rates in this province. That's what we've seen in Ontario. The NDP in Alberta are going to do it. Yes or no, does that leader support the use of coal, the mining of coal, and the use in electrical generation in the province of Saskatchewan?

**The Speaker:** — I would ask that members on both sides of the House allow the person asking the question to be heard, and the person responding to the question to be heard. I recognize the Opposition Leader.

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, this is 100 per cent about the credibility of what we are hearing from the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the president of SaskPower said two days ago, "We've had that plant operating at 26 to 2800 tonnes per day for periods of time. So we're up at that 80 per cent capture rate or close to it." In reality it's 78 per cent.

On repeated occasions, the Premier, right up until today, Mr. Speaker, says it's capturing 90 per cent whenever it's turned on. My question to the Premier: does he dispute what Mike Marsh, the president of SaskPower, says?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I note that my friend, the Leader of the Opposition, has dodged a pretty important question and then repeats the same question which I've already answered.

Here's the other thing . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member from Saskatoon Centre is chirping from his seat. He ought to listen to this now. Here's something else that the critic for SaskPower, the member for Saskatoon Nutana, said. She said this is . . . speaking of BD3 [Boundary dam 3] . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Here's what she said April 16th. This is the Leader of the Opposition's critic now for SaskPower. She says this about Boundary dam 3:

This is way too expensive of a technology for Saskatchewan ratepayers to be responsible for. It's extremely expensive and we know that there are many other ways to generate electricity and get rid of our emissions without focusing on coal.

Mr. Speaker, the questions that have been asked by the opposition on the project are absolutely fair. So is this question. There are thousands of jobs in this — well 1,000 jobs, direct jobs — in this province that rely on coal mining and they're IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers] jobs at Boundary dam 3, 4, and 5 that rely on coal power, that rely on this government moving forward with a technology that will clean up coal. We either clean up coal or, by federal regulation, we'll have to abandon it.

Now the NDP, his counterpart in Alberta, have said they're going to phase out coal. We haven't given up on coal yet because of this technology. We're going to carry forward. We're going to clean up the coal so we can operate it, so we can market the technology internationally. There's plenty of interest already, Mr. Speaker, as China and India continue to build coal.

The question in this debate is, what's his solution? If he's going to shut down that coal-fired generation, what does he say to those IBEW members, those jobs? What does he say to the miners' jobs and ratepayers of electricity who will face much higher costs under a plan like that, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, I think it's telling that we just saw the Premier stop using this 90 per cent figure, Mr. Speaker. And no, no clarification, Mr. Speaker, if we're supposed to be believing the Sask Party president's story or the Premier's story, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible] . . . We see a lot of bluster, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to the facts. But we see the facts, Mr. Speaker. We see a very different story.

The Premier's also claiming, he is claiming that he has no idea about serious design flaws with this carbon capture project. This is what he said yesterday: "I didn't know it had fundamental design flaws." Mr. Speaker, but that doesn't add up one bit, because we know a briefing note prepared two days, two days in advance of the grand opening, said the project had "serious design issues" and "fundamental design issues and serious design deficiencies." This was a briefing note two days, Mr. Speaker, before the grand opening.

Does the Premier, the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan, actually expect us to believe that he never read that briefing note or that no one bothered to tell him that there were serious design issues with this project? Does he expect us to believe that?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, with any major science project — and we've already referenced the synchrotron project

in Saskatoon — there's a commissioning year. There are difficulties that are experienced. There are those in the organizations that will offer up what those risks and difficulties might be, and then there's the final decision to go forward. And we made the final decision to go forward with the project on the best advice of engineers at SaskPower, Mr. Speaker. We made that decision because we believe that coal, at about 50 per cent of the generation of our electricity in the province, needs a future. We were aware of federal regulations with respect to coal that will shut coal plants down. And if there are no coal plants, there's no coal mining. That's a lot of direct jobs.

We also have seen in other provinces who have shut down coal, rates have gone through the roof for homeowners and for businesses. Coal needs to be part of our mix, along with renewables, along with natural gas, Mr. Speaker, along with hydro. Coal's going to be part of the mix in the province because of BD3, because we moved ahead with technology that is working.

The question is simple to the Leader of the Opposition: does he agree with the leader of the NDP in Alberta? Is it his position we should shut down coal? That's the position of his critic. She has said we should move away from coal. Is that his position? And if he's prepared to say that in Regina, will he go down to Estevan and say it there?

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, absolutely unbelievable we'd have these responses from the Premier. He gets a briefing note two days before a grand opening, talking about serious design deficiencies, and he expects us, Mr. Speaker, to believe . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Will the member for Arm River-Watrous come to order please. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, this is not believable in the least bit that he wouldn't have been told or wouldn't have read this information. Okay, but even if, even if we'll believe, Mr. Speaker, that he didn't read a briefing note of September 2014, and even if the minister and the many officials didn't bother to tell him about serious design flaws back then, surely, surely he would have seen the February 17th, 2015 briefing note or at least he would have been told about it. This note talks about very serious legal action, and it says:

Despite advising SNC-Lavalin about these deficiencies, SaskPower has had to correct many of the deficiencies itself. In addition, SaskPower has had to perform work that is within SNC-Lavalin's responsibilities.

It goes on to say:

The above noted breaches by SNC-Lavalin have resulted in SaskPower incurring substantial, additional costs.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier actually expect us to believe that he wasn't told about serious design problems and deficiencies and significant legal issues with SNC-Lavalin?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to my hon. friend, and I've provided this answer already, that all costs associated with the fixes required by the commissioning year events are covered under warranty or are going to be recovered in court. So ratepayers won't pay, and obviously there's remedy for the company as well.

I've also received and I appreciate the note from the president because the . . . of SaskPower, not the Sask Party. The hon. member was quoting him a lot, Mr. Speaker, moments ago about the 90 per cent figure. I want him to listen carefully. The NDP, Mr. Speaker, those who would subscribe to the . . . or ascribe to this position he's stated, are confusing the efficiency of the amine capture process, 90 per cent, with the volume capacity of the plant which is reduced because of the mechanical issues, which is what we've been saying all along. The capture is 90 per cent.

Well he was quoting . . . He says that he doesn't believe it. He was just quoting the president of SaskPower. He believed him then when it suited his political needs, and now that we've clarified it from information from the president of SaskPower, he says, I'm really not interested. You know who's not interested in this particular line of questioning without some clarification on coal and on the future of coal in this province under an NDP government, heaven forbid? The people of Estevan and area, the people of the province of Saskatchewan — who note, for the record, that the critic for SaskPower has said they want to move away from coal, that she doesn't think there's any interest in carbon capture. We've got lots of quotes.

The Leader of the Opposition says, well there might be, but from this line of questioning and his lack of clarification on the issue, we're left to wonder what the NDP would do if ever they were in office. Would they do as Premier Notley in Alberta has said she would do? Would they shut down coal in the province? You either clean it up or shut it down. What's his position?

[10:45]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, what a complete joke, these responses we're getting from the Premier, Mr. Speaker. We're getting story after story that's conflicting with one another, stories, Mr. Speaker, that don't match with the internal briefing notes whatsoever, Mr. Speaker. And the Premier's actually expecting us to believe this.

It's incredibly hard to believe the Premier because this is a project, this is a project that he has been incredibly close to. He has travelled the world bragging about it. He's hosted delegations. He's attended every possible meeting and he's visited this facility a lot. So when the Premier says, "I didn't know it had fundamental design flaws," "I didn't know it had fundamental design flaws," that's pretty hard to believe. Because the internal documents are so clear.

Now maybe he wasn't paying attention to the right details or maybe he's just forgotten what he was told, Mr. Speaker, or maybe he doesn't want to share what he knew and when he

knew it. But, Mr. Speaker, I think Saskatchewan people have a right to know the truth. So what is the Premier's explanation for apparently not knowing about fundamental design flaws with this project?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, we've seen this from this member before where he would use words like joke, like he just did in his preamble, in terms of the answers provided. The answer that I just provided with respect to the 90 per cent figure comes from the president of SaskPower. I mean honestly, a moment ago he was quoting the president of SaskPower and now he stands up and basically calls the president of SaskPower a joke or his answers were a joke. I don't think that's acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

There is an important debate that this will lead to. First of all, the work will continue on the plant. They're going to be at full operational capacity here soon and then we'll have more debate, I'm sure, and questions. But what won't be resolved, what will not be resolved is, what is the NDP's position on coal?

Here's what the SaskPower critic, the MLA for Saskatoon Nutana said. She said, the article in *The Estevan Mercury* is, and I'm quoting, Mr. Speaker:

Cathy Sproule . . . MLA for Saskatoon Nutana, has opposed SaskPower's implantation of CCS technology and said many other companies across the world have "abandoned" the idea of retrofitted . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — If the member for Saskatoon Centre wishes to continue talking, I will recognize him when the Premier is finished his response. So I expect him to be on his feet. I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, *The Estevan Mercury*, February of this year, I'm quoting:

Cathy Sproule . . . MLA for Saskatoon Nutana, has opposed SaskPower's implantation of CCS technology and said many other companies across the world have "abandoned" the idea of retrofitted coal . . . power plants.

That's what the member said, that she pointed to other countries that are abandoning even an attempt to clean it up.

There's a simple question here. What is the NDP's position? Is it worth trying to clean it up? Is it worth making sure BD3 is successful, so we could make sure coal is part of the mix, make sure rates are affordable for Saskatchewan people, keep people working, offer this technology to places like China and India that are burning coal, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the fight on climate change? Is that worth it, yes or no? Clean it up or shut it down? What's his position?

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the

opportunity to ask a question. The Premier's been seriously deflecting and not answering questions. We want to know, when did he know about the design flaws in the project?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — I thank the member for the question. We've obviously canvassed the issue about the 90 per cent. I think perhaps the Leader of the Opposition will want to explain later why he discounts the explanation from the president of SaskPower.

We know the project is coming back into full operation soon, as the mechanical problems are dealt with. We know the technology captures 90 per cent of the CO<sub>2</sub>. We know this is world-leading, transformational technology for us here in Saskatchewan so that coal could be part of the mix, so that coal-burning countries around the world can clean up their own energy profile, can use our technology in the fight against climate change.

Here's what else we learned from question period today, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition, four months from an election campaign, cannot stand in his place and answer directly whether he thinks coal should be part of our mix or not. He couldn't answer the basic question: clean it up or shut it down? Those are the only two choices we have because of regulations coming. We either clean up coal here or we shut it down.

We think we need to have it cleaned up and, as a part of the mix, that we can keep rates down for our businesses and our families across the province. We need to keep those people working in plants and in the mines. That's our plan on this side. BD3's a big part of that. Mr. Speaker, once again I encourage him, outside in the rotunda and especially down in Estevan, to let the folks know there, will he clean it up? Will he agree that we should clean it up or does he want to shut it down, Mr. Speaker?

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member on her feet?

## MOTION UNDER RULE 61

### Consideration of Carbon Capture Project

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I would like to seek leave under rule 61 to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity. If there is unanimous consent to do so, I'd be prepared to move the following very brief motion:

That this Assembly instructs the Crown and Central Agencies Committee to reconvene at the earliest possible opportunity to question the Premier, SaskPower minister, and officials, and review internal documents and records so Saskatchewan people can know the true state of affairs with the government's carbon capture experiment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Under rule 61, the member has requested leave to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity. She has explained the motion. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Yes.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — The nos have it.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — I'm comfortable sitting here all afternoon if you want to. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 983 through 997.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has ordered questions 983 to 997. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 998 and 999.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has tabled responses to questions 998 and 999. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answer to question 1,000.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has ordered response to question 1,000.

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Greystone.

#### Surgical Wait Times

**Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to be moving a motion related to the tangible, real successes that we've seen for people in Saskatchewan when it comes to reducing surgical wait times in Saskatchewan.

I thought what I'd do, Mr. Speaker, is I'd start with a brief summary of some of the work that's been undertaken, then I'd move on to perhaps some of the experiences we've seen previously under the NDP and why this is so important at this stage of Saskatchewan's political development because, as we have a contestation of ideas coming forward in the coming months in the form of a provincial election, these issues will no doubt, and correctly so, receive increased attention.

Mr. Speaker, importantly, our government has invested more than \$285 million, more than \$285 million in dedicated funding into the Saskatchewan surgical initiative and enhanced surgical services. As a result, surgical wait times in Saskatchewan are now among the shortest in Canada. That provides us an opportunity to compare where we've come from, the number of people waiting now today compared to 2007. It's an apt reference point.

So more than 18 months, waiting more than 18 months, that number is down 99 per cent from more than 2,600 patients to 18. There is more work to do, but that can only be seen as a fundamental and transformative improvement. Those waiting more than a year, down by 98 per cent from 5,136 patients to 97. Again we know there's more work to do, but this is an exponential improvement. Those waiting more than six months, that number's gone down 95 per cent; from 10,644 patients to just over 580. And those waiting more than three months, that number's moved down 83 per cent; from 15,365 patients to 2,587. We know there's more work to do, but these numbers demonstrate that we have seen a fundamental shift take place, not simply in philosophy but in results, real results for people across this province.

So when we actually have a sense of what's helped foster and facilitate this . . . I notice the member from Saskatoon Nutana is especially interested in this, and she ought to be because when we think about the dollars that have been invested, that's an important infusion.

But when we also think about some of the changes, one of those changes is the engagement of private surgical clinics within the public system since 2010. So through these private surgical clinics, we've seen over 47,000 surgeries completed, in fact here in Regina, more than 19,000 and in Saskatoon, more than 27,000. And as far as private diagnostic services, those provided by private diagnostic clinics, over 14,600 CT [computerized tomography] scans provided in 2014-15 alone and over 3,000 MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] provided in 2014 and '15 alone. Those are significant improvements, and we'll get into what those improvements have meant and what they represent across the province and also hear some anecdotes from individuals.

But that 2007 reference point to have these improvements actually provides us an opportunity to think and remember and recall where we were, the NDP record. In 2006, Saskatchewan was deemed to have the longest wait time of any province in Canada. In fact in the 1999 election campaign, the Saskatchewan NDP was re-elected on a promise to cut the wait-lists by 30 per cent over four years. That was a promise in 1999.

[11:00]

How did they do? Rhetoric and reality. So the rhetoric was the promise of reduced wait times by 30 per cent. And how did they do? Those wait-lists actually increased by 61 per cent. So the member from Nutana and in fact her colleagues and indeed her leader have an opportunity to reflect on the improvements, have an opportunity to weigh in.

And when asked recently, on October 26th, just a few days ago, a simple, straightforward question by a member of the media . . . The question was, would you cut private surgical clinics? Would you cut private surgical clinics? The leader of the NDP said this: "The same gains or better gains could have been made by building capacity within the public system. That is certainly my preference." That's a curious phrase: "That's certainly my preference." Maybe it's an ideological preference. Maybe it's an idiosyncratic preference. Maybe it's his own personal preference. Maybe there's a lack of understanding on the

empirical record.

And that's why this debate is so important because we're not simply talking about numbers; we're talking about our neighbours. We're talking about people right across this province. And that's important because when we think about the surgeries performed or offered in three months across the province, the Sun Country Health Region has performed or offered surgeries 100 per cent of the time within three months; Five Hills Health Region, 100 per cent; Cypress Health Region, 100 per cent; Sunrise Health Region, 100 per cent; Heartland Health Region, 100 per cent; Kelsey Trail Health Region, 100 per cent; Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, 88 per cent; Saskatoon Health Region, 88 per cent; Prince Albert Parkland Health Region, 94 per cent; and Prairie North Health Region, 100 per cent. Province wide, an average of 91 per cent.

So when we think about these results, it may be fair to say, are we seeing practices like this from other provinces? And in fact, we are. We're seeing that private clinics are operating in British Columbia, in Alberta, NDP Alberta, in Ontario, and Nova Scotia. And so as we look across the country, we see that this is consistent with practices undertaken in other provinces, and we see real results for the people of Saskatchewan.

So let's go back. It's worth having a look back before 2007, before there was a focus on improving real results for the people of this province.

We can go back to a *StarPhoenix* article, B7 in 1999. It's May 19th, the full text. It says:

You're ill, you need treatment . . . and you wait.

After seeing your general practitioner, you wait for an appointment with a specialist.

You wait for an appointment with a magnetic resonance imaging machine and you wait for an appointment with a surgeon.

The waiting list is one of the defining characteristics of Canada's system of universal health care. Everybody qualifies for hospital service and there are limited resources so some people must wait.

In Saskatoon and across the province, it has been subject to bitter public and political debate.

Several recent reports have suggested Saskatchewan is one of the worst provinces in the country when it comes to waiting times for some medical treatments.

That was 1999. Perhaps unfair to go back that far but it allows us to say what happened after the 2003 election when, during that election campaign, the NDP promised, among other things, to provide the best public health care in Canada — a promise made. Now why don't we get a sense of what this is consistent with? This is consistent with "the bread and butter issue for the NDP since its days with the CCF." But in the first two years of this term, and I quote now from November 8th, 2005, a *Leader-Post* article on A6:

But in the first two years of this term, the NDP government has taken extensive fire on the state of the Saskatchewan's health care system despite its election promise of the best public health in Canada.

. . . Waiting times [and I quote] for patients has been the focus of health care debate in Canada for some time and Saskatchewan has some of the longest wait times in the country.

But there was a way out. There was a way out; at least the members opposite saw it. And it's a peculiar way out, complex way out, but at the time it was their only way out and that was for federal money. Someone else was going to help pay the bill so that a broader issue of reform wouldn't have to actually come to the fore. And so in September 2004 the country's first ministers came together to come up with a \$41 billion federal-provincial agreement on health funding. That meant an additional \$66 million pumped into Saskatchewan's health system for that last year and an average, and I quote again, "90 million in extra funding over the course of the following six."

So what would happen? New money. What would the results be? Because if you're going to put more money, good money after bad, perhaps some things can be anticipated. The Fraser Institute says in this very article from 2005, in fact:

Saskatchewan patients are waiting 25 weeks between seeing their doctor and the beginning of treatment, the longest period in the country even after surgical wait times dropped by eight weeks.

It gives some sense of the crisis that we were in.

Glen Beck, a friend and colleague from the University of Saskatchewan, quoted:

The federal government gave them a lot of money that was allegedly being directed at solving the problem, but most people say that the problem is a shortage of nursing staff in the facilities. And what's happened on that front? I don't see fundamental change.

The federal-provincial deal has been a disappointment, according to Ken Fyke, Saskatchewan's former deputy minister ". . . because the extra money was supposed to be linked to a new model where provinces would be accountable to ensure improvements were made." Fyke went on to say, "The problem is that the NDP's long-held commitment to reforming primary health care is moving at a glacial pace."

Mr. Speaker, the list goes on. It gives you a sense and a summary of just how bad things were. The key barrier, buried in the assumptions, came out in 2010, among other times, when Judy Junor gave an interview and it offered a notion, a snapshot:

To tell the people that the public system can't do it and you're going to have to wait or we go private . . . that's not true. If you properly fund it and put your money in the public system, they can do it.

There was an ideological aversion to innovation. Now that is

peculiar, and it's peculiar because it goes against the very foundational elements of the CCF, because the CCF, as Tommy Douglas became Premier in the 1940s, had a dream. And I'll quote, Tommy Douglas is quoted by Vincent Lam:

Their dream was a society in which people were as free as possible to pursue individual self-realization, while working co-operatively in order that all could live a "dignified, and a rich and a varied life."

So, Mr. Speaker, the challenge for the members opposite, the numbers demonstrate that real progress is being made for our neighbours. The rhetoric coming from the other side simply belies and betrays their ideological blind spot that isn't even consistent with the original vision of Tommy Douglas. And that's why I'm delighted to move today:

That this Assembly commends this government's steps to address surgical wait times in the province through the Saskatchewan surgical initiative, noting a significant reduction in the number of patients waiting greater than three months since 2007, and furthermore will not support approaches that place ideological interests over the interests of the Saskatchewan people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Greystone has moved:

That this Assembly commends this government's steps to address surgical wait times in the province through the Saskatchewan surgical initiative, noting a significant reduction in the number of patients waiting greater than three months since 2007, and furthermore will not support approaches that place ideological interests over the interests of the Saskatchewan people.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to weigh into this debate and this motion today. I'd like to talk a little bit about the problem this government has right now with self-congratulations, particularly when it comes to health care. And at the end of my comments, I'll talk specifically about some of the challenges around the surgical . . . as this government is going in the wrong direction. There's been some really good work done, but the fact is they are now going in the wrong direction.

So in terms of self-congratulations, Mr. Speaker, I don't think a government should ever be in the position of patting itself on the back. The reality is the work of government is never done and there are always people left behind. There is always much more to figure out how to do better and to ensure that all citizens have an opportunity to have the services that they need and the opportunity to live full and inclusive lives, Mr. Speaker.

So it's interesting that we have this self-congratulatory motion before us. So, arguably, governments should never be so full of themselves and full of hubris and full of the desire to pat themselves on the back, but particularly now is definitely not

the time to do that, particularly when we look at the state of health care in this province.

So we could look to this government's record of health care. We can talk about the long emergency room waits, Mr. Speaker. We've heard in recent weeks that there are about 18,000 people who left emergency rooms in Saskatchewan last year, Mr. Speaker, 18,000 people who left Saskatchewan waiting rooms before seeing the appropriate medical, before seeing a doctor, Mr. Speaker. And these aren't people who were not . . . Some of them varied in range, but there were many people, Mr. Speaker, who left, who needed emergency care, dire emergency care. About 10 per cent of those people, 10 per cent of that 18,000 were leaving before they got the care that they needed.

I can tell you about a story that I just recently heard from someone in Saskatoon who talked about their own experience with the emergency room. They were sent to City Hospital in Saskatoon or they sent their . . . their mother went to City Hospital in Saskatoon by ambulance at 10 a.m. one day. She had a series of tests and then an ambulance took her to Royal University Hospital. They arrived at about 7:30 at night, and it was then many hours later at 11, their mother was still sitting in the hallway. This person notes that they saw four stretchers and a man in a wheelchair in the hallway, and many paramedics sitting with patients being brought in.

And that's another issue, Mr. Speaker: the lineup of ambulances at RUH [Royal University Hospital] because the ERs [emergency room] are overcrowded. And so we have many cases where we have ambulances not on the road and waiting with patients because they have to stay with their patient before they can hand them over in the ER. So we've got long ER waits.

I've heard from constituents and from other citizens outside of my constituency, who have presented, are at hospitals with suicidal ideation, Mr. Speaker, people with thoughts of killing themselves, Mr. Speaker, who have been sent home after waiting many, many, many hours, Mr. Speaker.

We can talk about, if we want to talk about self-congratulations, Mr. Speaker, maybe the government should look to their specialist waits. The number has increased here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Right now the average number or average time to wait for a specialist in Saskatchewan is about 11 months.

So when we're talking about surgeries, we have to factor in the whole timeframe, Mr. Speaker. It's the time to see your GP [general practitioner]. Many people in Saskatchewan don't have a general practitioner and then it's the referral to get to see a specialist or a surgeon — a specialist in particular; surgery may not be the option.

But there was just a quote on Twitter from someone who said, "It's the wait to get the surgeon appointment. That's the killer." That was a recent quote on Twitter. So a big part of the waiting is around specialists. And the government has been going the wrong direction when it comes to seeing specialists as well. Mr. Speaker, that is a huge problem.

So we have ER waits. We have specialist waits, and we can talk about the seniors' care crisis. So the government likes to pat itself on the back. We have a seniors' care crisis here in the province. This government's own reports have validated this very well.

The CEO tour, which they were dragged kicking and screaming to do just a few years ago, Mr. Speaker, initially they were like, there's nothing to see here. And then after much pressure, Mr. Speaker, the minister finally relented and said, I'll send my CEOs to tour facilities around the province, and discovered, lo and behold, there is a seniors' care crisis.

[11:15]

There are people, because of chronic understaffing in long-term care, Mr. Speaker, there are people who wait for hours and hours for the much needed services and care that they need, whether they're left sitting on the toilet for hours on end, or not getting to the toilet, and continent people having to wet their pants, Mr. Speaker. These were stories that came out of the CEO tour, Mr. Speaker.

And there was validation again a year later. The report was done a year later, but it wasn't issued until quite a bit after, Mr. Speaker. But the second CEO tour identified the same issues. And in fact this government was so lazy it did a cut-and-paste job from the Saskatoon Health Region. So it either didn't take the issues seriously, or nothing had changed despite a small injection, a modest injection according . . . relative to the needs, Mr. Speaker. Saskatoon Health Region needed 450 care aids; that's what they identified. They got 19, Mr. Speaker. So seniors' care is a huge issue in this province.

So this government is patting itself on the back because of one area in which they've focused, but they seem to have let everything else go, Mr. Speaker. And the one area on which they've hung their hat is now going the opposite direction.

Let's talk about the huge infrastructure issues, Mr. Speaker. This government, a year and a half ago, about a year and a half ago, finally released — again, after some pressure — the VFA [Vanderwiel Facility Assessors] report which identified \$2.2 billion in an infrastructure deficit, health care infrastructure deficit here in Saskatchewan. That was a year and a half ago that that number was released. But that report was done, I think, about a year before that. So where is that \$2.2 billion number now? The reality is it keeps going higher.

And this government invested this year a meagre 28 million, less than 30 million, Mr. Speaker, in maintenance of health care facilities throughout the province. A couple of years ago actually the former CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region identified, just to keep things going, Mr. Speaker, to stay on top of things, her health region would have needed five times the amount of money they were getting, Mr. Speaker.

So we have health care infrastructure where there isn't hot water when a woman has delivered a baby, Mr. Speaker. We have a facility in Saskatoon, the largest health region in the province, and RUH, Royal University Hospital, has netting up on the building to keep the building from crumbling down on people below, Mr. Speaker. We have surgery theatres, operating

theatres that have been shut down because of a lack of investment in maintenance of these facilities, Mr. Speaker.

We can talk about the mental health and addictions action plan, Mr. Speaker, that this government spent about \$800,000 on, and a lot of fanfare. Many people came forward to share their very painful stories, Mr. Speaker. And this government, nary a word in the last budget about the mental health and addictions action plan. This government . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The minister is saying that's not true. The one thing that they're doing has been committed to a very long time ago, and that is the hospital in North Battleford, which is long overdue, Mr. Speaker, long overdue. So if this government thinks that the North Battleford hospital is the fix to mental health and addictions issues here in Saskatchewan, they have their head buried deeply in the sand, Mr. Speaker, deeply in the sand if they think that is the only fix in mental health and addiction services.

So when we get to surgery . . . This is a government who's had record revenue, \$5 billion, approximately \$5 billion more than any government in the history of this province. They have drained the rainy day fund. They haven't put a single dime away for my children, your grandchildren, Mr. Speaker, not a person. And in fact the debt has gone up under this province. So at a time of record revenue, more money than any government has ever had, this is the state of health care in this province: high ER waits, Mr. Speaker, surgery times actually going up. Some progress was made, but they're going in the opposite direction, Mr. Speaker.

We have a seniors' care crisis. We have huge infrastructure issues. We have a broken mental health and addictions service, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government, Mr. Speaker, is going in the wrong direction. We know that in the last six months, surgeries have been reduced here. And this is a government who has had more money and more opportunity to do some really positive things, Mr. Speaker, and this is their record in health care. So I will not be supporting the motion. I can't in good conscience do that. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week there was a lot of hype and discussion on the news about what, if any, innovative ideas had come out and come from the movie *Back to the Future*. Well listening to question period in this House over the last week and the old, tired ideological rhetoric from the opposition, I would have to say it sounded like more back to the past, or *Groundhog Day* for that matter.

The only innovations that I heard about were ones put forth by the Saskatchewan Party government, which includes the Saskatchewan surgical initiative, a novel and an innovative idea put forth by this government to help combat the longest surgical wait times of any province in Canada created and left behind by the former NDP government.

Now I guess I would be remiss in not noting that they once thought they had an idea. Some of you might remember this. In 2001 they created the health action plan where they made a commitment that all Saskatchewan residents will have access to

primary care services within a 30-minute drive from their homes. Of course this couldn't be achieved, Mr. Speaker, because they were already in the process of closing hospitals across this province, including the Regina Plains Health Centre — 52 hospitals in total, Mr. Speaker, 52. In a November 14th, 2006 *Leader-Post* article, the NDP Health minister of the day, Len Taylor, admitted that his government had failed to meet the goal they had set up five years ago.

I'd like to say this whole discussion should be more about the results and the timely surgeries and significantly reduced numbers on wait-lists that have helped many patients and families across this province. But if the opposition wants numbers, let's talk numbers. Let's begin by going back to the days where the members opposite didn't bring any innovative ideas or allow any private sector involvement into the health care system, and see what it looked like. Let's go back to the days, just for a minute because I hate to look that in my memory for too long, Mr. Speaker, and talk about numbers for surgical wait times under the NDP in this province in 2007.

Under the NDP, 2,600 patients were waiting more than 18 months for surgery compared to 18 patients under the Saskatchewan Party government today. That's down 99 per cent. Under the NDP, 5,136 patients were waiting more than one year for surgery compared to 97 patients under the Saskatchewan Party government today. That's down 98 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Under the NDP government, 10,644 patients were waiting more than six months for surgery compared to 582 patients under the Saskatchewan Party government today. That's down 95 per cent. And under the NDP, 15,365 patients were waiting more than three months for surgery compared to 2,587 patients under the Saskatchewan Party government today. That's down 83 per cent, Mr. Speaker. There has been a significant decrease all across the board for surgeries since the new and innovative Saskatchewan surgical initiative was introduced, clearly a drastic comparison to the track record of the NDP when they were in power.

In 1999 they even campaigned and were re-elected on a promise to cut wait-lists by 30 per cent over four years. And how did they perform? They actually increased the wait-lists by 61 per cent. So compare that to our record where 89.9 per cent of all surgeries being performed within three months, in five years. NDP increase in surgical wait times versus Saskatchewan Party government decrease in surgical wait times. I wonder which one, as a patient waiting for surgery, I should pick.

Mr. Speaker, I also have to remind people that there was also a member from the other side in government at one time that recently made a statement:

The [Saskatchewan] health department established the Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative in 2010 to reduce wait times. Comparing the total cost of performing 34 procedures in the clinic versus the health department . . . reveals that it is 26 percent less expensive to use clinics than hospitals, and in all cases the clinics were less expensive.

That statement was made by Janice MacKinnon, former NDP cabinet minister, under *Health Care Reform From the Cradle of Medicare*, January 2013.

So our results and the methods we are using have shown that we are doing great things for the people of this province. Mr. Speaker, from just June 1st to August 1st of this year alone, we can tell the people of Saskatchewan that 91 per cent of all surgeries can be performed or offered within a three-month period, and 99 per cent — I repeat, 99 per cent — of all surgeries are performed or offered within six months. We've made progress, significant progress, and given the people of this province actual results.

We can now say that surgical wait times in Saskatchewan are now amongst the shortest in Canada, a far cry from the notoriety we received as having the longest wait times of any province in Canada under the NDP. If it's a choice between NDP ideology and a blast from the past or actual results through innovative ideas and partnerships, I believe the people of this province would definitely choose the latter.

To bring this a little closer to home, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to briefly share my own mother's story of being on a long surgical wait-list under the NDP government. My mom is currently 91 years old. In the fall of 2003, my mom was told she needed to have knee replacements and, after seeing her doctor a number of times, she was put on a surgical wait-list. She was told that it would be about a year before she would be called and scheduled for surgery. After the year went by and she suffered through excruciating pain on a daily basis, she was told she was moving up the list but it would still be a few more months. She was 80 years old at the time. Those few months went by and another few months and another few months until finally, two years later in the fall of 2005, she had one knee replacement. It was another year later before she got the second knee replacement. These were the longest surgical wait-times, under the NDP, in the history of Canada and this province. I know this is not an isolated event and was commonplace under the NDP.

As my children would say often from the back seat of the car when on a long trip, are we there yet? No, Mr. Speaker, but definitely much, much closer than before. We readily admit we need and can do better, and we will not apologize for coming up with innovative and new ideas like the Saskatchewan surgical initiative that has worked to improve the health care system in this province and give people a better quality of life. We will never go back to the past like it was under the NDP, where the only response to fixing a broken health care system was closing 52 hospitals and 420 beds, losing 450 nurses and 173 doctors. We can never allow this to happen again.

Thanks to the work and the direction of this government, our population is growing and with that will come a bigger and greater demand for quality and efficient health care services. The Saskatchewan Party government has invested 285.3 million in dedicated funding into the Saskatchewan surgical initiative and enhanced surgical services, and we are committed to ensuring that we continue to move forward on reducing wait times.

We are forward thinking, not like the members opposite who seem to be stuck in the past with old ideology. They have no plans for health care in this province, and this is quite evident with the statement made recently by the opposition leader when asked by the press, would you cut private surgical clinics? His



answer was very telling, Mr. Speaker. I quote: “The same gain or better gains could have been made by building capacity within the public system. That is certainly my preference.”

Mr. Speaker, the Premier was right. The people of Saskatchewan, given a choice between tired, old . . . [inaudible] . . . will choose timely surgery. I wholeheartedly support the motion.

[11:30]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and as always, it’s an honour to be able to rise in this Legislative Assembly to enter into debate.

Interesting topic, today’s debate. And I think the hon. member who brought it up kind of had bad timing, Mr. Speaker, because of some of the things that have been revealed here in the House this week about the change in direction in the surgical wait times. So I’ll speak to that later. But certainly I think maybe he was wishing he had brought this motion forward a couple of weeks ago rather than today. So that’s kind of a, I guess, maybe they’re . . . We’re seeing the swan song from some of these members. We know that as of the end of November, they will no longer be rising to speak in the House, so I guess he had to take his turn when it came and that was the timing that he got stuck with. I’ll be talking about that quite a bit in the few minutes that I have here.

But I think the first thing we need to note here is that there have been achievements in surgical wait times, and those need to be celebrated. And our leader has consistently said, we need to celebrate the achievements that have been seen. But the problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we’re now moving in the wrong direction. And those numbers were clear and in the forefront this week as we brought forward the information that shows that we are no longer seeing these reductions, but in fact surgical wait times are increasing.

We know that in March this government, with its non-ideology, decided to cut funding for surgeries. This was a deliberate cut that was put forward by the Sask Party government. And what’s happened since then, Mr. Speaker? Well I think this is something that’s very telling. The number of people waiting more than three months for their surgery has ballooned by 50 per cent. That is something that should set alarm bells ringing throughout this government’s surgical initiative. I think what they see is a deliberate . . . When you see a deliberate cut like that, then all the progress that they have made is going to evaporate. And we know that the numbers are going in the wrong direction.

With about 3,500 people, more people, in the group that are now waiting longer than three months, we know that thousands of people are in pain longer. They’re frustrated longer and possibly unable to work or unable to play with their kids longer. These are people that are now being put out of their daily lives because those waits are now increasing.

In addition to waiting for surgery, we have to keep in mind, and

my colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale brought this up, it’s not just the surgery itself. It’s everything that has to happen before you actually get to the surgery. First of all we know that there’s a huge wait time now for specialists, so what advances that can be claimed in terms of surgical wait times we know that there’s a negative effect in terms of the amount of time that people now have to wait for a specialist. Then there is the wait for diagnostics and tests. And we know again there are waiting lists for MRIs, and certainly I’ll speak to that in a few minutes as well. And then after you’ve got your diagnostics, after you’ve seen your GP, and after you’ve waited a very long time to see a specialist, then you’re put on the waiting list for surgery.

So we know that this waiting list is growing; it’s growing fast. Fifty per cent more people since March are now waiting more than three months for surgeries. So this is really, really concerning statistics. And I think, having brought them forward in the House this week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know the people of Saskatchewan are starting to realize that, without a sustained effort, the Sask Party is letting down the numbers that we . . . the gains that have been made in the surgical wait times. So the real wait time for any individual from the day they go to their family doctor, in pain and worried, until their surgery date, it’s now up to 14, 15, 16 months or longer which, Mr. Speaker, I’m sure you’ll agree is unacceptable.

Now why is this happening? We were seeing progress, and now we see a complete reversal in the way this government is approaching this. We know there has been an \$8 million cut to surgeries in the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region, an \$8 million cut at a time when progress was being made. We know that that means there is going to be fewer surgeries. The math is pretty simple. No money, no surgeries. So we’re going to lose 3,500 . . . There’s going to be 3,500 fewer surgeries in Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region alone . . . or sorry, in Saskatchewan. Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region is planning 1,664 fewer surgeries in Regina alone this year. So those folks who were finally getting through the list, they’re finally getting to see their specialists, they’ve finally had all the diagnostic tests and the surgery has been ordered, they know they’re going to be waiting much longer than three months.

We have quotes from Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region’s internal documents: “The goal has changed from one of growth to one where contraction of services in order to meet a reduced target is the overall goal.” So we see a complete reversal in the direction that this government — certainly the speaker and the introducer of the motion — has indicated.

He’s said it’s, you know, the number of surgeries is going to keep pace with the demand. It’s clearly not what the folks within the health regions are saying or doing. And we know from Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region, they’re definitely changing their goals. “The goal has changed [that’s a quote] from one of growth to one where contraction of services in order to meet a reduced target is the overall goal.” That’s the quote. Why is there a reduced target? Because this government has cut funding for surgery. Simple math. I know we saw some interesting math earlier in question period about somehow 78 per cent equals 90, but that’s the way we see numbers going around.

And here's another quote from a Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region internal document:

The Ministry has modelled the supply and demand, and linked with the financial situation, has provided funding for around 1000 cases less than last year with the expectation that we maintain flow of incoming demand.

I think that the telling part of that quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is where they have linked this to the financial situation. So it acknowledges that there is a financial situation with this government despite I think some bluster and denial of that from the government benches, Mr. Speaker.

But we know that this government has had record revenues. That was one of the reasons why they were able to make progress with the surgical demand. But now there is a financial situation, and they are starting to have to make cuts to the number of surgeries that are going on, which is going to have a direct impact on the length of time that people are going to have to wait. We have more people in Saskatchewan, *ergo* we're going to have more people needing surgeries. We have less money in Saskatchewan, *ergo* we're going to have to cut the number of surgeries. It's a simple mathematical equation. Therefore Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region has had to make \$38 million in cuts, and Saskatoon Health Region has to make more than \$44 million in cuts.

And when you think about the fact that we're giving Cenovus \$12 million in penalties for last year, we're giving them probably . . . There is an estimate of 5 to \$6 million more this year. That's already, on that one file alone, at least half of the cuts that are being required in Regina for surgery wait times. And so you've got to wonder what's going on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over there, when they're incurring penalties, large penalties, on a project that is not proving to be working well, and then we see cuts in surgeries in the two main health regions for sure.

We're concerned about the numbers. We're concerned about the numbers the government's been giving. Both the Premier and the Minister of the Health have given us inaccurate numbers. We heard that in the House this week. And we know that the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region has raised concerns. The officials within the region have raised concerns that these cuts might affect progress. We know internal documents have indicated that these cuts put the gains made at risk, and it will have a negative impact. There's no way to get around this, Mr. Speaker. If you cut funds, surgeries are reduced. So again I think the timing of the member's motion is a bit awkward because he probably should have raised it a couple of weeks ago before we were able to release these numbers and show that the gains are diminishing and that in fact they're going in the wrong direction.

We note from the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region department of surgery . . . Here's a quote right from the department of surgery, Mr. Deputy Speaker: "The ministry by their own calculations realizes that maintaining a strict three-month target is going to be a challenge based on the projected availability of surgical resources." So once again you see it right in the quote itself. It's a matter of math. Less money in, less surgeries are performed. If this government cuts the

money for surgeries, there are going to be fewer surgeries and the wait times are going to grow. And we know that this is a frustration.

We've proposed a lot of solutions to this, Mr. Speaker, and I know these guys don't seem to think we have. But we've said, first of all get rid of things like the toxic John Black lean experiment. Get rid of top-heavy management. Get rid of kaizen promotion offices. And reduce their addiction to consultants, Mr. Speaker. Those are some of the things that this government could do better.

So again you know, my condolences to the member for raising this motion at a pretty awkward time for his party. But certainly I know he had to get his last words in before he leaves the Assembly. So I will not be supporting the motion.

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's an honour to join in this debate today about surgical wait times in Saskatchewan and the progress that has been made since 2007 to 2015, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think there's a lot of numbers that are going to be thrown about for the next 10 minutes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But one that we have to keep in mind is that 99 per cent of patients receive surgery within six months; 91 per cent of patients receive surgery within three months. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we have to keep that in mind because we're not talking . . . It's not surgeries we're talking about. It's people. This means 91 per cent of people get surgery in three months; 99 per cent of people get surgery within six months. And I think we have to take that in context that these are people. They're suffering with knee injuries. They're suffering with hips, with other afflictions. And it's a quality-of-life issue that we're talking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a quality of life for people in Saskatchewan that, since 2007, have seen more timely access to surgery.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a few numbers I'd like to quote. Surgeries performed or offered within three months, and these are . . . I'm going to go across the health regions in Saskatchewan: Sun Country Health Region, 100 per cent; Five Hills Health Region, 100 per cent; Cypress Hills Health Region, 100 per cent; Sunrise Health Region, 100 per cent; Heartland Health Region, 100 per cent; Kelsey Trail Health Region, 100 per cent; Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, 88 per cent; Saskatoon Health Region, 88 per cent; Prince Albert Parkland Health Region, 94 per cent; Prairie North Health Region, 100 per cent; province wide, 91 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I think that talks about our government's commitment to making sure that people across our province have more access to care. And this isn't like the member from Riversdale's saying. This isn't patting ourselves on the back. We've always said that there's more work to do in the health sector and within providing patient-centred care. And for her to rise today and say, you're self-congratulating and you're patting yourself on the back, well no, these are the numbers, member from Riversdale.

These are what we're trying to do, and we're trying to have the best possible outcomes for patients, for people, for families in Saskatchewan. And one of the reasons why we've provided more timely care is because of our government's investment of \$285.3 million in the surgical initiative, an enhanced surgical services program, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Surgery wait times in Saskatchewan are now among the shortest in Canada. That's one thing we have to really remember.

When we talk about what our government has done, it's not a referendum on our government. In five months give me a choice on what our government has done and will do and what they, the opposition, will put forward and what they are going to do. It's the choice of the longest wait times in Canada or the shortest wait times in Canada. It's a choice of should you supplement the public health care system with private clinics or just be tied to ideology and not go forward with private health care clinics.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's an important question for the people of Saskatchewan because private surgical clinics since 2010, over 47,000 total surgeries have been done in the private clinics, 47,000. You think you're going to make up that backlog in the public service system? Over 19,000 in Regina, over 27,000 in Saskatoon. Private diagnostic clinics, over 14,600 CT scans provided in 2014-15, over 3,000 MRIs provided in 2014-15. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's the record on this side of the House. That's an innovative approach to making sure people in Saskatchewan get more timely access to the health services they need.

[11:45]

Mr. Speaker, on their side they have a record as well. They say, oh, don't bring back up the past. Don't bring up the history of our government because it's not so good. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that's, when people go to the ballot, that's the choice they have to make. Their record versus our record. NDP's, longest wait times of any province of Canada in 2006. That's not a long time ago. Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2006, when they were in government, they had the longest wait times in Canada according to the Fraser Institute.

So they can argue with the Fraser Institute if they'd like and say that that's not a good report but, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . And the member from Saskatoon, he was on his feet once during question period. I'm sure he might get on his feet again if he wants to get asked a question again during the time we have questions and answers here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In the 1999 election campaign, the Saskatchewan NDP was re-elected on a promise to cut wait-lists by 30 per cent over four years. And how did they perform? What did they do, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They actually increased wait times to 61 per cent. It's sad. But I'll ask the member from Lakeview . . . The all-knowing member from Lakeview asked some questions in committee in April 30th, 2013. So the member from Lakeview, and I'm quoting *Hansard*, Mr. Nilson talked about what they had . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I quoted, yes, quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They had the Surgical Care Network. The Surgical Care Network was their idea of how to shorten wait-lists. Like, that's fair. We have the surgical initiative. They had the Surgical Care Network. And this was the answer. This

was the answer on the NDP's plan to cut wait-lists from someone in committee. It looks like 20,000 to 27,500 people were on the wait-list. You know, that's kind of a bit of a movement. They decreased it by 500 people. But it would probably put us in really good shape 30 years from now.

So the NDP's proposed initiative would have taken 30 years to cut that backlog. I think that's a long time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's almost as long as I've been alive actually, so you put that in context.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we talk about the funding for health regions, and some of the members across the way say it's because of funding that some of the surgical numbers have gone down. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've increased the budget for health, the total health budget by 50 per cent. It's over \$5 billion now from 2007 to 2015 — 50 per cent budget increase. Here's some of the increases for health regions across the province: Cypress Hills, 83 million, 2007-8; 2015-16, 122 thousand, 600 million, an increase of 46 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, there's a long list of numbers here, but there's a couple more things I'd like to get to before my time's up. So the overall in health regions, the budgets increased, base operating funds to health regions increased by 77 million, which is 2.5 per cent in 2015.

So this whole conversation is talking about people and about how people need more timely access to care to ensure that they have a better quality of life.

And our Premier, a couple of days ago, posted an infographic on where we were and where our wait times were across compared to where they were in 2007; an infographic actually. And there's a lot of comments on this, a lot of interesting comments from people all across Saskatchewan. But I looked at it. There's over 200 comments on what people had experienced, and these are real people telling their experiences. And I could make some of these comments and put them in the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

My experience was completely different. I tried to put it off [meaning surgery], and I was taken immediately on a long weekend in Regina and I don't even live there. I'm not a PC/Sask Party, but I've got to give credit where credit is due. When the NDP were in, I had friends waiting years [for surgery].

Another one, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

I am 20 days post bilateral knee replacement. It took four months from the time I met with my orthopedic surgeon. Great timing as he was in summer holidays for three weeks, plus it is a little longer surgery so extra time was required. I'm very grateful for my full experience so far. Thank you very much, Saskatchewan government.

That's not patting yourself on the back, member from Riversdale. These are real people making real comments.

Three years ago this coming November, I had emergency surgery to repair tendons in both knees after falling on ice. Best care, and I also had the best surgeon to perform the

surgery. Took two months to recover but by New Year's Eve 2012, I was home. I'm so thankful for [and I'm quoting] Premier Wall and the Sask Party for the service I had there. The challenge was learning to walk all over again, but without the Sask Party, who knows how long I would have taken to recover? Thank you, Brad Wall, for your leadership and for improving the care in hospitals like Saskatoon City Hospital.

One more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one more:

Hurt my knee last November; saw a doc early December. MRI in early January then bone scan in February then consult and then surgery sometime in January. Happy with the pace it has progressed at. Good job, Sask Party and Mr. Wall. Don't ever leave us . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a lot more quotes I could use from real people across the province. But one thing is true. We've had the results. The surgical initiative brought more people into surgeries faster, and we've created a better quality of life for people across the province.

At some point in time, the members opposite are going to have to put forward their plan. And it's going to be interesting if they're going to agree with private clinics, ensuring people get more timely care to health, more timely access to health care and not . . . I'm hoping that one of them will put forward a plan today.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to enter into this debate. I read the motion with some interest, and again, my colleague from Nutana thought it was ill timed. And I'm thinking it's ill placed because really there's not a lot of argument in it. You know, when we take a look at this and I read that “. . . commends this government's steps to address surgical wait times in the province through the surgical initiative . . .” And we have said that we celebrate the successes, so that first part is done. We recognize that.

And you know, sometimes I wonder if this government is a little deaf tone. They often say we on this side don't recognize good things. We do; we have. And I can think of several opportunities, you know, and I think in Social Services we recognized the good work around SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability], but somehow the minister doesn't seem to recognize this.

The government on the other side . . . You know, we're not going to make a big deal of it. We're not going to go like the member before for 10 minutes or 7 minutes, go on and on and on about it, but we have recognized it. It's a good thing. For people of Saskatchewan, that's a good thing. And we have said that, and the leader has said that. So what's the argument? What's the argument there? We'd all be there. But then we go on to say, “. . . and furthermore will not support approaches that place ideological interests over the interests of . . .” But we all agree with that. We all agree with that.

We've seen the boondoggles, and I have to say, one of the biggest boondoggles for this government, when they placed ideological interests over the interests of Saskatchewan people. And I wonder if the member from Walsh Acres will be talking about the Supreme Court ruling around essential services, that they made a big deal, made a huge deal, cost hundreds of thousands of dollars if not more, more.

There was a clear example of a government placing ideological interests over common sense. And eight years later, at being ordered by the Supreme Court to get down to work and think about the interests of people of Saskatchewan, and finally they're doing it. And you know, funny how it only took a few months. And if they had done that in 2007, we would have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars and, I think, a lot more.

But when we talk about ideological boondoggles, it's this government that really we need to take a look at. We see this, and the answers to questions today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where they refuse, they really refuse, to give straight answers to straight questions and they prefer to really fight the ideological interests of the right wing.

You know what? What we're here for is the common sense interests of the people of Saskatchewan, and what makes sense today in this year, in this month, at this time, and what people are facing today.

Now they're fighting the battles of 2007, you know. And the other day I had brought up, well actually both sides brought up the 1970s. They love to go back to the 1970s and fight that battle over again, like to fight the battle of 2007, 2011.

They don't want to fight the battle of 2003 again when it was really . . . Their leader at the time really did admit to their ideological interests, that they would privatize many of the Crown corporations. That little slip cost them the government of the day. They don't want to talk about that, but they do want to fight 2007 over again, over again, and over again. No, we're going to fight, we're going to fight the good fight of 2016. And we'll put our case forward; they can put their case forward.

But I've got to tell you, what's happening in health care today is a real, real mess. And we can go down the list. You know, I can talk about the headline in the paper, and I don't know how they can live with this one. How can you live with this one? “18,000 Saskatchewan patients leave ERs without seeing a doctor.” How does that feel? How do you feel about that? How do you really feel about that? When you have 18,000 people leaving emergency rooms, giving up, saying, I'm not going to be able to see a doctor, that's a problem. That's a problem. That's a problem.

And you know, and my colleague for Riversdale so rightly pointed out the issues around mental health. Mental health, we've got a lot of work to do with that. And when you see a report that looks like it's on a shelf somewhere gathering dust, the Minister of Finance can talk about the North Battleford hospital as a good start, but there's so much work, so much work to be done in that area. Absolutely, absolutely so much work that needs to be done in that area.

And then we talked about seniors' care. Seniors' care is a real

issue as well, and we've raised that. And finally we got the Minister of Health to recognize that he's got to fix that. It took a lot of work, a lot of work in this Chamber for him to actually admit that there's a problem.

And now we see what's happening in wait times. Now this should be a red light. Buzzers should be going off. Okay, we'll take a couple of minutes, pat ourselves on the back about the good work that we've done, fair enough. But what about now? What about now? We see health regions cutting back their budgets, and the impact is that there are fewer people getting surgeries. I mean we know that there's 3,500 people in this group that has waited longer than three months, and we know that thousands of people are in pain longer. This is a problem. This is a real problem.

And these folks over here would prefer to fight the battles of 2007, 2011. They bring out the old clippings. And you know, it was interesting that the member who raised this issue won't be part of that fight. He's done a lot of good work in the House, but some work has not been as good as it might have been. But I have to recognize that he's not going to be here, so maybe he is living some past glories.

We would like to see some issues, some concern about what's really happening here and now, here and now. And really if we're talking about . . . This is one that's most interesting, I find, that when we talk about waiting lists and all of that and the whole issue around MRIs, and of course we're fighting at that bill. And we haven't really heard the members talk about this because really on this side of the House we get to talk more about it than they do in second readings. So we don't really have members, private members on their side raising their concerns, their thoughts on MRIs. I thought that would have been the thing that we would have been hearing more about. But in fact they are reaching . . . and they wanted to spend time, they want to spend time congratulating themselves.

But here's a letter. Here's a letter about MRIs. And this is from Sally Mahood, a well-respected doctor in Saskatchewan. Private MRIs are a bad . . . Are private MRIs bad medicine? She says, "I see this as a cynical political move that caters to public fears about long lists for imaging, but . . . [one that will actually worsen things] for patients who truly need an MRI."

So talk about cynical moves. Talk about ideological moves — that's the habit of that government over there. And we have some real concerns about what's happening here and now in Saskatchewan: 18,000 people leaving emergency rooms without seeing doctors; thousands of fewer surgeries being happening, forcing longer waiting lists; mental health report not being paid to in attention at all; and senior care that should be, should be a priority for this government. What we see is not, is not because this government would prefer to pat themselves on the back.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this motion is deeply flawed and doesn't really help the people of Saskatchewan. It should be focused on helping the people of Saskatchewan, as I said, in just those four areas. And I know we'll . . . [inaudible] . . . so what about we'll get people talking about other areas that are important as well. So, Mr. Speaker, there is no way, no way at all that I can support this motion, and I look forward to questions. Thank you.

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

[12:00]

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the member from Walsh Acres explain why it would make any sense to put health regions in a position where they have to cut 3,420 surgeries while the demand is going up?

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm proud to say that the health regions have received more money under this government than ever before under the previous government, Mr. Speaker. We've got to take this into account. Look at the whole history of our government. Since 2007 and 2015, health regions have received 50 per cent more dollars.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I would love to know from that member specifically, because she's bound to . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Ideological.

**Mr. Steinley:** — Ideologically bound. Thank you, member from Rosemont. Would her party cancel the 47,000 surgeries done in private clinics over the past four years?

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

**Mr. Parent:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government strongly supports the use of private clinics to reduce surgical wait times. Since 2010, private clinics have helped reduce wait times by providing 47,000 surgeries in Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Regina alone they provided 19,000 surgeries.

On October 26th, 2015, the Leader of the Opposition was asked if he would cut private surgical clinics. He responded that he would prefer to eliminate private surgical clinics. Mr. Deputy Speaker, doing this would result in longer wait times and reduce surgeries. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question for the member from Saskatoon Riversdale: do you stand by your leader's word and would your party eliminate private clinics?

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to answer that question. We believe in a single-payer system where we encourage innovative ideas and time-tested methods for ensuring . . . that are put forward by front-line workers, Mr. Speaker, that strive to improve quality for everybody. This is about common sense solutions, Mr. Speaker. We believe in good ideas, Mr. Speaker, good ideas, not ideology. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that patients in

the Saskatoon Health Region now have to wait over 300 days on average to see a specialist. We're just wondering; we know the member for Walsh Acres likes to speak and raise his voice as much as he can in this legislature. Unfortunately he doesn't get very many opportunities to answer questions, so I'm going to put that question to him. Does he think it's appropriate that patients in the Saskatoon Health Region should have to wait over 300 days — and I hope we get an answer to this — 300 days on average to see a specialist? What's your answer?

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I do enjoy getting on my feet and speaking on behalf of members of Regina Walsh Acres. I enjoy talking about how the wait times in the province have gone down since 2007, not up. I enjoy talking about how 99 per cent of patients in Saskatchewan get surgery within six months. I enjoy talking about health: 91 of patients in Saskatchewan get surgery within three months, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And my question to the member from Saskatoon Nutana would be, are you sure that you don't support your leader in cancelling the private clinic surgeries in Saskatchewan? Because on this side we'll put patients' health, patients' quality of life ahead of ideology every time.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Once again we have no answer from that member. He did not even touch on the question at all. So it's really disappointing that we hear as much volume as we do from that member, but we don't hear any positive answers to questions that are actually placed to him. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I should try this again. Can the member from Walsh Acres explain why it makes any sense to fill your budgetary holes with cuts to health care?

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you so much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it breaks my heart that I disappointed the member from Nutana. It really does. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will try and support the people of Saskatchewan whenever I can and make sure that we support a surgical initiative where we put \$285.3 million into making sure people get more timely access to surgeries, make sure that no . . . 99 per cent of surgeries are done within six months, 91 per cent of surgeries are done within three months, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So on this side of the House, we're going to put the people of Saskatchewan first. We're going to put the patients of Saskatchewan first to ensure that they have a higher quality of life and that they get their access to timely surgery faster, safer, and better, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I did miss my opportunity because I was carefully listening to the

member from Walsh Acres who very carefully but correctly answered the questions, as opposed to the member from Saskatoon Riversdale who when asked a question did not respond.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in his scrum on Monday, the Leader of the Opposition made it very clear that he is against private clinics. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess this means he's against the 14,600 CT scans provided in private clinics, 2014-2015, the projected 40,000 CT scans to be delivered over the next three years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this question is for the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. I've given her plenty of opportunity to craft her answer. Would you be in favour of closing the diagnostic clinics along with your proposed closure of private surgical clinics?

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, the issue at hand here is whether or not wait times for surgery are going in the right direction. This government is going in the exact opposite direction. Yes, there's been progress made, which our leader has commended this government and said that needs to be celebrated, Mr. Speaker.

But in the last six months alone, this government has gone in the exact opposite direction very quickly. Surgery numbers or the wait for surgery has gone up by 50 per cent in the last six months, Mr. Speaker, because of this government's \$8 million budget cut to the RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region]. That is the issue at hand. The government is going in the exact opposite direction than it should be.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And we see on the other side all sorts of contortions to pat themselves on the back and refuse to take responsibility about what's happening here and now. And alarm bells should be going off, should be going off. Now we hear and we see that the Health minister says he's monitoring the situation, but the waiting lists are actually growing. And I want to know from the member from Walsh Acres, how can he go out and knock on doors when he knows that's the fact? What's he telling people about the growing waiting lists?

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, and thank you to the member from Saskatoon Centre for the question. What I'm telling people is that in Saskatoon this year, 6,500 surgeries are going to be done in a private clinic; in Regina, 5,000 surgeries are going to be done in a private clinic. And that would not be done under the NDP in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What I'm telling people when I knock on doors is that we're doing more surgeries, 85,000 surgeries this year. The NDP in their last year did 70,000. That's 15,000 more surgeries, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What I'm telling people about health care in

this province is we're working as hard as we can. There's more work to do, but there's more surgeries being done now in this province. There's more doctors, there's more nurses, and there's more front-line workers than ever before in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I knock on doors, I'm proud of this government's record, and I tell them about the plan. We're going to continue to work hard to make sure you get more timely service. I'm wondering what he tells people when he knocks on doors and about their history of having the longest wait times in Canada.

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

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — The NDP often refuses to set goals. Perhaps this is because in the past they have set goals and they failed to deliver any progress towards meeting their targets. One of the few targets they did set was in 1999 when the NDP was re-elected on a platform which promised to reduce surgical wait times by 30 per cent over four years. Unfortunately it actually increased by 61 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, to the member from Saskatoon Riversdale: what is your party's plan to ensure that Saskatchewan never returns to the longest surgical wait times in the country, as we did when the member from Lakeview was Health minister?

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to take that question. I need to point out that the issue at hand is the government made some progress and now when they are having some financial troubles, they are cutting health care, Mr. Speaker. They are going in exactly the wrong direction. The member from Walsh Acres, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was waxing on about numbers of surgeries are taking place in our health regions but the reality is he failed to mention that those numbers are going up actually. Those surgery numbers, Mr. Speaker, the wait-list for surgeries is going up, not down, Mr. Speaker. The member from Walsh Acres can cite numbers, but the fact is the progress is being eroded.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — To Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Once again, no answer from the member from Walsh Acres. We've asked him a few and . . .

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 609

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by Ms. Chartier that **Bill No. 609 — *The Residents-in-Care Bill of Rights Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate here this afternoon as it relates to Bill No. 609, a private member's bill that was brought forward by the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

I do want to, just before we move on, I want to recognize the good work of that member, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, on this file. And this is a member that's gone out and met with seniors across Saskatchewan, that's met with those providing care across Saskatchewan, that has met with facilities, and that has built a piece of legislation that's common sense and compassionate and simply the right thing to do for seniors today and certainly important for us to be ensuring that security and dignity that seniors deserve for tomorrow.

So when I look at Bill No. 609, *An Act respecting the Rights of Residents in Special Care Facilities and Personal Care Homes*, I also want to recognize the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of conversations and pieces of input that have put together this piece of legislation, that certainly have directed the bill that was brought forward by the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, but have informed all of us to enter in and to form this piece of legislation and bring it to the people of Saskatchewan.

I know that on a daily basis, I'd have numerous conversations and phone calls and emails and messages with people helping contribute to ensuring that seniors have the security and dignity that they deserve. So many of those conversations, so many of the stories have directly shaped this piece of legislation, have directly shaped the actions of this opposition to ensure that seniors are a priority, to ensure that the care they receive is a priority. I'm thankful to everyone on that front.

And I think of so many of those conversations, whether it's the direct exchange with somebody while door knocking, who might be a daughter or a son of somebody who's receiving care or might be someone who's receiving care right now, or it might be somebody who's working and working hard, and working hard with resources that are insufficient because of choices of this government, to try to deliver the care that seniors deserve. Quite frankly this is an issue that touches us all. We can relate to it by looking at our own families, certainly at our own constituencies. And it's a pressing matter that quite frankly needs to not be part of the partisan fray in here and be delayed or dismissed any further. Action needs to be required.

When you look at Bill 609 and establishing standards for seniors in care, this legislation is something that provides a promise of some very basic security and dignity that the seniors of this province deserve. We know that it's critical to do the right thing now for those that are receiving care today. But we know as well when we look at the demographics, if we look at the growing need for care and for support, that it's absolutely critical that we respond to the crisis and insufficient support and attention from the current government right now, but that we

plan for the future. So it's about responding to the crisis today, one that's been dismissed by the government opposite, one that's a creation of their own budgetary choices, Mr. Speaker, and a choice of theirs to eliminate standards and that commitment to seniors.

If you think of the vulnerable position that anyone entering care is in, Mr. Speaker, they deserve some certainty. If you think of the role as a son, as a grandson, or a person that's entering in, we all deserve to know what a loved one can expect. And I guess the reality is we hear day in and day out way too many stories of strain and strife, way too many stories of the impacts of the inadequate funding of this government by the scrapping of the minimum care standards of this government.

[12:15]

And all too often we hear heartbreaking stories, Mr. Speaker. And when we're thinking of those heartbreaking stories, we need to recognize that these are stories about families and people. These are real people, Mr. Speaker, in communities all across Saskatchewan who deserve better, Mr. Speaker. We have thousands and thousands of seniors who deserve better as they enter into care, Mr. Speaker, as they're in care. And we know that the system has failed far too many, Mr. Speaker.

We've also heard in a very tragic way of premature deaths in care facilities, at least seven of them that we've discussed on this floor of this Assembly. I think we owe it to those families, those families and those people who were lost in a premature way while in care, to do better for the seniors of today and certainly the seniors of tomorrow. If we put into perspective the tragic loss of those individuals within their families, I think it should cause every last one of us in this Assembly to take this issue with the serious attention that it deserves and to provide the basic common sense measures, the basic compassionate measures that seniors deserve. So when we think of Margaret Warholm, when we think of Jessie Sellwood, when we think of Lorne Rowell, when we think of Fern Chingos, Irene Hohne, Lois Rein, and the man in Moose Jaw who died after eating detergent pods, we need to think of those people, those families who lost those loved ones in a premature way, Mr. Speaker.

At a time where government has presided over record revenue, Mr. Speaker, and has found all sorts of money for certain sets of priorities that on too many fronts quite frankly have turned into debacles and waste, Mr. Speaker, it's sad that a priority wasn't given to bolstering the seniors' care system in this province and to providing the basic guarantee and assurance that seniors across this province deserve to address the chronic short-staffing that's providing strain and causing inadequate quality of care across this province.

You know, we have incredible workers in the seniors' care system across Saskatchewan, working in homes, providing support. They're dedicated to their work. They do it to make a difference. They do it because they care, Mr. Speaker. They need to have the supports that they deserve to be able to carry out their work and provide the quality care that they know that every one of those seniors they work with deserves.

We should also recognize the work of the Ombudsman on this front, who weighed in and took on a study and provided a report

and looked at complaints that came forward to the Ombudsman. I believe there were 89 complaints that the Ombudsman reviewed. And in those complaints and in the report in reporting back out to the public at large, the Ombudsman reinforced what the public's known for a long time and what the opposition has been asserting, is that there's not the sufficient support in our seniors' care system, that the standards of care are far too broad, far too vague, that they're not measurable, that it's very difficult to ensure accountability on this front, that they're not able to make sure that quality of care is in place where it needs to be.

So that report was an important piece as well in identifying the inadequate crisis-type conditions in seniors' care across Saskatchewan, and again a government that has made choices, Mr. Speaker, and sadly hasn't made seniors' care a sufficient priority when making budgetary decisions and focusing their time and attention, Mr. Speaker.

So we certainly need to have legislated minimum care standards to make sure that everybody gets the care they deserve. And certainly as I've said, that's important for anyone who's in care today or may enter into care fairly soon. And it's important to all those families and loved ones, Mr. Speaker. The current guidelines are incredibly vague, and they don't provide the protection and security that seniors deserve. I know that internal documents show that an official of this government actually cites that these are extremely general, with the following quote: "Is there any further policy development or requirements under each of the items under section 1.4 for care standards? These are good but extremely general."

So we owe it, Mr. Speaker, to make this the priority that Saskatchewan people deserve. We know that this government has officials, their own officials, Mr. Speaker, letting them know that the current standards are extremely general. And we know from the conversations and the people that we serve, and our own loved ones and our families, that the current conditions for seniors' care across Saskatchewan are, you know, are inadequate.

We recently had three other seniors speak out, proud seniors, at the Ross Payant home in Assiniboia. They came forward. I want to quote one of them. And again like I said, they're very proud seniors. That's the story of Saskatchewan seniors, seniors that have worked hard their entire life, that have given so much to their family, to their community, to our province, have asked for very little but have given lots, Mr. Speaker. And they deserve more than insecurity and inadequate supports when they get to the stage of life where they need supports. Jim Lawrence, who lives in the home says, "I didn't come here to be abused and pushed around. We've been fighting to try and get the staff increased." Well that's our push too.

But if you put yourself and think of your own family and your own loved ones or you picture Mr. Jim Lawrence sharing that quote: "I didn't come here to be abused and pushed around." That's absolutely troubling if you think about the stress and strain that that individual, that senior has upon his shoulders, and certainly the family as well.

Now seniors shouldn't have to fight for the basics, Mr. Speaker. That should be a promise and a guarantee to the people of Saskatchewan. The government should focus on providing



quality care instead of on its pet projects.

You know, I'm not going to get into the long, long and growing list, Mr. Speaker, of pet projects of this government that haven't related to quality of life, that haven't related to seniors' care, that haven't related to improving things for the people of Saskatchewan, but that have wasted money hand over fist, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to get into that list right now because I want to stay focused on the importance of this bill that was brought forward.

But it hasn't for this government been a shortage of money, Mr. Speaker. They were handed record revenues year after year after year. And they made choices, Mr. Speaker — choices, Mr. Speaker, that haven't lined up with improving lives for far too many across this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I again want to I guess commend the Leader of the Opposition. I want to commend the member from Saskatoon Riversdale for their focus and attention to the seniors' care crisis in Saskatchewan.

It's been frustrating to observe as those members in this opposition have brought this issue and the voice of thousands and thousands of seniors and thousands and thousands of families to this Assembly and to this Premier, that it was met with arrogant dismissal, Mr. Speaker, and that it's been met with inadequate and delayed action, Mr. Speaker.

At a time where we have an Ombudsman, an independent officer of this Assembly, weighing in and stating the inadequate conditions in care, Mr. Speaker. At a time where we know thousands across Saskatchewan are far too vulnerable, families who don't have the security that they deserve to know that their loved ones have care. And at a time, Mr. Speaker, where we know the stress and the pressures upon this system are growing.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, if given the current conditions and the record revenues that this government has had, if they couldn't make it a priority then, Mr. Speaker, and fix it for the seniors of today, it offers little hope, which is very sad for the future of this province, which is why this issue — the security and dignity and the promise of safety that seniors deserve across this province — is something that the official opposition takes very seriously.

I'd like to recognize as well the voice of many across this province, the hundreds upon hundreds of my own constituents who have engaged on this issue. Unsolicited, contacting me to engage with their own personal stories, stories that often they don't want directly on the floor in a public way, Mr. Speaker, very personal stories. Stories that are conveyed often when you're engaging individuals directly on their doorsteps, Mr. Speaker. The stories of workers all across Saskatchewan who are committed to seniors and committed to those that they provide care for, but are beat up from a morale perspective and are beat up from being able to do what they know they need to do, Mr. Speaker.

And they recognize the inadequate staffing, the inadequate resources provided by this government. And they recognize what it means when a government goes and eliminates standards and scraps certain commitments, Mr. Speaker, and

how that allows the government to get off without providing the commitments to seniors, yes, or the funding to these homes all across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the seniors of this province have given far too much to their families, to the people of this province, to their communities, to be treated like this. Now this issue is something that we can resolve. It's an issue that, with focus and attention and with some dedicated resources, with scrapping wasteful spending on priorities that aren't getting the job done in improving lives, Mr. Speaker, but improving our seniors' care system, we know we can do a better job for the seniors of today. We know we can deliver that tomorrow. That's the commitment that the official opposition New Democrats give to all families and all communities across Saskatchewan. That's a priority for us, Mr. Speaker.

But here today we have an opportunity to do something as well. We have the opportunity to vote and support a piece of legislation that would provide a basic guarantee — a basic guarantee of security and dignity and certain standards to families across Saskatchewan and seniors across Saskatchewan. And it's increasingly frustrating to see this government not do its part on this front. We have a chance to support a good piece of legislation. We have a chance to make this a priority. Certainly this opposition, the New Democrats, will continue to do that. And we'll continue to push, you know, a government that has dismissed the issues in seniors' care across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have too much more to say as it relates to this bill here today. But I will say this: there has been way too many tragic losses, Mr. Speaker, that aren't right. There are way too many seniors across this province that don't have the security and dignity they deserve. We have the opportunity and we have the resources in this province to fix this, to provide security today, dignity today and tomorrow as well, Mr. Speaker. We owe it to Saskatchewan people to do just that, which is why I strongly support Bill 609 and I urge government members to support it as well.

But at this point in time, I'll adjourn debate as it relates to Bill No. 609, *An Act respecting the Rights of Residents in Special Care Facilities and Personal Care Homes*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 609, *The Residents-in-Care Bill of Rights Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

**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. Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:28.]

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