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**M U R R A Y M A N D R Y K**
[More from Murray Mandryk](#)

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If the Saskatchewan NDP is sputtering in this election campaign – and by all measure, it sure looks like it is – that’s not because it didn’t properly vet its candidates.

The four dropped NDP candidates are yesterday’s news ... presuming many voters paid all that much attention to this in first place.

The real reason the NDP doesn’t seem to going anywhere might have something to do with the fact it hasn’t changed its major talking points since the 1980s.

The NDP is again raising the privatizing-all-the-Crown-corporations scare ... as it did in the 1991 election, the 1995

election, the 1999 election, the 2003 election, the 2007 election, the 2011 election ...

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What was a stupid idea 30 years ago (from Grant Devine's Progressive Conservatives) to sell off all Crown corporations has morphed into a stupid thing for the NDP to keep trotting out.

And what made leader Cam Broten's assertion even stupider this week is that Premier Brad Wall has had eight years in power to sell off whatever he wanted ... yet hasn't.

The old NDP fable about Wall being the wolf in sheep's clothing has very much turned the NDP into the boy who cried wolf.

On Tuesday, Wall emphatically said "no" to selling SaskPower, SaskEnergy, SaskTel, SGI and even STC. He reminded voters he signed the old NDP Crown Corporation Protection Act and noted his only proposed change to that law is on the sale of liquor stores.

Yet there was Broten, becoming the fourth straight NDP leader telling us of their opponent's hidden agenda to sell off all Crown corporations, including SaskTel, SaskPower, SaskEnergy, SGI, STC, etc.

After all, said Broten, Wall never mentioned in the 2011 election a plan to sell off protected wildlife habitat (an overstatement of the nature of this policy initiative) or government liquor stores (which appears to have some level of public support and is something on which the Sask. Party is actually running in 2016.)

Broten then went on about the pretty good "tells" (signs Wall supposedly is giving that are obvious to nobody except the NDP and the unions) that include: selling liquor stores (about which, again, Wall has been upfront); "attempts" to sell off SaskGaming (Wall listened to former Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde's proposal and decided he couldn't) and "selling off Information Services Corp." (which a former NDP government itself pretty much tried to do when former NDP cabinet minister Andrew Thomson was outsourcing all information technology contracts to ISM.)

But wait, there's more. Broten has a smoking gun. Don't let it get around, but ... pssst Saskatchewan is running a deficit.

"He's not talking about his plans for privatization, but we know, in his desire to go after quick, one-time money ... anything is on the table for him." Broten said.

Well, there you have it. What more proof could anyone possibly need? Wall and the Sask. Party intend to commit political suicide by first being forthright about selling liquor stores, then lying to the voters about selling off everything else.

So why does the NDP keep doing this?

There is the sentimentality. It is absolute NDP lore about how former NDP premier Roy Romanow drew a line in the sand and stopped Grant Devine from even introducing a SaskEnergy privatization bill in 1987.

And then, there is similar lore from the 2003 election — the one the NDP really shouldn't have won, but did because then-NDP premier Lorne Calvert convinced voters that then-Sask. Party leader Elwin Hermanson had a secret privatization agenda.

But the biggest reason for Broten to bring up the privatization scare is that it still riles up the public service unions, which have been running anti-privatization ads to rally their own members. It's a relationship that's uncomfortably cozy.

The problem, however, is that the rest of Saskatchewan isn't buying it anymore ... or so the polls strongly suggest.

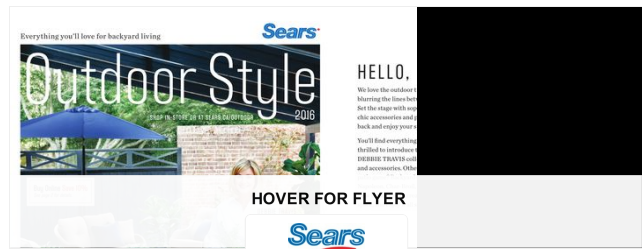
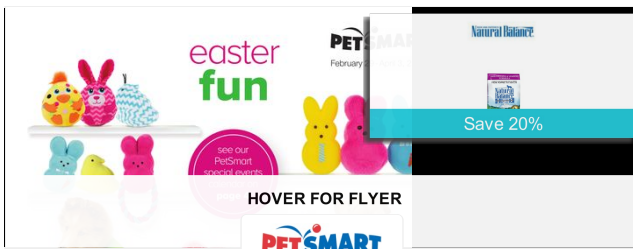
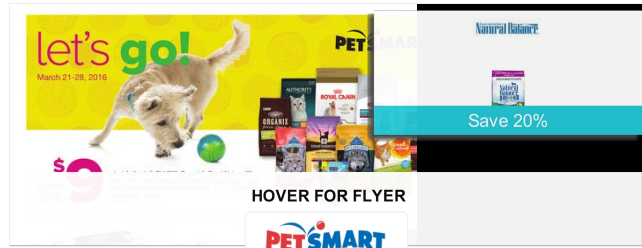
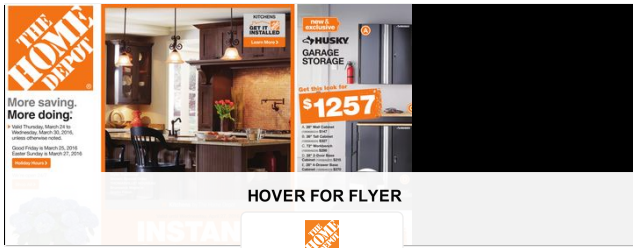
Trotting out the old privatization scare near the midpoint of the campaign in which you're 20 percentage points down comes across as a little desperate.

Mandryk is the political columnist for the Regina Leader-Post.

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Simon Enoch ·

Director, Saskatchewan Office at Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

In 2013, Mr. Mandryk had this to say re: privatization by the government: "Wall would be fully aware that he has gone about as far as he can with any small, 'incremental' changes. This would seem to be about more than ISC or a few new private liquor stores. Otherwise, why would Wall bother? So what else might be in play for Wall and the Sask. Party? SGI? SaskTel? Even SaskPower or SaskEnergy?" The government was still bound by the Crown Corporation Act when Mr. Mandryk wrote the above column. What changed? The Premier made another promise?

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Keith Lee ·

St. Mary High School

Living in this necropolitical age we have to search out life forms which were once known as Politicians. It's now a very rare thing, a rare thing indeed to witness a Saskatchewan Politician who IS Political. Zombie Economics can not be destroyed for it is un-dead. Not alive. Not dead. Undead. If you are feeling a bit frustrated and bored with our political landscape you need to search above that horizon onto another one. Get off your tweets and twitters. Demand more out of your Bio-political un-dead existenze. Embark! Hear that heed calling! Under ONE, "The Economy" we are slaves t... [See More](#)

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Bob Stadnichuk ·

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

In 2012 through a report from CBC Brad Wall stated that the Saskparty government would not privatize existing liquor stores and yet here we are. The Crown Corporations Protections Act has been compromised by the Saskparty and we stand to lose 40 public liquor stores as a result. How can Mr. Mandryk say that this does not equate to privatization? It is being brought up by the NDP because it is a reality. Stop living in this dream-world utopia where the words of Premier Wall are to be believed. He lied on the liquor stores so what makes you think he is now telling the truth?

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Kyle Zieglgansberger ·

Owner at Implosion Services

The majority of the people want private liquor stores. If the majority said no and he did it anyway then there might be a problem.

Like · Reply ·  4 · Mar 19, 2016 1:09pm



Colin Zolc ·

Works at Regina Autohaus

SLGA isn't being privatized. It's moving from a retailer to retailer/wholesaler. I, for one, couldn't be happier. The selection and service has already improved. And, when I want cheap booze, I can still go directly to the SLGA store. How could we ask for anything more?

Like · Reply ·  1 · Mar 19, 2016 8:10pm



Bev Nate

Kyle Zieglgansberger Too true, you are correct. Just look at Alberta, where we have told our government no to bill 6 and no to carbon pricing taxation, as well as no to bill 10, where parental rights are taken away. Does the NDP listen, heck no, they know what is good for us. We are after all the "embarrassing cousin no one wants to talk about and we just need to "settle down"." If you want a leader for your province that is 100 percent affiliated with the federal NDP, you cannot belong to a provincial NDP party without automatically belonging to the federal NDP, which is a member of a world... [See More](#)

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Jon Saskboy Klein ·

Regina, Saskatchewan

Media: 'Why won't both parties stop talking privatization?'
3rd party: 'Change Crowns to public-owned co-operatives.'
Media: *silence* 'Why won't the NDP stop talking about Crowns?'

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Keith Lee ·

St. Mary High School

It's time to, 'Co-Constitute Provincial Economic Pluralism'.... <http://beyonddiversity.dnr.cornell.edu/node/104>

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REGINA PATS

Vanstone: Previous Pats/Hurricanes series was one to remember

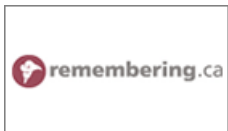
The Regina Pats and Lethbridge Hurricanes are meeting in the WHL playoffs for the first time since 1996 — when, in keeping with one of the teams' nicknames, things became ...

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This week's federal budget — like so much about Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party — can be seen as a Rorschach test for political observers.

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