



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

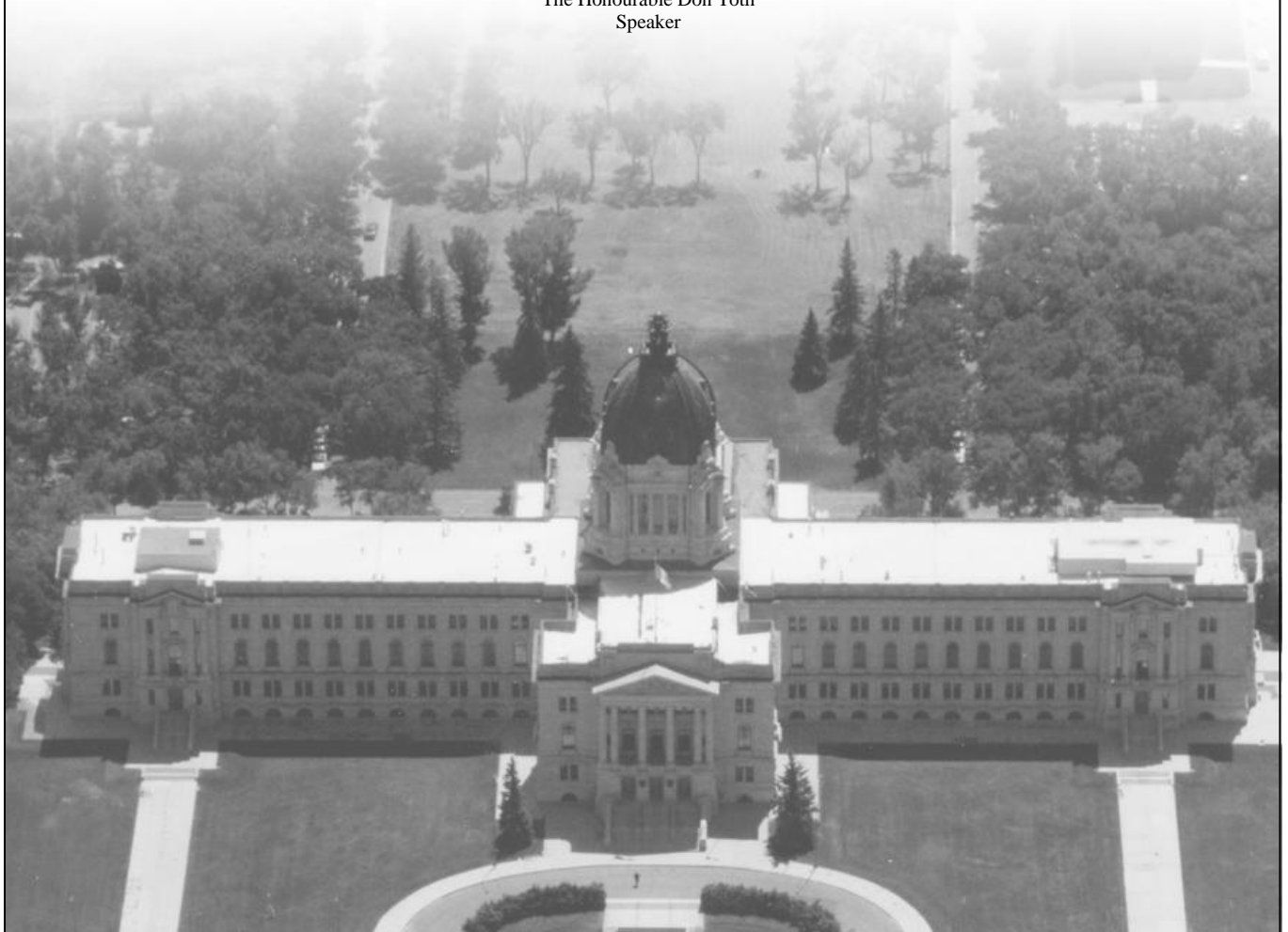
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Lorne Calvert

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
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Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
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Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
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Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
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Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
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McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
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Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
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Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
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Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly some very special guests who are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Joining us today is the ambassador from the Netherlands, His Excellency Wilhelmus Geerts. We welcome him today, as well as the consul general for the Netherlands out of the Vancouver office, Hans Driesser. And joining them today are honorary consuls from the Netherlands. We have Willem de Lint who is the outgoing honorary consular. Welcome to you, sir. And we welcome the incoming, the new and soon-to-be new honorary consul general for the Netherlands, Judie Dyck who's no stranger to this building and this Assembly because of her work in agriculture and in specifically advancing the canola industry here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the ambassador, His Excellency, has had an ambitious schedule over the last number of days. He was in Saskatoon yesterday. He was at the synchrotron, went underground for a look at that new star of minerals, potash, to see how it is mined at a Mosaic mine here in our province.

And in addition to meeting with officials and ministers of the government, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you we've had a chance, His Excellency and myself, to talk just this morning about a mutual interest we have in sustainable energy, in carbon capture and sequestration, Mr. Speaker, in uranium value-added opportunities. We're looking here, as a province, in the Netherlands' example with respect to the nuclear industry and nuclear research.

We talked a little bit about increasing the trade between our two jurisdictions, improving perhaps the number of what would be expatriates of the Netherlands joining us here in the province of Saskatchewan. It was a very enjoyable meeting, and we look forward to fostering an even better relationship between Saskatchewan and the Netherlands, a relationship that has already augmented and forged, Mr. Speaker, in our shared experience in war and in liberation and in long-term friendship.

I'd ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming His Excellency and our delegation from the Netherlands today in the Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Premier on behalf of the official opposition in extending our equal greeting to His Excellency, the

ambassador; to the consul; and to the honorary consuls who have joined us today, Mr. Speaker.

I fully support all of the comment that the Premier has brought to this introduction and would hope for an even stronger relationship between the Netherlands and the province of Saskatchewan — a relationship, if I may say, is based on a fair number of expatriates, friends from the Netherlands who have made their home in our province and in fact make their home in our legislature.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would invite again all members to join in a warm welcome to His Excellency.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Silver Springs, the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly some more than 100 students from St. Joseph High School in the heart of the Saskatoon Silver Springs constituency. They're in the west gallery. They're in the east gallery. They're on the floor, Mr. Speaker. They're one of the largest groups to ever come to the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, they're students from grade 9 to 12. They're taking English as an additional language program. And, Mr. Speaker, they're from over 15 countries around the world, and they've come here to study in Saskatchewan and come to their Legislative Building. They're a good-looking group, a well-behaved group, and the moniker for St. Joe's is the Guardians.

They're accompanied by their teachers, Lorraine Ratzlaff, Elaine Mugeridge, Sheena Wing, Joan Caruk, Gerard Saretsky, Christine MacNeil, Janet Carmona-Figueroa, Anita Gooding, Roberto Godoy, Theresa Hitchings. And joining us on the floor is a student, Jocelyn Fan — welcome, Jocelyn — and Mrs. Cechanowicz, an educational assistant. We welcome them all.

And if I just may, Mr. Speaker, talk about one of the initiatives that this school is involved with. It's called Changing the World One School at a Time, where students bring a dime to school every day — 60 per cent of the students participate — and they're 25 per cent of the way to building a new school in Africa.

Mr. Speaker, through you and I'll ask all members to help welcome the group from St. Joseph's collegiate in Saskatoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to welcome three students in particular from St. Joseph High School, two of whom live with my son Jay, my daughter-in-law Kaeli, and our

granddaughter Madelynn. And you'll see why there's three in a moment, Mr. Speaker, that I'm introducing.

Ana Paulina Medellin Gallegos — Polly to family and friends — and Ana Cristina Medellin Gallegos — Cristy to family and friends — are twins actually, and they're from Mexico. Aline Queiroz Pereira is from Mexico and has been here from January and will be here until the end of June.

Mr. Speaker, Aline and Polly live with my son and daughter-in-law and granddaughter, and of course Polly's twin, Cristy, resides in another residence. But these three are a welcome addition to Canada, to Saskatoon, for a short period of time. And I wanted to join with the hon. member for Saskatoon Silver Springs in welcoming the entire group, but particularly the three that are known to me.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Humboldt, the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a great pleasure for me to introduce someone who is seated in your gallery. In your gallery today, we have with us Susan Luedtke. Susan is the executive director for Eagle's Nest Youth Ranch, a group home for high-needs youth. And the Eagle's Nest Ranch is committed to providing quality care, counselling, and therapeutic social and educational programs, Mr. Speaker. Susan has been the executive director of Eagle's Nest for 12 years, helping to found the organization in 1997. In total Susan has dedicated over 20 years to working to improve the lives of young people in our province. So I would ask all members of the Assembly to welcome Susan to her Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, if I might just for a few moments join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in extending a very warm welcome to His Excellency and the consul from Vancouver, and especially, Your Excellency, just to say a few words in recognition of Willem de Lint as his service as consul here in Saskatchewan for the Government of the Netherlands. Mr. de Lint's service has been exemplary, has done a very good job in terms of promoting strong ties between the people of Saskatchewan and the people of the Netherlands.

And we look forward to working with Ms. Dyck in the years to come. I know she's going to have big shoes to fill, but then Bill de Lint does have big feet, Your Excellency. But we look forward to working with her, and to again thank Mr. de Lint for his exemplary service. And one more time, greetings from this side of the House.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Dutch.]

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I'd like to introduce a person that is very important in my life. Seated in your gallery is my sister Edna Irwin. Edna, if you'd give us a wave.

Edna usually comes up to visit me every year, and she's usually accompanied by another sister, but she's alone today. So I look forward to spending the next couple days with her, and I'm sure we'll get some shoe shopping in. So I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and ask all members to join me in welcoming Edna.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in your gallery are two young women who are visiting from Germany — Ariane Lill and Berthe-Marie Mierswa. Ariane is from Kiel, and Berthe-Marie is from Tetenhusen in northern Germany. Please give us a wave.

These ladies have been in Canada since February with Willing Workers on Organic Farms and most recently spent time working with Ron and Louise Hawkins who farm near Biggar. Ariane and Berthe-Marie will be staying in Canada till July and are looking forward to seeing more of this great country as they travel and continue to work with Willing Workers organizations. Please join me in welcoming them to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may, one last introduction to a special guest that's joined us as well in your gallery, someone who follows politics very, very closely in this province, maybe more closely than anyone else, frankly, based on my discussions with him. He's very familiar with public affairs and the goings-on of this legislature and this government.

His name is Phil Entz, and he is from the Abbey Colony, very near Swift Current in the constituency of Cypress Hills. And I have found him to be not only a source of great interest in politics but a source of good counsel as well, whether it's agricultural policy or other matters. And I just wonder if all members would join with me in welcoming Phil to his Legislative Assembly here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members, as well I'd like to introduce three gentlemen who joined us, seated in the Speaker's gallery — and if they could wave as I call their names — Doug Osborne, Ken McMillan, and Peter Suderman. These gentlemen have served in many capacities, but the one I've really got to know them in is the Saskatchewan prayer breakfast committee. I want to welcome them to their Assembly and ask the members to help me in welcoming these gentlemen to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of indexing the minimum wage. Mr. Speaker, we all understand that indexing the minimum wage would ensure that minimum wage earners would be able to maintain a standard of living as the cost of living increases. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to indexing Saskatchewan minimum wage to ensure that the standard of living of minimum wage earners is maintained in the face of cost-of-living increases.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon, Regina, and Melville. And I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. We know that workers who work in the community-based organizations care for and provide valuable services to some of the most vulnerable members of our society, such as persons living with mental, intellectual disabilities; women and children in crisis; low-income, at-risk individuals; young children and youth; Aboriginal, immigrant, and visible minority persons. I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the development and implementation of a multi-year funding plan to ensure that CBO workers achieve wage equity with employees who perform work of equal value in government departments.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, these folks come from Saskatoon, Gull Lake, and LeRoy, Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind with respect to providing safe and affordable water. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to financially assist the town of Duck Lake residents for the good of their health and safety due to the exorbitant water rates being forced on them by a government agency and that this government fulfills its commitment to rural Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Duck Lake and North Battleford. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to present a petition in support of fairness for Saskatchewan students through the necessary expansion of the graduate retention program.

The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately expand the graduate retention program to include master's and Ph.D. graduates.

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed this petition are students here in Saskatchewan at our universities, as well as a number of health care professionals who have graduate degrees practising here in the province. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of a long-term care facility in La Ronge. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately invest in the planning and construction of long-term care beds in La Ronge.

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

It is signed by the good people of La Ronge and area. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Two of Canada's Greenest Employers

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it's my pleasure to inform this House that both SaskTel and SaskEnergy have been named two of Canada's greenest employers by Mediacorp Canada. Mr. Speaker, this honour's a testament to SaskTel's long-standing commitment to reduce its ecological footprint in all of its operations.

In choosing SaskTel, Mediacorp highlighted the corporation's extensive recycling programs, energy conservation efforts, greenhouse gas management plan, and employee-led initiatives to reduce power consumption and donate refurbished computers to schools and other organizations. Mr. Speaker, with this national recognition, all of Canada will know about SaskTel's commitment to a greener Saskatchewan and a greener world.

As well, Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy has invested more than \$1.8 million to assist over 10,000 customers through various energy efficiency programs. SaskEnergy's been working closely with the provincial and federal governments on energy solutions for customers, two of which include the energy efficiency rebate for new homes and the Saskatchewan EnerGuide for Houses program. It should also be noted, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan is now the leader in national participation in the EnerGuide for Houses program with three times the number of homeowners per capita taking part in the program. That's compared to the national average.

Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy is pursuing Saskatchewan-based business opportunities, in co-operation with the private sector, that will help to protect our environment. SaskEnergy believes its pipeline expertise can be used to transport and store other commodities, such as carbon dioxide.

Mr. Speaker, the achievement of these Crown corporations can inspire companies across the province to find sensible and effective ways to reduce their impact on the environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I recognize any other members, I would ask members to be courteous enough to allow the member to be able to make their statements so that even the visitors in the gallery will be able to hear.

I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Tribute to the Best Neighbourhood in Saskatoon

Ms. Atkinson: — Not long ago, Saskatoon residents were treated to the 2009 Best of Saskatoon edition of *Planet S* magazine. For weeks the magazine's editors were buried under mountains of ballots as this contest gained enormous popularity.

Mr. Speaker, the best MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] competition was indeed a squeaker. But as any seasoned politician will say, a close win is still a win, and I'll take it again.

I want to pay tribute to the best neighbourhood in Saskatoon, Nutana; the best shopping area, Broadway; and to businesses

and constituents in Saskatoon Nutana who were also named winners. Congratulations to the following Nutana restaurants: Amigo's Cantina, best restaurant overall, best nachos, best staff, and best live music venue; The Yard and Flagon, best wings, best patio, and best place for after work drinks; Calories Restaurant and Bakery, best French cooking, best soup, and best desserts; Keo's, best Thai food; Sushiro, best sushi; Upstairs, best vegetarian food; and the Broadway Café, best breakfasts.

Congratulations to Bill's House of Flowers, best florist; Steep Hill Food Co-op, best eco-friendly store; Guru, best hair salon; Bulk Cheese Warehouse, best butcher; Homestead, best ice cream; the Broadway Roastery, best coffee; Optika, best optical shop; the Vinyl Diner, best CD [compact disc]/record store; the Bike Doctor, best bike shop; Turning the Tide, best locally-owned store; and Schmatta, best piercing store; individual talent, Ward 6 rep, Charlie Clark; and best local news anchor, Rob MacDonald.

Congratulations to all of these folks in Saskatoon Nutana.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Saskatchewan Co-operative Fisheries Conference

Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this month this year, the Saskatchewan Cooperative Fisheries Conference was held. Fishers from across our province's North made their way to Prince Albert for two days of important discussions and meetings on the future of their industry.

I am very pleased that two of my colleagues, the Hon. Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs and the Minister of Enterprise and Innovation, attended the conference in a show of support for the hard-working fishers and the challenges that that industry faces. The last number of years have been very tough ones for the majority of fishers in our province due to mostly outdated rules and regulations around the sale and marketing of fish in this country. The fishers asked government to continue support as they aim to opt out of the federal freshwater fish marketing agreement that is more than 40 years old.

I am happy to say that the Saskatchewan Party government gave definite support to this plan. We will continue to talk to the federal government as the plan moves forward. I am told that the fishers of the North were impressed that our government came to the conference to listen to their needs and work with them. Our government understands the critical importance of fisheries and the future of our province.

I wish the fishers the best of luck as they continue on their path to greater control of their industry, and I'm sure of their success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Celebrating Literacy and Fostering Learning

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was my pleasure to attend the 2009 Canwest Canspell *Leader-Post* Spelling Bee. This competition, which celebrates literacy and fosters a desire for students to engage in learning, was made possible by the sponsorship of Canada Post, the *Leader-Post*, the Egg Producers of Saskatchewan, and Global.

In this region more than 6,000 students participated in this program, enough that 40 bright, young, confident students emerged to these regional finals. I am honoured to recognize students from my constituency, that I'm very proud of their achievement. They include Ms. Amy Zatylny of St. Francis, Mr. Damien Duarte of Rosemont, and Mr. Christian Skwark of Ruth M. Buck. I would like to congratulate the winner, Ms. Katelin Peters of Waldeck School.

I want to thank Mr. Marty Klyne, *Leader-Post* publisher for his support; Mr. Bill Wright as host; and the judges, Mr. Chris Oreit, Mr. Dan Danforth, and Ms. Jana Pruden.

Literacy development is essential in ensuring the potential of our province is reached. It is essential, certainly essential in ensuring individuals are able to achieve a fulfilling life and able to participate in their community's rewarding employment and our democratic process. I ask all members to join with me in extending our thanks and gratitude to all that ensured the success of this spelling bee and to congratulate all participants. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Family First Radiothon

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The third annual Family First Radiothon held in Moose Jaw last week was another success in support of the Moose Jaw Hospital. The radiothon is broadcast for 36 continuous hours on community radio CHAB with volunteers donating their time to assist with answering the phone and accepting donations.

This year the goal was to raise money toward new surgical equipment for diagnostic and treatment of colorectal cancer. In Saskatchewan, colorectal cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in men and women, and the second most common overall cause of cancer-related deaths. About 250 people die each year in Saskatchewan from colorectal cancer. Early detection is the key for fighting this disease. You may remember that the Five Hills Health Region was approved for a pilot project for a new colorectal cancer screening program by our government. The funds raised in the radiothon will assist in the purchase of medical equipment to go along with the training to help prevent and work toward a cure for this disease.

This year the radiothon raised \$237,874 toward new equipment. I would like to recognize the volunteers of the Moose Jaw Health Foundation Board for their time and dedication to health care in the Five Hills Health Region. And thanks to the hundreds of donors for their generosity to the Moose Jaw

Hospital Foundation's third annual Family First Radiothon. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

United Way of Regina Tribute Luncheon

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One fine day in April, I and my colleague from Regina Rosemont had the opportunity to attend the United Way of Regina's tribute luncheon. The United Way is Regina's premier volunteer organization, and they do a tremendous amount of good in bringing together citizens, corporations, and labour to help raise money, provide funding, mobilize volunteers, and to build a better Regina. And as many outstanding volunteers as there are that make the United Way such a great success, the tribute luncheon is a chance to shine a spotlight on those who stand out just that much more.

First up were the awards for Distinguished Corporate Philanthropy. Those awards are dedicated to outstanding corporate community support, and this year's worthy winners were Farm Credit Canada and Great-West Life, London Life, and Canada Life.

Next came the Labour Community Service Award, and this year's deserving winner was Wendy Daku, a citizen who has devoted decades of her professional and volunteer life to working to make a better world.

Finally there was the presentation of the United Way President's Award to Eunice Cameron. Eunice's life has been devoted to the service of people, young people especially. She was a high-impact educator with 17 years teaching at Cochrane High School and then as the principal-CEO [chief executive officer] at Cornwall Alternative School for 10 years, retiring last year. Despite being a highly dedicated educator, Eunice always found the time to do more for family, more for her community. She has always believed, and I quote, that "You are a citizen in this community and enjoy the many advantages we have in Regina, but you have the responsibility not to just take what is offered but to give back so that others may enjoy the same" — sage advice.

Congratulations to this year's nominees for the United Way of Regina tribute luncheon.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan's Forest Industry

Mr. Bradshaw: — Good news, Mr. Speaker. Last week there was a sign of progress in Saskatchewan's forest industry. C & C Wood Products of Quesnel, British Columbia announced that they had signed an asset purchase agreement with Weyerhaeuser. The agreement is to purchase and reopen the Carrot River saw mill and the Hudson Bay plywood mill. This

is great news for the communities, forestry workers, and our forest industry, Mr. Speaker.

C & C Wood Products fits in to our vision for the forest industry in our province. C & C is a value-added producer, Mr. Speaker. The administrator from Hudson Bay called this great news, and the mayor of Carrot River said it should be nothing but good news for us. We'll get our people back working and living in town again.

Unlike the failed 100 million MOU [memorandum of understanding] the NDP [New Democratic Party] offered up before the last election, the Saskatchewan Party government is not putting a single dime of taxpayer money into these facilities. And they're still planning on reopening. This is a slap in the face to the NDP strategy of risking taxpayer money on private business. As we recently stated in our forest industry development framework, our government will continue to work with the forest industry on competitiveness issues like taxes, regulations, wood supply, and transition to value-added production in our industry. This is great news for Carrot River Valley. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Supply of Physicians for Stem Cell Program

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, we learned today that stem cell transplant specialist, hematologist Dr. Michael Voralia in Saskatoon, has been on holidays since February and there's no timeline for his return. Mr. Speaker, patients deserve to know where their specialist is and when he will be back at work. These patients already have the stress of knowing they have cancer. They don't need the additional stress of not knowing if they will have a specialist available to them.

To the minister: when is Dr. Voralia returning to work? And if he is not, why not?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report that the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency has recently recruited two hematologists to the blood and marrow transplant program. One is now in Saskatoon providing care to patients and the other hematologist, the transplant hematologist, is expected to arrive in early August of this year, Mr. Speaker.

But it's this very issue that has caused our government to act quickly, I believe, on a physician recruitment strategy for this province, because this is just one isolated case that you'll see in various parts of the province because of 16 years of lack of movement on this file. I remember asking questions on this very issue when the former minister from North Battleford, talking about emergency rooms closing, said, it's just normal practice.

Normal practice perhaps for that government, but not normal practice for our government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the information on physician recruitment, but what I'm actually talking about is the stem cell program. There is currently only one stem cell transplant specialist left handling the caseload of three specialists, and he's seeing 184 patients, according to the Cancer Agency. Mr. Speaker, there is concern from the Saskatchewan stem cell advocacy group, STEM [Saskatchewan Stem Cell Transplant Advocacy Group], that he will burn out and leave. Then where will these patients turn for care and life-saving treatment?

To the minister: what is this government's commitment to the stem cell transplant program at RUH [Royal University Hospital] in Saskatoon?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, our government is completely committed to the stem cell program in Saskatoon for the province of Saskatchewan. But that member would know and realize that over the last number of years this program has had a fluctuation of staff within the program. It has been in place for roughly a little over 10 years and they have staff that have come and go and come and go.

That's why I'm pleased to see that the Cancer Agency is working on recruitment. We have another hematologist coming in August to fill in as well, Mr. Speaker. But our government is absolutely committed. But I found it very curious when the member was asking the question she said, I'm not talking about physician recruitment; I'm talking about the stem cell program. Well excuse me, the stem cell program needs physicians — hematologists — in order to operate the program, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's the responsibility of this government to ensure that the stem cell program addresses the needs of its patients. To the minister: a program review was done in 2006; recommendations have been given; the government is moving to get this program up and running, properly funded and staffed, but meanwhile to the minister: what is he doing to ensure that patients who are left stranded today looking for care and answers are having their needs met?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the program has been reviewed and that's why our government is committed and provided \$2 million to planning and construction at the Royal University Hospital to allow more transplants to be performed in the province. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2009.

But construction is only one piece of the program, as you can imagine. We need to ensure that there are the proper complement of health care professionals, proper complement of hematologists. That's why the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency is working towards that. They've attracted one. They've got another one coming in August.

And that's why I think, into the future with our dedicated recruitment program, our dedicated recruitment strategy from our government — something that this province has never seen under 16 years of NDP government, Mr. Speaker — a program that is initiated under our government, I think it will bore results. It will prove very successful, just as the recruitment agency has proved very successful from our government regarding registered nurses.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Utility Rates and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party election platform promised to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 32 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party now says the difference between the 32 per cent reduction targets of then and the new shadow targets is \$65 million annually. The NDP left a Green Future Fund with \$320 million in it. This would have offset the first five full years of 32 per cent reduction targets, but the Sask Party chose to scrap the fund.

To the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan]: how is it that SaskPower customers always pay for the Sask Party's inability to manage this file?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite is interested in SaskPower actually reducing emissions, and think that \$320 million which sat in the GRF [General Revenue Fund] and wasn't allocated is going to solve all the problems at SaskPower, then perhaps I can remind the member asking the question, Mr. Speaker, that SaskPower low carbon energy sources — and just to point out, low carbon means a reduction of emissions — we have allocated, there is budgeted \$1.7 billion for renewable energy; \$139 million for energy efficiency; and conservation, \$105 million.

Mr. Speaker, the list goes on. We have over \$2 billion allocated in current and future funding to meet our greenhouse gas emissions in this province, Mr. Speaker. I think the \$320 million mystery fund that the NDP keep talking about is only a

fraction of what this government is committed to.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the Sask Party inherited the 320 million Green Future Fund.

Mr. Speaker, when there's capital spending at SaskPower, the Sask Party chooses to increase SaskPower rates. When the Sask Party talks about clean coal or carbon capture, they talk about increasing power rates. Mr. Speaker, the NDP created enough wind power to serve 73,000 Saskatchewan houses and still remained with the lowest cost utility bundle in all of Canada . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: why does this government always look to SaskPower customers to pay for the Sask Party's inability to manage?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the member opposite references carbon capture and storage for our province. The province is a world leader in carbon capture and storage, which makes me wonder why, Mr. Speaker, the NDP Environment critic said, and I quote, ". . . carbon capture and storage, a technology the Sask Party claims to be cost-effective which is a claim that is simply dubious . . ." She also said, Mr. Speaker, in December, "They [meaning us] committed to the expensive and untried technology of carbon capture . . ."

Yet their little green brochure, Mr. Speaker, on page 11 says, and I quote, "Carbon capture and storage is critical technology . . . We will continue to research these technologies . . ." It goes on to say, "Saskatchewan's exceptional geological storage potential will enable us to store very large volumes of carbon dioxide at relatively low cost for hundreds of years."

Mr. Speaker, are they for it or against it? Are they for reductions? Are they against it? Are they for clean coal? Are they against it?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we're four-square in favour of trying to get some answers out of that Sask Party government. The fact is they chose to spend the \$320 million green fund in other areas. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party has chosen subsequently on every occasion to pass the buck on to Saskatchewan people through increases in utility rates.

To the minister: are rate increases the government's way of

undermining public support for climate change action or is this the government's plan to undermine Saskatchewan's Crown corporations?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I would point out in a *StarPhoenix* article from earlier this spring it says, and I quote, “. . . it's a fool's game to believe [that] this province can reduce emissions without cost.” Mr. Speaker, reducing greenhouse gas emissions is not free. It will cost the province money. It will cost SaskPower ratepayers money. But, Mr. Speaker, we will do everything we can to make those rates affordable for the people of our province going forward.

It is a position of our government to balance economy and the environment, Mr. Speaker — something that the NDP Environment critic says is a red herring, that we should have no discussion about the economy in the face of climate change. I think that is irresponsible.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP remains committed to a 32 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2004 levels by 2020. We even set aside \$320 million in proceeds from the sale of a greenhouse gas emitting asset to begin the process of implementing those targets. Those greenhouse gas reduction targets are the same targets the Sask Party promised to implement in the last election, the same targets that they were so confident of meeting that they scrapped the Green Future Fund upon coming to office.

Of course the minister now claims that the money wasn't real, just money in the General Revenue Fund — you know, the same account the government uses to pay for health care and education, for instance.

To the minister: why is the Sask Party breaking its promises on climate change?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I have twice read out the list of the investments that our government is committed to when it comes to green technology. It's over \$2 billion. And I would think perhaps, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite were serious about actually achieving reductions in our province, that they would think that perhaps \$2 billion versus \$320 million was probably a good approach.

But, Mr. Speaker, as to federal targets, I will point out again the member opposite said, and I quote, “I would say the federal

targets are something [that] they should clearly be adopting.”

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, it's a broken promise by the Sask Party, and what we're serious about is having climate change addressed, not having a document entered into the legislature 18 months into government that will not see the light of day until perhaps next spring.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party now has a new set of climate change targets, a 20 per cent reduction by 2020, but their so-called plan has more than a few holes. The legislation contains no year when greenhouse gases will stabilize and it contains no baseline year against which reductions in greenhouse gases could be measured.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: how can she describe this as a credible plan when it doesn't provide a baseline year against which reductions in emissions could be measured, and how will we know whether we've reduced emissions by 2020?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that we've stated that the emission reductions that we are seeking are 20 per cent reduction by 2020 from 2006 levels, our baseline year. But, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the information — understanding the way the legislative process works — a lot of the information, the fleshing out of this legislation will be done in regulations. That will be done in consultation with environmental NGOs [non-governmental organization]. It will also be done in consultation with industry.

And, Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to engage in her own consultation, she can easily do some in-house consultations. She has direct access to a former vice-president of one of the largest oil and gas companies in the world actually, Mr. Speaker, so perhaps she could ask her potential new leader what he thinks of the new targets.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, the minister says 2006 is the baseline. Well that's very interesting given that it's not contained in the Bill. So is it not contained in the Bill so that she has wiggle room to deal with a different baseline at some point? I think so.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear what the Sask Party is doing. They will select the latest possible year against which to measure reduction in emissions, and they hope that they can claim victory. But greenhouse gases won't stabilize for years, assuming that they ever do. To the minister: can the minister

tell us whether greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 will actually be lower than they are today?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pretty sure that the action that we will be taking will do more than what the NDP did. I have a report here from the Scotiabank Scotia Economics. It's based on provincial emissions over the course of 17 years from 1990 to 2007. Saskatchewan has the highest increase in emissions overall, 65.9 per cent. We also carry, Mr. Speaker, the highest emissions per capita in the entire country. That is their record. We are trying to fix the legacy that they left behind, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of this information will be done in regulations. And, Mr. Speaker, on regulations . . .

The Speaker: — Order. It's becoming somewhat difficult for the Speaker to hear the response. I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite said yesterday, and I quote, "Our government undertook . . . regulations to reduce emissions." I thought that was a little bit interesting because I wasn't aware of any. So I thought, well maybe I don't know everything. So I went back to the Ministry of Environment and asked.

Mr. Speaker, there were no regulations to reduce emissions by the previous government in this province, Mr. Speaker. So perhaps you can take the next question that she has, take that opportunity to clarify the record and admit that the NDP had no regulations to reduce emissions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Here's what we're serious about, Mr. Speaker: we're serious about the fact that the Sask Party has broken its promise to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party is hoping that they can announce a 20 per cent reduction target now and hope that Saskatchewan people don't read the fine print. But the fact is, greenhouse gas emissions will continue to rise for this foreseeable future. Their so-called reduction target could still result in a significant increase in emissions from where they are today.

To the minister: why is the Sask Party playing a shell game with the people of Saskatchewan? Why won't they just admit that their so-called plan to reduce greenhouse gases is actually a plan to do nothing of the sort?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the

Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Under the NDP, emissions rose in this province by almost 66 per cent. We will take absolutely no lessons from the NDP on how to reduce emissions in this province because they did absolutely nothing. They had no legislation and, as I just pointed out, there were no regulations, Mr. Speaker.

And the NDP record is, and I quote from the Sierra Club of Canada, ". . . an environmentally regressive Premier and [a] cabinet whose NDP orange verges on brown." And, Mr. Speaker, from the David Suzuki Foundation, "Saskatchewan remains the Canadian jurisdiction with the fastest growing greenhouse gas emissions and the highest per capita emissions." Mr. Speaker, that is their record, that is their legacy, and we will do all we can to overcome the mess that they left behind.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Effect of Power Generation on Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The study released yesterday by the government confirms that there will be no reductions whatsoever in greenhouse gases by 2020 from nuclear power plants, presumably because those plants, if developed, would not be built by then. It also confirms that the majority of the power will be exported out of the province, which suggests that it would contribute more to reducing greenhouse gases in other jurisdictions than it would here in Saskatchewan.

To the minister: why is the Saskatchewan Party touting nuclear as one of the major ways to address climate change when their own studies confirm it will do nothing to help Saskatchewan reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2020?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for that question, or assertion I guess. And as assertions go, Mr. Speaker, of all the ridiculous assertions from that side, that is the most ridiculous to date.

Mr. Speaker, even those members will admit that there are zero GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions from nuclear power. That's not a matter that's up for debate. That's a fact, Mr. Speaker. There is no way that nuclear power, even if it's built in this province, could not reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The same report released yesterday notes that a regulation requiring 30 per cent of utility

electrical generation to come from renewable energy sources by 2020 would reduce greenhouse gases by 2.5 megatonnes or one-quarter of the Sask Party's new so-called target.

But the Sask Party has no plans to invest significant new resources in renewable energy sources. Everything they've done on this front is a continuation of initiatives already begun by members on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is renewable energy always an afterthought with this government?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, let's call a spade a spade. We said in this legislature we took ideas from the members opposite; we improved upon them. We said the Crown Corporations Committee; we asked them to join us. We said the Crown Corporations Committee will look at all types of generation.

SaskPower has been working hard to ensure that we have a renewable mix of energy going forward. We have the fastest growing economy. We have no choice, Mr. Speaker. We have to be there. We have to be there with wind energy. We have to be there with gas. We have to be there with hydro. We're working on all fronts.

Very soon SaskPower will release a wind study based on the information that they received from some 28 groups that came to Saskatchewan and expressed interest on pursuing wind energy. That's just one aspect, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to offer more if there's more questions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Environmental Plan

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, my question will be to the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday in the plan that she unveiled, it calls for the establishment of something called a climate change advisory council. Now, Mr. Speaker, you will and I think even government will understand how there is some skepticism among the Saskatchewan public and among this opposition about this government's appointments to various councils.

So my question to the Minister of the Environment: how does she plan to appoint this council? And by the way, will there be room on that council for individuals who may not in fact support the minister's plan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, we will be looking for experts in different fields, whether that's industry or research and development; expertise coming from our universities and the sectors that are represented there; and environmental NGOs, Mr. Speaker. We are looking for a broad base of people who can advise the government going forward so that we make the right decisions on reducing our emissions in this province, Mr. Speaker, because in 16 years we do not look forward to another 66 per cent increase in emissions like we saw under the NDP.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, by the minister's own admission yesterday in the materials presented to the public, there are a number of environmental groups in this province who do not support her plan. Now when we watched this government put together the UDP [Uranium Development Partnership] panel, they went out and found an environmentalist who claims to be in support of a nuclear reactor.

My question again to the minister is: will there be room on her council for those who may in fact disagree with the plan that she has unveiled?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, our government has already undertaken consultations with various groups, including environmental NGOs, and the message that we heard from them is that the time for talk is over and the time for action is now. And, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the position that we will take.

And I'm sure not every single person in the environmental NGOs is going to agree 100 per cent with anything that any government does. And, Mr. Speaker, we are not looking for a rubber-stamp advisory council. We are looking for people who are going to bring us ideas and insights and creative opportunities to reduce emissions in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, according to the documents released yesterday, it was revealed that the Saskatchewan Party government actually changed its climate change targets way back in January. They decided to break the promise way back in January. Now it's my understanding that even in the month of February the minister was publicly saying that they had not yet made a decision.

My question to the minister is: why, why the three-month delay? After having made the decision to break your promise in January, why a three-month delay until April, nearing the close of the legislative session, to indicate to the public that you're breaking your promise?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, the member, the Environment critic last year counselled us to adopt the federal targets. That is something that we examined as a government and as a cabinet. Our date for release for the legislation was yesterday and we made that a full announcement, Mr. Speaker. We announced our targets. We announced the legislation. We announced the consultation on regulations and, Mr. Speaker, we also announced change to the Go Green Fund because as an independent, an outside source had told us — we asked for an outside opinion on that — that the NDP's green initiatives fund was not going to help us, indeed, reach our targets, Mr. Speaker. So we announced an entire program yesterday to reduce emissions in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, when being asked about environmental issues, the Leader of the NDP said this, and I quote, "If I have some regret about our time in office it's that I didn't, we didn't, early enough sense the urgency around some of these issues . . ."

The Speaker: — The minister's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the minister would be well advised to leave her little yellow and green sheets at home and refer to her own activity, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister suggested that the very cornerstone of this plan is an equivalency agreement with the federal government — an equivalency agreement, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't exist. What we saw yesterday was an agreement, an agreement to talk about an equivalency agreement, Mr. Speaker. There is no equivalency agreement with the federal government, and not likely until the fall of 2009. I ask the minister what's to happen in the fall of 2009 if in fact we have a federal election and a change in a federal government.

And why, Mr. Speaker, why, Mr. Speaker, was the agreement — that was portrayed yesterday as an equivalency agreement — only signed yesterday? Would that not indicate that this is a plan that's been put together on the fly, in a hurry to deliver something before the end of this session?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, well I'm sorry that the NDP don't like my little yellow sheets because what's on my little yellow sheets is the truth about the NDP record. And if I were them, I wouldn't . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — But, Mr. Speaker, at no time yesterday did I portray the agreement that I signed with Minister Jim

Prentice as an equivalency agreement. For the member opposite to assert that for some reason I was misleading yesterday is completely inappropriate, and I have to say I'm a bit shocked.

What I said was it was an agreement in principle to work with the federal government to reach an equivalency agreement. That is what I said all along. And any assertion that I said otherwise, Mr. Speaker, I take absolute offence to.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Support for High-Needs Youth in the Saskatoon Area

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today our government has taken another step towards . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today our government has taken another step towards strengthening the province's child welfare system. I am pleased to announce that we are providing Eagle's Nest Youth Ranch with a total of \$4 million to provide 20 new spaces for high-needs youth in . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, these spaces will consist of 11 short-term emergency receiving beds and 9 assessment and stabilization beds, and they will assist some of Saskatoon's most vulnerable young people. We know that there has been a critical shortage of appropriate care spaces for youth in the Saskatoon area. The Children's Advocate described this issue in the report that he released earlier this year.

Addressing this issue and the gap in the care continuum in Saskatoon is an important part of our government's plan for the child care system announced in February. Eagle's Nest is one of the finest providers of residential youth services in the province, Mr. Speaker. They currently provide 46 spaces for youth in the Prince Albert area.

The funding announced today will enable Eagle's Nest to expand its services to Saskatoon and purchase property and the necessary furnishings. We expect that these 20 new spaces will be available next month. We're looking forward to continuing our successful partnership with Eagle's Nest as they expand to Saskatoon where together we can strengthen the services we provide to the children in our care.

Our government is committing to putting children and youth first and ensuring a better quality of life for the young people of Saskatchewan. Today's announcement takes another step closer to that goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the minister for sharing an advance copy of her ministerial statement. And I know that the families and folks in Saskatoon will be most welcoming to Eagle's Nest Youth Ranch to the Saskatoon area. The 20 new spaces will be a very good addition, and that's very hopeful.

I note the commitment to have this open next month. That's very impressive — the speed of which this \$4 million will be put to use — and we look forward to that. Speaking of a breach to trust, the Children's Advocate report, and the response from the minister, we are also looking forward to — probably, maybe in the next two days but surely within the next few weeks — the data updates. I note that the minister made a commitment to update her website, on a regular basis, on the impact that her initiatives are having on the foster care issue in Saskatoon. And the website looks pretty much the same as it looked in February. So we're looking for that.

But with this news, I'm happy to hear it and thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Kirsch: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 94, *The Profits of Criminal Notoriety Act* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill and that the Bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. The minister may proceed to move third reading. I recognize the Minister of Justice.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 94 — *The Profits of Criminal Notoriety Act*

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice

that Bill No. 94, *The Profits of Criminal Notoriety Act* without amendment now be passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Kirsch: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its seventh report. I move:

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice now be concurred in.

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice has moved:

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice be now concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Chair of the Human Services Committee.

[14:30]

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 63, *The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Amendment Act, 2008* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill and that

the Bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 63 — *The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Amendment Act, 2008*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for Social Services that Bill No. 63, *The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Amendment Act, 2008* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 66, *The Witness Protection Act* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill and that the Bill now be read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 66 — *The Witness Protection Act*

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing that Bill No. 66, *The Witness Protection Act* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2008* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of this Bill and that the Bill be read now a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 49 — *The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2008*

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — I move that this Bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2008* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present the seventh report. I move:

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services has moved:

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

I recognize the Chair responsible for the Private Bills Committee.

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Private Bills to report it has considered Bill 903, *The Ancient Order of Melchizedeq, Inc. Act* and to recommend to the Assembly that this Bill not be further proceeded with at this session.

Mr. Speaker, your committee has concerns regarding the ad hoc process of dealing with private Bills relating to degree-granting authorities of religious colleges. Other concerns raised included the ability of private Acts to confer degrees under *The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995*. These questions could not be addressed by your committee. In light of these circumstances and the current ongoing review of the post-secondary education system, your committee recommends that this Bill not be further proceeded with in this session.

I move:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Private

Bills be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair of the Standing Committee on Private Bills:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried. I therefore direct that Bill No. 903, *The Ancient Order of Melchizedeq, Inc. Act* be removed from the order paper.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Committee of Finance.

The Speaker: — I do now leave the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Executive Council Vote 10

Subvote (EX01)

The Chair: — The first item of business is the estimates for Executive Council found on page 71 of Saskatchewan Estimates book. I will ask the Premier if he will please introduce officials present today, and after I call the first item of business he may make some opening statements then if he wishes. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair of Committees. We're looking forward to the afternoon, to the debate and discussion that will ensue during estimates. And it's my pleasure to be able to introduce senior officials of the government who've joined us today for the discussion, hopefully to provide some help to myself.

I want to welcome Garnet Garven, the deputy minister to myself, to Executive Council. I'm going to be saying a few words about him as the opportunity affords, but appreciate having my deputy, Garnet, here. To my right is James Saunders in Executive Council as well; Reg Downs, the senior advisor in Executive Council; and Bonita Cairns who often provides much of the specific information requested by members opposite.

And, Mr. Chair of Committees, we'll leave it at that. We'll have ample opportunity for discussion and debate. But I want to welcome the officials here, thank them for their time, and thank the members opposite in advance for the questions that will be coming during estimates.

The Chair: — Executive Council, vote no. 10, subvote (EX01),

central management and services. I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to join the Premier, of course, in welcoming his officials who have joined us. And if I may say, if memory serves me well, the subject of the Premier's estimates is usually a concern for a broader group of officials than are in the room today and no doubt have prepared for this afternoon's discussions. And so, through the officials who are here, I would extend thanks also to those many officials I know who have been at work to prepare for this afternoon.

Mr. Chair, if I may just preface my interventions this afternoon with just a very few comments. I recognize that I have about three hours and two days to bring down the government. I suspect, Mr. Chair, that's not likely to happen. What I hope can happen today is a good, frank exchange of ideas and hopefully some good, frank exchange of information and answers to questions.

To preface my interventions today though, Mr. Chair, I just want to say this. It has been said that to whom much is given, much is expected. And I think it is a fair observation, and I think it would be shared by others outside of this room, that the current Government of Saskatchewan has been given much.

Arguably, no other government in this province's history coming to power has come at a more advantageous time in the life of the province. This government, I think it's fair to say, inherited some very significant work of former government and governments. They inherited a circumstance where our provincial debt had been paid down substantially, where I think we'd reached a point of the relationship between the debt and the GDP [gross domestic product] being one of the best in Canada. This government inherited Fiscal Stabilization Fund cash reserves that approached \$2 billion.

This government inherited an economy, I think by all judgments, an economy that was essentially firing on many, many cylinders. If I recall, the member from Nutana established the saskjobs.ca website and when government changed there were something like 11,000 jobs on the website. And I think, Mr. Chair, it's fair to say that this government has been gifted by some skyrocketing resource prices, and we see oil climbing again today. How well I do remember, Mr. Chair, when oil reached \$50 a barrel, and that was hard to believe, and now we get concerned if it gets to \$50 a barrel. They inherited a growing population.

And, Mr. Chair, this government was elected with a very workable majority, strong majority, strong mandate from the people of Saskatchewan. They inherited an opposition of course which is in transition at this moment, and if I may say, they've proven to be a very worthy government in terms of their public relations. The Premier is a very able communicator and, at least by my measurement, they've never really faced a very hard, hard decision yet.

So I think it is fair to say, Mr. Chair, that this government has in fact been given much and therefore, Mr. Deputy Chair, the expectations of a province, expectation of an opposition, the expectations are high, high on those issues which we know face

our province, which we know will shape the future for all of our people. And so today in the course of these estimates, I and most of my colleagues will want to participate in questioning, in challenging, in seeking information about this government's future, about how they intend to bring to the people of Saskatchewan what the people of Saskatchewan believe given, given the strength they enjoy, given the economy they enjoy, given the fiscal capacity that they enjoy.

We will cover over the course of the day a wide variety of areas of attention of government, ranging right through from the environment and climate changes — the issues we were just talking about in question period — to economic issues, to the important issues of First Nations and Métis relations, northern affairs. I'm sure we'll have some discussion before the course of the day is over around nuclear energy and our Crowns, obviously some discussion on social policy, and broad discussion, I hope, on good governance. But my premise, Mr. Speaker, is we will ask some tough questions today because this government has been given much, and those who have been given much, of them much is expected.

[14:45]

Let me therefore begin the conversation today where we left off in question period on the question of the government's climate change proposal. Mr. Speaker, this has been some time in the coming. I can recall, when the current government was in the opposition benches, they were suggesting at that time that there would be a formal plan described before the election. We did not see that.

Post the election, government chose — one would assume in a knowledgeable choice — to adopt the targets that had been established by the former New Democratic Party government. And now, only of late, we learn from government that they in fact, having made the promise in the campaign, have now abandoned that promise and have abandoned the targets which they committed to and adopted from the former government.

So my initial question to the Premier today — because I have not heard a clear answer from the Minister of the Environment on this question — my first question to the Premier today is: why did the Saskatchewan Party government choose to break their own campaign promise and abandon the targets that they had adopted, the targets that had been set by the former government?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — I'll recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair of Committees, and I thank the hon. member for the questions. We're going to have a chance perhaps to reflect on his career — a distinguished career I would say — maybe later on this week in this legislature. At least I hope to take that opportunity, and so perhaps we could just get right to the questions and answers and the debate that will ensue today and leave those things for another day.

Mr. Chair of Committees, a couple of points in terms of touching on the former premier's introduction of his line of questioning before we get into the specific question on the

environment plan, the very first emissions reduction plan in the province's history introduced yesterday by the Hon. Minister of the Environment.

I want to touch on some things that the premier said. I think he was, obviously he was quoting the New Testament when he mentioned quite rightly that to whom much is given, much is expected. And I mean, I guess we're going to start today by agreeing because I agree that much has been given to this government — in some measures by actions of the previous government, yes. Much has been given to this province just by natural endowment, by providence if you will. Those gifts have existed for a long, long time.

And so he's quite right. I think expectations are high and they rapidly went higher and higher of a new government. I'd also point out that relative to other provincial situations — I think of Ontario, I think of even the province of Alberta that's looking at a \$4.7 billion deficit — that our government has not, and thankfully, mercifully, our government and our people have not faced those kinds of difficult questions that have been dealt with in other cabinet rooms and in other legislatures across the country.

And so I do believe it's also fair of the former premier to say the measure ought to be then, what do you do with what has been left to you? What has this government done, together with the people of the province, with this good fortune, and in some cases the stewardship provided by the previous administration? And let me just cite a couple of those first of all.

I mentioned in this Assembly — I've mentioned it in public very many times — the business tax cuts undertaken by that member who just spoke, no doubt with some great difficulty to get his party to support those kinds of business tax cuts, where someone in his party would not have been supportive, was really leadership for the province that has paid dividends to Saskatchewan's economy in the months that followed that budget, and to our government as well, as we have inherited a much healthier business tax regime.

Now I would point out, I would point out, I hope, I think it's fair to say, as we give credit to the government that did those things, the previous government, I hope that they would say — maybe from their seat, as the member for Lakeview's doing — I hope they would agree that the official opposition Sask Party that campaigned on those very business tax cuts in '03 when they were not in vogue, when they were not the policy of the party opposite, and then continued to press the case for those business tax cuts after the '03 election when we were still in opposition, I think perhaps that had also a positive impact on getting those things done.

There's some other good things we've inherited from the previous government, including carbon capture. Well the member for Nutana is already in a bit of a bad mood, I think. She doesn't agree with that even, that an opposition can cause some good things to happen. I would argue that this opposition has already caused some good things to happen when our government has moved on a number of adjustments in part because they were raised in this Assembly.

So let me just say this, that what . . . Let me answer the

question, what has the government done with what we've inherited? Well for us there were a number of priorities. We had a growth agenda when we were elected to the government we campaigned on, we talked about in opposition, and that growth agenda was fundamentally based on having a more competitive economy.

We've seen the largest in-year income tax cuts in the history of the province. We've seen the largest property, education property tax cut in the history of the province. That's what we've done with the wealth of this province, with the resources that have been left to us both by providence and even in cases by previous administration.

We have undertaken the largest infrastructure investments in Saskatchewan's history because that too is part of our growth agenda. We had to deal with an infrastructure deficit left behind by the previous government. And, Mr. Chairman, let me just say this: they might say, well we didn't have the money you had. Well they had about \$700 million, I think, in the fund when it all wrapped up. And yet there was this infrastructure deficit, and yet there was this challenge with respect to revenue sharing unaddressed with our municipalities.

What else did we do? Well we could have chosen just to live by the letter of the law. We introduced *The Growth and Financial Security Act* in terms of debt repayment. We did introduce stronger balanced budget legislation in *The Growth and Financial Security Act*, I think the first Act that we introduced as a government. And had we only met the letter of that law, we would have paid down a lot of debt, Mr. Chairman, but we exceeded that. We made a decision as government to significantly exceed what was already more stringent requirements for debt repayment by our own legislation. And because of that, Mr. Chairman, I'm very proud to say — the people of the province should take the credit — that 40 per cent of the province's General Revenue Fund debt from the day we took office has been reduced. Forty per cent of the debt is gone, Mr. Chairman, that we inherited.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — That's what we've done with growth, Mr. Chairman. That's what we've done with good fortune from higher resource revenue and some of the policies that were good for the province inherited by the previous administration.

And I look forward to the hon. member from Regina Douglas Park entering the debate because he often likes to talk about the 1980s and, Mr. Chairman, I think we should probably talk a little bit about a decade, for sure, that saw an increase in debt and compare it and contrast it with what's happened since this party took office — again, a 40 per cent reduction in the General Revenue Fund debt of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Chairman, I also want to point out that if we can make the investments in terms of infrastructure and debt reduction and lower taxes for a more competitive economy, if we can do all of those things with the resources that we have, it's still not enough. Because we know with the growing economy there comes challenges. There comes challenges for those who are most vulnerable among us, for those in rural and urban and northern Saskatchewan who are having a hard time keeping up

with what are higher costs for housing, higher costs, really, for everything. That's one of the hallmarks of a growing economy. And I heard the hon. member, when he was premier, say that he would much rather have the challenge of too few housing than too much housing. In an economy where people were leaving, I would agree with that. But it is a challenge nonetheless.

And so what else have we done with the resources, the revenues that we have in the province of Saskatchewan? Well there is a very, very long list of historic and unprecedented increases to allowances, Mr. Deputy Chair, social investments in the people of the province of Saskatchewan. Whether it's the 6.5 million annualized enhancements for seniors' income plan, Mr. Chair of Committees, which raised the maximum monthly benefit from 90 to 190 or for single seniors from 72 to 155 — not increased, I don't believe, in the life of the hon. member who just spoke, of his previous government, not once. We've seen the inflationary increases in the Saskatchewan assistance plan and the transitional employment allowance — TEA — so people can move from dependency to independence.

We've responded to higher utility costs. We've responded to transportation costs; \$1.7 million to increase daily food allowance for welfare and community living division group home and day program clients, something that people in the care homes have been waiting for for a very, very long time, Mr. Chairman; 12.4 million to adjust shelter rates in income assistance programs in response to the task force on housing; an increase in the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement for low-income families, between 36 and \$136 a month, Mr. Chairman.

And let me also say this, for the first time in the history of the province, the Minister of Social Services undertook the innovation of tying increases in these allowances to inflation by region because housing inflation is different depending on where you are in the province. Housing inflation may be more acute in the city of Saskatoon than it might be in the community of Wynyard. And so our government said, let's be sensitive to that. Let's actually tie these allowances and the inflationary increases to the reality of inflation in the markets that they were in. That's also a change we brought about, Mr. Chair of Committees.

Increased the employment supplement by \$2 million, benefiting 6,000 low-income families. Increased shelter rates for 6,500 households in the social assistance plan. Provincial training allowance was increased in August '08 and again in '09. And the PTA [provincial training allowance] is now indexed to keep shelter rates current.

Mr. Chairman, what are we doing with the resources that we have inherited as a government that we are grateful for, that we mark prudence for, that we acknowledge the opposition to the extent when they were government they had a positive impact on? Mr. Chairman, well we've reduced the debt by 40 per cent. Historic tax cuts. Historic property tax cuts. Historic infrastructure investment. And a government that, in unprecedented ways, has made sure that we have made social investments in people, in families who are vulnerable, who need to participate in this new Saskatchewan and in prosperity. That's what we've done, and I'm proud of the record, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — With respect to the question on the environment, let me just say this, Mr. Chairman. I think it's fair to say, by any reasonable measure, that our government with its imperfections and mistakes that we have made — and there will probably be more, human nature being as it is, Mr. Chairman — but with all of that, I think it's fair to say that the people of Saskatchewan think of their government, maybe perhaps a number of things, but I do think the people of Saskatchewan believe that well even if we don't agree with everything they do, they keep their promises. They do what they said they would do in the campaign.

So, Mr. Chairman, it was and remains a very difficult decision, the one we made that led to the introduction of the greenhouse gas reductions Bill yesterday in the legislature. It was not an easy thing to do because I'm very proud of the record of these women and men of keeping campaign promises that we've made. We looked very, very carefully at this issue, Mr. Chairman, inheriting from the previous government — other than a budget allocation where there were no ideas to how they were going to spend it, other than a climate change office that was simply that — a press release. We inherited no plan. We inherited no legislation for emissions reductions. We inherited nothing from the previous government.

And so we began to look very carefully at the targets that they had implemented, that they had assigned to the province — the ones that we agreed with in the campaign, I freely and readily admit — and asked ourselves, can we achieve these targets without completely kneecapping the economy? Can we achieve these targets while ensuring that we still have affordable electrical rates? And, Mr. Chairman, can we achieve these targets in the context of an equivalency agreement with Ottawa and of a potential new continental cap and trade as we've heard from the Obama administration and the Harper government? And the answer was clearly, Mr. Chairman, there was just simply a lot of doubt.

And so what we've done instead, Mr. Chairman, is move forward with reductions that harmonize the province with the federal government. What we've done is move forward, for the first time in the history of the province, emissions reduction legislation that prescribes penalties and fines if emissions are exceeded by the people of Saskatchewan, by industries in the province. What we've also done is made sure we balance the economic future and the future of Saskatchewan families who would like to be able to continue to afford electricity with the important environmental causes at stake.

And moreover, Mr. Chair — and we'll have a chance to debate it, Mr. Chair, I'm sure, in the subsequent questions — I don't think you should look at this Bill absent the facts of our government's agenda when it comes to environment. Because the other facts include this: the largest per capita commitment to technology that will actually deal with carbon that you will find not just in the Dominion of Canada, but on the continent, Mr. Chairman.

When you consider what we're prepared to do with Montana, we announced that last week. When you consider the \$1.4 billion Estevan project, Mr. Chair, when you put that together

with the legislation, the conservation initiatives — another one announced yesterday with great effectiveness by the Hon. Minister of Crowns who had helpful Father's Day present, gifts as well in his announcement, Mr. Chair — when you put all of that together, what we see is, I believe, the best environmental, the best carbon plan that you'll find anywhere in the country, and the per capita commitment on the part of the people of Saskatchewan unrivalled anywhere.

I look forward to more questions, Mr. Chair, but the bottom line is this: we moved away from NDP targets because we want to see the economic momentum of the province continue because it's that economic momentum that will pay for these carbon capture initiatives, that will pay for initiatives to make sure we are more environmentally sustainable in the future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[15:00]

Mr. Calvert: — I did say, Mr. Chair, the Premier is an able communicator. I didn't say he was a lengthy communicator, but I think that's proving to be the case this afternoon. I think at the end of the Premier's comments, I heard the germ of an answer to my question, why his government chose to abandon the targets and break the promise, targets which one would presume they had given some consideration to before adopting them as their party policy going into the election.

Now there has been some speculation that in fact the reduction in the target was first of all and foremost driven by a desire to be on a level playing field, or rather to adhere to the target set by the Harper Conservative government in Ottawa. It is interesting, Mr. Chair, that the target now set by the Sask Party government, having abandoned their promise, is precisely the target recommended by and set by the national Conservative government.

Now it is interesting when the minister is asked to explain the difference, well she said, you know, the lower targets — and I think I heard this in the Premier's answer — will have a better chance of maintaining the strength of the economy. And yet yesterday at least when asked to document this, the Minister of the Environment pointed out that in terms of costs to SaskPower, or the consumers at SaskPower, of rate increases, the reduction from 32 per cent target by 2020 to a 20 per cent target by 2020 would only vary the cost by 2 per cent on the consumers of electricity, and in terms of cost to industry, suggesting that the costs would be in the several hundreds of millions of dollars.

But over the period of time between now and 2020, Mr. Chair, I think it's reasonable to suggest these are not onerous, onerous costs to the energy industry in our province to reach the 32 per cent, and particularly, Mr. Chair, when this government had access to over \$300 million at its disposal. If they didn't like the plan that we had laid out for that 320, there were clearly other options for it, but they used it for other purposes, Mr. Chair.

So I'm not sure yet we've had a clear answer. Let me just ask the Premier this: was the reduction in the target, by his estimation, necessary to preserve the strength of the energy economy and to protect SaskPower, or was it to adhere to the

federal climate target set by Stephen Harper?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the answer is (a), the first one.

Mr. Calvert: — Then perhaps the Premier can explain how it is that by lowering the target from 32 to 20, how that 32 per cent target would have had such a negative or dramatic impact either on the Power Corporation or on the energy sector in our province which together represent the two large, large emitters.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you for the question. Mr. Chair, it's interesting. The hon. member is inquiring as to analysis done, assuming . . . In his question he assumed that we had done some analysis on the decision we made. And he's correct in that.

As I've said, it is not a, it is not a . . . Well the hon. member from Lakeview is laughing from his seat again, so I'm going to bring him into the debate with some quotes of his that he'd made in the past, which will be quite interesting to see if he's still giggling after those quotes, Mr. Chairman.

But I would just say this. The hon. member assumed that we had done some homework into these adjustments. The answer of course is, we have done a lot of homework into these adjustments because for us a government that keeps the . . . Unlike members opposite, when we say something in a campaign, our intention is to do exactly that. And that's been the record of our government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — And so in this particular issue, in order to change that, you bet there was a lot of analysis done. Interesting though that the hon. member would assume some analysis on our part to come to the decision.

Part of the reason we had to make the adjustment, Mr. Chairman, is we quite incorrectly assumed that they had done some homework when they were the government, before they set the targets that we did agree to in the election campaign. But what we found, Mr. Chairman, was that there was nothing in terms of assessment.

The hon. member from Nutana is talking from her seat. Well I'm going to invite her over to the Environment ministry, and she can go through all . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. We're in Executive Council. I would ask the members to respect the person that's asking the question, and also respect the person that's answering the question. There's other people wanting to enter into the debate. I would just recognize the people on the floor. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, I've consulted with the Minister of the Environment again who's consulted with officials. So if there is some NDP economic analysis of their targets on the effect of Saskatchewan families and of the economy, something we assumed existed, we need to have the former minister, the member from Lakeview, who is very engaged in the debate, agree to come over to the ministry with us and show us where they exist. Or maybe, maybe they're in the documents that ministers still won't turn over to archives, in

violation of a transition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Maybe that's where the documents are. I don't know.

He was also the minister of Justice. I think there's a bunch of questions there we'd want to talk about. But I want to say to the member who just asked the question, to the member who just asked the question: how in the world could they set any targets at all for the province with zero analysis on what that would do to our economy in the province and what that would do to electrical customers for SaskPower?

Because it doesn't exist. All there was was a vague notion on the part of members opposite, including the member who's been engaged from his seat, the former Environment minister, the member for Lakeview, there was just this vague notion that people would be paying a lot more under the NDP plan. Here's what he said, April 19, 2007. He said, "And this is one area where people can contribute . . .", he said. He was engaging the people of the province. He said people can contribute in this area, and it ". . . is to actually pay for new production which is . . . zero emissions."

He went on to say in April 19, 2007 on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] News, he said Saskatchewan people, "Saskatchewan people are saying they're . . . [willing] to pay higher power rates if that's the cost of fighting climate change." Implied in that of course is that apparently the analysis of the opposition, then Government of Saskatchewan, had simply been that it's going to cost a lot more, because we can find nothing else. We can find no other work that the previous government did.

Mr. Chairman, we found a fund that was allocated with no plan on how to execute the technology investments. We found a climate change office that was just a tentative agreement to rent a space and a press release. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, there was no plan for the NDP on greenhouse gases. And I believe that's why one of the leadership candidates today — well yesterday, or earlier on — in Estevan, seeking to replace the current member from Riversdale said, we failed the people of the province on poverty and failed them on emissions.

We intend, we intend not to fail the people of the province. We are going to move forward with our plan with respect to carbon capture. We're going to do it in a way that's also respectful of the economy because we know that the economy is one way to ensure that the changes coming to Saskatchewan are affordable for families who have to pay the electrical bill.

The other issue that the hon. member may want to talk about some more, I hope he does, is . . . And by the way we will do a comparison on the hon. member's plan and its impact on SaskPower versus what we've announced yesterday.

But the hon. members opposite need to remember there's more than just SaskPower at stake, as important as that is. There are potash mines who have a carbon footprint, and there are uranium mines who have a carbon footprint, and there is a huge oil and gas sector that has a carbon footprint. And, Mr.

Chairman, right now they're paying for a lot of health care in this province. They're paying to hire nurses in this province. They're paying for better education and better highways.

So when we move forward on an aggressive plan to deal with these important environmental issues, we do need to balance affordability. We need to balance continued sustainability for our economy. We need to engage not just environmental NGOs but industry so that we can have reachable targets and that those targets, while doing something meaningful on carbon and CO₂, also ensure that Saskatchewan can continue to lead the country, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — So let's try and understand this, Mr. Chair. The Premier and his government, while campaigning for office, promised the people of Saskatchewan a plan. Well they don't come up with a plan. Then they decide to adopt the plan of the former government — the New Democratic Party's plan — which includes a 32 per cent, a 32 per cent reduction by 2020.

Now, Mr. Chair, we're understanding that the Saskatchewan Party did no research about adopting that, and they denied that research has been done. Well, Mr. Chair, I can tell you that significant, significant research was done — both at committee levels, at the bureaucratic levels — and that these targets were very carefully set, very cognizant, very cognizant, Mr. Chair, of the economy of Saskatchewan which . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Now there's some member from the backbench over there just hollering from his seat.

An Hon. Member: — Moose Jaw. Moose Jaw.

Mr. Calvert: — No, it's not from Moose Jaw this time. Mr. Chair, so now let's understand this. So the government has been in office now almost two years; it's coming to the midpoint of their government. Apparently if this was a very significant priority for the government, they would have acted very quickly upon coming to government to either change the plan or begin significant implementation. And I'll say again in this House as I have said publicly, as others have said, if I have some regret about our time in government, is that we did not act with more wisdom or speed on this matter.

Now the fact of the matter is, that government has come to office almost two years ago. If it is as they say a priority and they are not satisfied with what is in place, then why in the world, Mr. Chair, does it take this long to come up with a plan? Particularly the kind of plan we saw yesterday, a plan without, in fact, the equivalency agreement with the national government which they say is essential, a plan that does not — as I've been able to read it — indicate any significant measures in energy conservation or any significant measures in renewable sources of energy, Mr. Chair.

They're counting on this equivalency agreement from Ottawa, uncertain whether the national government is going to adopt the cap-and-trade system which is now becoming prevalent in North America, unaware if this federal government will even survive the fall.

They're basing all of this on an equivalency agreement with

Ottawa and a technological fund. Well, Mr. Chair, there was a fund in place. If the government wanted to direct that to technological advancement where, in fact, some of it was going, then that was their choice. No, they chose to get rid of the fund.

Mr. Chair, then we have the circumstance where apparently the government made this decision way back in January. Way back in January when we were receiving news releases about the most popular baby names in Saskatchewan, they make an important decision of the targets that are going to be achieved by their government in this province way back in January.

The Minister of the Environment we're told, in the month of February, is saying to the people of Saskatchewan and the journalists, no, no such decision has been made. Yesterday she said the decision was made. And then it takes to April, towards the end of April to tell the people of Saskatchewan that the target, that the promise is being broken. Mr. Chair, this is not credible. It is not the sign of a government who is taking this file seriously. It is not confidence in a well thought out plan.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, the Kyoto Protocol was signed in 1997. I think there has been ample . . . I'm glad to hear the hon. member admit that their legacy is years of climate failure, climate change failure in terms of their policy. That admission I think is a healthy thing. It's the road to improvement and the road to getting it done a little bit more effectively down the road.

You know in that regard, Mr. Chair, we welcome members opposite to join us because we're on that same road. We've inherited that legacy from the members opposite. We've inherited the fact that there was no legislation before this Assembly.

There were in other provinces. Alberta had legislation. British Columbia has legislation. Quebec has legislation, and now the fourth province — and there's no others — has legislation moving forward that our targets of the national government, combine that with a very aggressive plan with respect to carbon capture. We have a lot of work to do because of what we've inherited. But I'm pleased to see that we're making some progress.

Some would like to have it more aggressive. I've heard from the industry sources saying even the new federal caps are too high. I've heard from environmental groups saying, well they're not high enough. And I guess as the hon. member knows well — perhaps better than me — this side of the House is really about trying to make those decisions.

[15:15]

And so I can truthfully say to the member opposite, we have looked at this issue very carefully. We have consulted with industry, and we have made decisions both with respect to this legislation and the attendant investment we'll make in carbon capture and sequestration and other technologies and renewable energy that we'll hear more about in the future. We made this decision with the best environmental interests and economic interests of the province at heart, and time will tell as to whether or not the people of the province support the decision.

You know, Mr. Chairman, there's been some discussion of the different approaches by two different governments and the impact of the targets, the NDP targets. And they're sticking to their targets, so I guess we'll be talking about it in the months ahead and probably through the next election.

While the NDP targets in the long term, in the very long term — if SaskPower is able to meet the targets — in the long term may not be that much, may not be that much, have that much of a negative impact on people's electrical bills if those things happen, if SaskPower's able to in the long term meet the targets. But it's very likely that, Mr. Chairman, very likely that increases in electrical bills will spike for an unknown period of time under the NDP plan. Under the NDP plan though in the long term, in the long term, if SaskPower reaches its targets, may only be slightly higher on people's electrical bills. We know that for some period of time undetermined the NDP plan will cause huge increases in people's electrical bills at a time, I don't think, when this province or this economy perhaps ever could afford it, but could afford it in the context of where we'll be even throughout this next decade as a growing have province. So again we reached for a balance. We reached for a balance, Mr. Chairman.

And it's interesting that the hon. member would, the hon. member would have a number of questions with respect to the environment because it is hard to contain all of the questions that, all of the positions that the NDP have had on the environment. It is hard to contain them, even with a smaller font, on one page. Just in the last number of months we've had the Environment critic opposed to carbon capture, saying it's not really feasible; it's not effective. And then the government in favour of carbon capture. Their own glossy brochure that the Hon. Minister of the Environment refers to says, no this is part of the solution. We've had many different positions from members opposite with respect to nuclear power being at least a greenhouse gas friendly, perhaps, alternative for the province to look at.

Mr. Chairman, we've heard the hon. member for Coronation Park, I believe it is, every other day get up in the House and say rates are too high. But then his colleague, the Environment critic, says she'd like rates to be even higher because she wants us to have even more onerous targets with respect to greenhouse gas emissions.

And you know, Mr. Chairman, I remember getting lectured by members opposite when I sat in opposition about the luxury of being in opposition — that you could really be on all sides of the issue. That was one of the advantages. And I remember, and I remember, Mr. Chairman, I remember, Mr. Chairman, that members on that side of the House would tell us in opposition that we really can't have it both ways. Well, Mr. Chairman, the same advice applies to them as well, and when they . . .

The Chair: — Again members are entering the debate from their chair. I would ask them not to do that. And it's getting increasingly hard to hear the person that has the microphone. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — And just as soon as the NDP have an actual coherent position on carbon capture, on sustainable energy technologies, on where we should do with rates, on greenhouse

gas emissions plan, when the day, the moment that they finally have a coherent plan, an idea, I hope they'll share it with us because we would be prepared to take a look at it, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. This whole area points to a very interesting issue around how you develop public policy. Now what we know is that the Premier learned quite a few things during the '80s around developing public policy, and we accept his quotations about that at various times over the last decades in fact. And one of the issues becomes, in this particular area, how do you respond to these bigger, broader issues that are influenced from out of the province?

And in Saskatchewan, one of the range of tools that we have as a province is the whole array of Crown corporations, and in this particular area we're talking about SaskPower and we're talking about how we provide safe, dependable power for the people of Saskatchewan in the long term.

Mr. Chair, we knew when we were working in this area that there are some extremely difficult issues, and I think that the Premier has confirmed that. But what we also knew is we needed to have some funds that were available.

Now we know that when the new government came in, they made a lot of quick choices without thinking through what they did, and I think this — what we're seeing today — is an example of what happens when you make some of these quick choices without really thinking it through. Because there was a fund of money that we set aside from the sale of the upgrader, which we knew was going to be available to deal with a number of the public policy issues that were going to have to be addressed through SaskPower and, to a lesser extent, through some of the other Crowns.

And, Mr. Chair, when that fund was wiped out — or as they say, put into highways or other places — I don't think there was enough forethought by the crew that had just come into government about what the longer term effects would be. And now we're at that point in 2009, and the money's not there to address some of these public policy issues.

So where does it come from? Well it comes from increased costs on utilities which we're seeing on a pretty regular basis, and my colleagues have been raising this. Now, Mr. Chair, my question to the Premier is, when you're in the role that he has as Premier and you're dealing with public policy, you either make some choices around providing some funds out of the General Revenue Fund — which I think the minister has mentioned that that's where this money is or was — or you go and increase the money in how you charge for those utilities.

What we know is that in the '80s, in the public policy forum that that Premier was trained, debt was increased in the Crowns to the point where it was unsustainable, and that was what caused the great deal of difficulty in the early '90s for the Government of Saskatchewan, for the people of Saskatchewan which we have now, are in a position . . . And so some of the

choices that were made in those years have some of the kinds of things that you are now, as a government, making choices now.

So my question to the Premier is, are you going to deal with these public policy issues through taxation, through revenue generation on the government revenue fund, or are you going to put it on the backs of the utility payers directly? And I think the more important question is, are you going to be open and accountable in how you do this because I see you going down a track which caused us incredible difficulties in this province which resulted in the near bankruptcy of this province in the early '90s.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well you know, Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member wants to talk about the 1980s because he doesn't want to talk about today because the legacy of the government, of the Saskatchewan Party government today is 40 per cent less debt since we were elected, Mr. Chairman . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — The legacy of the Saskatchewan Party government today is sustainable and historic tax cuts; record investments in people, in those who are vulnerable in our communities right across the province; and record investments in infrastructure. You know what, Mr. Chairman? We're pursuing radical notions like you ought to, if you can afford it, pay down the debt, lower taxes, and — oh, by the way — fix the odd highway that's been ignored for 16 years, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — And I would say this to that hon. member. I would say this. We're going to work very hard to keep that record as a government. And, Mr. Chairman, we know when the next election will be because that's another promise we've kept. When that next election happens, I'm not sure if that member is running again, but if he is, I hope he's prepared to debate with his Saskatchewan Party opponent about a record, Mr. Chairman, that includes that debt reduction, that includes lower taxes and better services for Saskatchewan people because that will be the legacy of this government. That's the direction we're headed, and that's where we're going to continue to go, Mr. Chairman.

With respect to his questions, with respect to his questions on what did we do with the \$300 million? Well you know what? Earlier on, the hon. member from Riversdale was saying you've moved away from your promise on greenhouse gases, and we have admitted that we have.

But, Mr. Chairman, one of the promises that we kept was one we made when I was in the city of Yorkton with the hon. member for Yorkton. We gave a speech to the chamber there and said, you know the NDP have this . . . They've sold the co-op refinery. I beg your pardon. They've sold the Regina assets, and they've privatized the upgrader. And with their proceeds from the upgrader, they are going to have an environmental fund. But other than a backgrounder — and I'm going to get to it in a moment — there's not a lot of details

around what this fund will be.

We said that we need to get to these environmental issues and at least 40 million of that 320 million will go to those environmental issues. But we also said that the people of the province had priorities we needed to deal with, that we needed to fix highways and infrastructure in the province. So we campaigned on a change from that fund, using that NDP environmental tech fund to fix highways.

What else did we say, Mr. Chairman? We should use that fund to pay down debt. Promises made, promises kept. And then we took \$40 million, and we moved it over to green initiatives. And in the ensuing months, Mr. Chairman, as fate would have it or perhaps as good planning and good public policy would have it, we have actually vastly exceeded anything contemplated by members opposite with that \$320 million.

And I want the member to pay attention because he raised the question about exactly what we are doing with these environmental investments and how does our plan differ from their plan. Their media backgrounder from their Green Future Fund in September 2007 said that they were going to put \$100 million for conservation and efficiency. The Saskatchewan Party record and our plan going forward, energy efficiency and conservation — \$105 million.

They said they were going to put — when they agreed with carbon capture — they said they were going to put \$125 million towards carbon capture and storage, Mr. Chairman, \$125 million. That's basically one project for this government. That's the Montana project, never mind the investments we continue to make in centres at University of Regina, together with Shell, together with the university itself, never mind what we're going to be doing at Boundary dam, Mr. Chairman, in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

That member should be embarrassed to stand up and compare their record and what they were prepared to invest in terms of environmental technologies with what's happened already in the province of Saskatchewan under our watch.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — But let's go further. Let's go further. That hon. member's plan that he was just touting and saying, what have you done with our plan, was going to spend \$75 million to increase the use of renewable energy. Well, Mr. Chairman, let me just find it. I will tell you that our plan that we have talked about here in this Assembly in the past — the Minister of the Environment has — how does it compare to 75 million from the NDP? How about \$139 million planned for by this government?

Mr. Chairman, the total value of investments and technology that this government is prepared to make is \$2 billion. And I'm not sure about the new math of the hon. member opposite, but I am prepared to compare that, that investment in the future and in the sustainable economy, with what may have happened if that member had gotten around to his 300 million versus 2 billion on the part of the Saskatchewan Party government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Nilson: — Well, Mr. Chair, we're getting such long answers to our questions, and my colleagues have lots of questions, so I'm going to slip to another area. Mr. Chair, in the whole budget that the government has brought forward, they have increased the spending in 18 months almost 25 per cent. And that's gone right across the board.

Now I have a simple question for the Premier. Waiting lists in health care for surgery have been a huge issue, and on December 2007, the number of people on the waiting list was approximately 26,000. And now at December 2008, the most recent information on the public waiting list, it's gone up by 1,000 instead of going down. Can the Premier explain why, after all the ranting and raving about waiting lists and health care and everything else, you've been in government for 18 months, and the waiting lists have gone up?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can't hardly recall a time when the current Health minister, then Health critic, would have ranted and raved about things, Mr. Chairman, but I'll take the member at his word.

An Hon. Member: — I think it was about five years worth.

[15:30]

Hon. Mr. Wall: — It may have been five years worth — that's right — the member for Lakeview says. I think there's been a lot of debate in this legislature about health care over the years, and some of it fairly emotional, as it should be, because obviously there are fewer issues as important as the health care of our citizens.

You know, it's interesting, Mr. Chairman, that the segue from the environmental discussion would be health care and would be wait times because I think we all agree in this Assembly, notwithstanding our party affiliation, that one of the most important things a government can do to deal with wait times is health care workers, front-line health care workers. And if you have a shortage of nurses, that will exacerbate your wait times. If you have a shortage of doctors, that's going to make it even a little bit more difficult to deal with wait times.

And so we as an opposition said that we should have targets for nurse recruitment and retention, for example, that we should have targets. Now I am just going to jump back to the environment discussion for a minute because I don't think we ought to be . . . that you can get obsessed by just sort of setting targets that are unachievable. On the environment issue, I note that the CEO of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy said this: "I think what is important is that there is a focus for a target. A lot of people have suffered from what I call targetitis: throw out bigger and better targets [he's talking about greenhouse gas emission reductions] to show that somehow we're more concerned than the other guy on doing something."

I think we've seen in the environmental debate in this House that members opposite may have targetitis. They're interested in those targets and increasing them even if they're not interested in backing up those targets with action.

But the NDP took quite a different tack — and I assume still

takes a different tack — with respect to one of the important issues in dealing with wait lists, and that's setting targets for nurse recruitment. I remember when the hon. member from Indian Head-Milestone asked the minister the question, what's your target? I remember when SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] asked the member for North Battleford, the then Health minister, what's your target? And what did he say? He said, well we don't like to set targets for nurse recruitment because it's very likely we'll miss the targets, Mr. Chairman.

Now I don't think that's good enough for the province. That's part of the reason, by the way, we have longer wait times for procedures — and yes, still today — than we did. That's also something we've inherited from the NDP.

So what has our government tried to do? Well first out of the gate, we worked very hard to get a sufficient number of nurses. We know if you're going to reduce wait times in the province, you need to be able to have beds open. In order to have beds open, there needs to be nurses. So rather than fight with SUN, we sat down and, in an unprecedented way, hammered out a partnership with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, with nurses in this province. We followed that up with, to be sure, an aggressive contract, so we could send a message to our nurses and nurses from across the country that you are welcomed here, that we need you here, that you're the long-term solution in many ways to wait times. And both of those things occurred, Mr. Chair of Committees. Very recently the Government of Saskatchewan has announced a physician recruitment and retention plan — first one in the history of the province — because we also believe that front-line workers include doctors. Doctors are part of the answer to shortened wait times.

Is there more work to be done? Absolutely. Wait times are long. There's examples we all have that are close to us — I have some very close to me — of wait times for procedures that are too long. And so that is why . . . and I encourage members opposite to work with us because they'll be seeing more from our government on this very specific issue. But we are going to be building on both the recommendations of the patient-first review and the unprecedented health care worker recruitment and retention efforts of this new Government of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. Premier, last Thursday at the legislature, we had a group of people here from the Saskatchewan ProLife organization. It's the second year that they've been here for their March for Life. They have asked the legislature and members of your government to de-insure therapeutic abortions.

I want to know what your government's position is when it comes to this particular medical procedure. Is it your intention to de-insure therapeutic abortions, or will women in this province continue to have access to therapeutic abortions through our Medical Care Insurance Commission?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, the answer to the question is no, no to the first part; yes to the second part.

The Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the official Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — For a while, Mr. Chair, I'd like to move some of our discussion into a broader economic discussion or perhaps a focused discussion around the economy and the activity of this government. I well recall, during the process of the campaign which brought this government to office, there was I think a lively debate about the Premier's flagship, the economic plan which was the creation of Enterprise Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — I hope the members can applaud the results thus far of Enterprise Saskatchewan. Can the Premier describe for the legislature today, for the people of Saskatchewan, as they approach the mid-term of their government, what tangible result has been provided by Enterprise Saskatchewan to the economy of this province?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Chair, I know my hon. friend and I can hardly believe that other members are talking about other things right now, but it's happening.

Let me just say in answer to the hon. member's question that Enterprise Saskatchewan, it is a different approach to economic development in the province. I just recently had a chance, an occasion to speak with the Vice-Chair, Mr. Gavin Semple, about where things were at. And obviously it was . . . And in daily conversations with the minister, who I applaud for doing an excellent job of providing leadership to a brand new approach to economic development in the province.

What we wanted to do with the establishment of Enterprise Saskatchewan is depoliticize the process, is to have an independent board prepared to provide advice and counsel to the government on the economy. And in cases where we could agree and afford to enact the recommendations they made, we would. In other areas where they recommended where we were unable to act immediately, we would say so publicly. And then Enterprise Saskatchewan would be welcomed, even as an arm and funded by the government, to say publicly, well we think the government needs to move a little harder on this issue.

Part of the way to do that is to organize Enterprise Saskatchewan by sector teams, as the plan called for. There are a number of important sectors to the economy. We can all name a number of them, I'm sure, from agriculture to mining to the technology sector in our province. We've asked these sector teams, fundamentally volunteers, to provide advice to the government on barriers to growth in their sector that perhaps government can do something about if it has the means and the will, report back publicly to the government on that.

You know, we've already benefited from advice from Enterprise Saskatchewan. The recent inclusion of the R & D [research and development] tax credit, which was by no means . . . I'll be quite transparent here and say that, you know, it was not a done deal in the budget process that was occurring just a few months ago in our province. Enterprise Saskatchewan made a forceful case, said if we were truly to have an innovation agenda that was workable for the province, we need to make the improvements, changes to the R & D tax credit that provide an

incentive beyond what existed already for those companies to make R & D investments.

It was Enterprise Saskatchewan that also recommended income tax competitiveness, and we moved on that recommendation. And more on that in a moment because they would tell you publicly we should be going further in terms of a flatter income tax process, and they'll say that publicly and we'll get that advice.

They also advised that we had a problem with education portion of property tax. That's a capital tax. There is no more insidious tax on an economy than one that taxes capital, regardless of its ability to necessarily generate income. And so we took historic steps in the budget to deal — first phase this year — with the education portion of property tax. And the rest will come next year, and I expect we'll never be done because we'll now have a provincial mill rate and there'll be opportunities to reduce it further as we can afford to.

That's the kind of advice we've gotten from Enterprise Saskatchewan just in under a year because they had to get up and running, had to have the enabling legislation. And I expect this to just evolve and develop more and more each month and each year that passes.

I expect as I maybe predicted naively in the paper that I presented as opposition leader where we outlined these ideas, I do naively believe that even by the time we're finished — whenever that is, either in a couple of years or a couple of decades — as a government, whichever it is, I don't think the next government will want to change it because they'll have inherited a better system, one that does take the political clause out of economic development and relies truly on the stakeholders of the economy to provide open and honest advice. And then it's incumbent on the government to explain why, or they would not follow that advice.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, just one other on the question of enterprise. The Premier in his answer has suggested that Enterprise Saskatchewan has talked about further flattening of the income tax system. Not sure that we needed Enterprise Saskatchewan to tell us that. The . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the minister from Thunder Creek yells from his seat, why didn't we do it? In fact we did do it. We did it in a more dramatic fashion than has ever been done in this province's history, and you, sir, have inherited it. You, sir, have inherited it.

Now the fact of the matter is we didn't need Enterprise Saskatchewan to tell us that property taxes, that the levy on the property for the funding of education was too high. We didn't need that. The Premier tells us it was Enterprise Saskatchewan that instructed his government to do something about the R & D. So my question to the Premier is . . . And we might just, you know, ask the Premier to answer the question specifically so that we might get through a variety of questions that the people of Saskatchewan expect their opposition to ask.

Will we find ourselves in a circumstance that Enterprise Saskatchewan's recommendations are going to be very public

recommendations? Because I do not recall — I may have missed it — but I do not recall yet a public report from any of the sector teams or any part of Enterprise Saskatchewan. I do not recall Enterprise Saskatchewan being public in a call for the change to the R & D. Can we expect some transparency from Enterprise Saskatchewan which in fact is costing the taxpayer a great deal of money?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Interesting, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. member would say that we didn't need anybody to tell us that we needed to do something about income tax. They needed a near-death experience in the election in 1999, when we campaigned on income tax reduction and they almost lost. And then, well the member from Nutana says, chirping from her seat, they needed the Vicq commission. And good work by the Vicq commission.

Of course the hon. member must admit he relied on third parties to provide that advice because otherwise they would have done it prior to the '99 election when they almost got beat right out of the blue, Mr. Chairman.

Of course they needed someone else to tell them about property taxes. There was the Scharf-Langlois report and there is the Boughen report that they commissioned. I mean it's an amazing line of questions. Why would you need Enterprise Saskatchewan and the stakeholders of the economy to advise you about taxes? I don't know. Why would they need those same kinds of groups in a different manifestation to provide them advice? You know what the difference is, Mr. Chairman, on property tax, for example? The difference is they ignored the people that they asked advice for.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — The Boughen report — let's talk about the Boughen report. What did it say? The Boughen report said, you need to provide meaningful education portion property tax relief. That's what the report told the former premier, roundabout the time when he went to SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and said, we're going to get this done; we're going to get it done.

The Boughen report though also said, you should increase the PST [provincial sales tax] by a point. Right? As it turns out, they did listen to the Boughen report — at least half of the Boughen report. They got the tax increase part right. And you remember that hon. member was talking about breaking promises earlier on. That hon. member raised it.

Do you remember what the then minister of Finance said in response to questions in this House about why in the world would you not provide property tax relief and increase people's PST? Do you remember what he said, Mr. Chairman? I'll tell you. He said, well you wouldn't want to talk about a tax hike in an election; you want to do that after the election.

Mr. Chairman, of course governments rely on third parties. We now have Enterprise Saskatchewan providing good advice. I want to thank the Enterprise board for what they've been doing because they're doing a good job for the province of

Saskatchewan. They're getting under way. And in terms of public disclosure, I would like to talk more about that because we're going to be, I'm sure, talking about transparency and disclosure, and we have a record and the NDP have a record and we'd be prepared to talk about that.

But I will say, Mr. Chairman, as the sector teams are reporting now, we are going to have a full report from Enterprise Saskatchewan twice a year. It's part of the, it's part of what's written into the DNA [deoxyribonucleic acid] of this organization. We do want it to be public, and our ministers and our caucus are going to have to get used to the fact that this group of women and men, Enterprise Saskatchewan, are going to provide advice to the government as we have asked them to, whether we want them to or not.

Now knowing the women and men on this side of the House, I have a pretty good feeling that when we get that good advice — unlike the government previous — we might actually do something about the things that we're advised on, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[15:45]

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I also want to say this, Mr. Chair of Committees, that I omitted to say that the Enterprise Saskatchewan board is right now, has been engaged with the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Education working on the schools of opportunity issue because you will know our legislation gives communities a chance to provide an economic case that their community is viable. And that decision, if made by the government, will in fact buy those communities some time to demonstrate viability. It will keep that school open.

And one group that we are relying on for advice — not the ministry, not the politicians — we're relying on people like the board of Enterprise Saskatchewan, representatives of First Nations and of labour and of post-secondary and of business and of municipalities and of government. We're asking them to be engaged in the process.

Mr. Chairman, we are determined to make this Enterprise Saskatchewan model the envy of the country. We're going to do so not because of anything the government does or even the minister, as able as he has been on the file, will do, but because of the great women and men that are involved in Enterprise Saskatchewan — the volunteers and the sector teams and the great board we have in place, I'm proud to say, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt about it. Every government in this province, including the one I led, has received valuable information from third party, from third party groups. We did receive very valuable information from the Vicq commission, having made a policy decision. Mr. Vicq recommended proper and direct ways to provide that.

We did, Mr. Chair, take some very direct information from a summit that we held bringing together the economic players of Saskatchewan, a summit which the Premier and his caucus at

that time refused to attend, and boycott, refused to listen to the voices of industry and the economy in our province. And from that, I would argue, came the direct changes that we witnessed to the business tax regime in this province.

Now, Mr. Chair, what we did not do, what we did not do, and I guess the verdict is still out, but I'll tell you what we did not do was create a massive bureaucracy which many of us, which many of us see happening around Enterprise Saskatchewan — a massive bureaucracy, Mr. Speaker, that is becoming and growing more and more expensive. The verdict may well be out, but to date we've seen very little for this massive bureaucracy that's been created around Enterprise Saskatchewan.

That said, Mr. Speaker. I want to move on. The Premier now has attended twice to job fairs in Ontario, I think relatively successfully the first time round. I would like to ask the question, a few very specific, specific questions, and maybe we can get a specific answer around the Saskatchewan job fair presence in Toronto.

I would like the Premier to indicate to the legislature today how many private sector employers accompanied Saskatchewan's presence to the job fair last year. How many private sector employers accompanied the Government of Saskatchewan to the job fair this year?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, we can provide a specific breakdown to the hon. member of his question. He mentioned the summit though first, if I may, and why members of the opposition were not at the summit on the economy that was planned by the former government. I just want to remind the hon. member that I think we were at an even more important economic meeting in the province being held at that same time.

You might remember, Mr. Chair, that one of the biggest threats to economic prosperity was the NDP job-killing monster — the most available hours legislation proposed by a potential leader of that party over there when she was the minister of Labour. So we were at a rally — a packed, loud rally across the street — of business people and others and business employees who were working very hard to ensure that the NDP hadn't undone their own good work with respect to business taxes by labour laws that weren't really needed, that wouldn't have helped part-time workers to the extent they claim, and that would have sent a chill through the business climate of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — That's where we were. That's where we were.

With respect to the job fair, we have attended two as the hon. member has referenced. One in the spring of 2009 this year, one in the fall of 2008. I will say that there were, in 2009 there were few . . . In the spring of 2009 I think it's fair to say there were fewer private sector employers than there were in the fall, but

still a good number of them. And there were public sector workers there which I would expect . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well we'll get . . . The hon. member is very impatient. We'll provide that information to members opposite.

And you know, Mr. Chairman, I would also say this. I think it's important to note that there were public sector employers there, including the Saskatoon Health Region who are looking for nurses, who are looking for health care workers. There were other Crown corporations involved who need workers as well. So they attended both the spring and the fall job mission.

I also want to say this. On both occasions, on both occasions the Saskatchewan Construction Association was there and, Mr. Chairman, I will say this. When the Saskatchewan Construction Association is there, we have them representing dozens of private sector employers. There are dozens of private sector employers, Mr. Chair, who are represented by the Construction Association.

And do you know why they need workers? It's actually a great story because, in the face of a unprecedented, worldwide, economic recession, Saskatchewan still had jobs posted on that website, saskjobs.ca. Saskatchewan was still creating jobs when others were losing jobs. And employers like the contractors and the construction companies from across this province knew that they needed construction workers, in part because of the business climate we have and the other reason is because the unprecedented investment in infrastructure this government has made.

So there were those who were public and private sector employers. We will provide the specific information to members opposite about the participation in both job fairs that I believe were successful — successful in terms of the families that came back to the province, successful in terms of getting our message out. And, Mr. Chairman, may I say this, at a fraction of the cost, more successful than any Future Wide Open TV campaign meant to burnish that old government's image that ever came from members on that side of the House, Mr. Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I'll be very interested to see the information that the Premier has now committed to provide about the number of private sector employers, because my understanding is that, in fact, the number of private sector employers were very, very few in number in this most recent job fair in Toronto. The Construction Association, fair enough. But my understanding is, beyond that, there were very few private sector employers there. Most of the employers or representatives were of the public sector — nothing wrong of course with public sector jobs.

I heard the Minister of Advanced Education saying from his seat, well the Crowns were there and they were looking for workers. Well I understand that SaskEnergy was there, that we've spent the money to have SaskEnergy in Toronto at the jobs fair. And while the jobs fair was on, I accessed the SaskEnergy website where job postings are listed and I found there was one posting. One posting at SaskEnergy, and I'm not sure we need to go to Ontario to find someone to fill that job.

I'm sure there are people in Saskatchewan who could fill that job.

But, Mr. Chair, I have another question for the Premier. A friend actually attended the job fair in Toronto and reported back to me, in fact has sent me a picture of a sign that, I'm told at least, was at the job fair in Toronto. This sign says, and I quote, Mr. Chair: "Premier Wall Parkway." I would like to ask the Premier: was this sign a part of the Saskatchewan display at the job fair in Toronto, and why would we have a sign up at the job fair that reads Premier Wall Parkway?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure if there was a little street sign that had Premier Wall on it or not. I know that officials in the ministry did a very good job of promoting the province of Saskatchewan. We tried to go down and complement that promotion by getting on *Canada AM* and by getting on all of the media outlets there. And I'm not sure how many points in the polls we've risen because there was a little green Premier Brad Wall sign at a job fair in Toronto, because most assuredly that must have been the reason, given the implications coming from the hon. member.

You know, Mr. Chairman, I also want to answer some of the questions that came. In addition to the dozens of companies represented by the Saskatchewan Construction Association, we also note that Travelzoo Inc. was there. Access Communications was there. North Ridge Development was there, Mr. Chairman, and the Canadian Home Builders' Association was also there. We also know that Co-operators Insurance was there. And so there was a mixture of private and public sector employees. And you know, Mr. Chairman, there may have been, there may have been a Premier Brad Wall street sign at the top of one of the booths. I'm not sure if there was or there wasn't.

What I am sure of, Mr. Chairman, is that no government more effectively, in terms of using taxpayers' dollars — I believe this — no government has worked as hard to tell Saskatchewan's compelling story in the most efficient way possible with the use of public money than our government. And we're going to do more of the same, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I want to just change the page a little bit here and speak to a couple of issues that are within my critic responsibilities. And this is something that we actually had asked the minister on too when we were in estimates and it has to do with . . . I think first and foremost I'd like to say, you know, congratulations on reaching a permanent formula for revenue sharing, having that put in place. I know that it is just at a percentage of the final total which, I believe that that's been put in place, that next year we will move to a full point of the PST that will be distributed to the municipalities.

But one of the questions that we talked to the minister about, and he was a little bit soft on it, so I thought we'd ask the Premier, that the distribution of revenue sharing — or I believe

it's been renamed the operating grants — to the municipalities is done on a per capita basis. And while often we are using statistics that are quite outdated, the stats that are used this year were from 2006, and we all know that there has been many changes made. We have seen shifts in population. We have seen some communities grow substantially — many in the province — but yet the province is still using outdated statistics.

I guess I would ask the Premier if he has ever considered changing the formula so that the distribution is done differently on more current numbers than outdated Stats Canada numbers.

[16:00]

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I want to thank the hon. member for her question. I hope this leads to a whole bunch of discussions about population in the province. I will want to wrap up in answer to the question of the previous member if I may also point this out, Mr. Chairman. I am proud of the government's record of promoting the province of Saskatchewan. We're doing that outside the province. We actually do promoting, so we get coverage in CNN [Cable News Network], in *Fortune* magazine.

But the hon. member for Nutana says, so did we. So did we. Lorne Calvert's delivered more than \$11 million, this is . . . Well, I won't quote, Mr. Chairman, I'll just use the language of the Assembly. The previous government under the now Leader of the Opposition spent \$8 million on a Wide Open Future campaign. Was it half of the ads ran right here in the province of Saskatchewan, people who are already convinced about the wide open future?

They ran a \$75,000 equalization campaign, which was self-serving. Never forget the Raise a Flag for Fairness campaign for \$268,000, and the whole security fence-gate that happened as a result of that.

Remember the budget of the former member, Andrew Thomson? Remember that budget, where they ran TV ads with the minister of Finance actually in the ads trying to burnish the government's image? And when we asked him in the legislature why was the minister of Finance in the budget ads, he said, well because it's my budget, Mr. Chairman. It's my budget. I remember that. I guess we could find *Hansard* about it.

Mr. Chairman, between budget advertising, between advertising at the end of that government's reign when they were about to be defeated, that kind of advertising we saw, Mr. Chairman — Real Careers and Real Life campaign, pre-election Department of Health learning campaigns, over \$1.6 million — that's part of the reason why the member for Nutana is sitting over there and we're sitting over here, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, we're using the same system for analyzing revenue sharing as we've inherited from the previous administration. We do use StatsCan numbers. Part of the reason is because they're the only numbers that the federal government will accept in terms of joint federal-provincial initiatives.

Some municipalities are asking for flexibility. Some municipalities are saying to us, look, if we're dealing with a provincial-only issue, can we move away from Statistics Canada numbers because we don't believe that they may be as accurate or as up to date as others. We are, as the Minister of Municipal Affairs has said, we're prepared to look at some other options.

But I would say this: one of the challenges we have is that Statistics Canada have a hard time keeping up with the growth in the population of the province of Saskatchewan. It is a challenge. It is a challenge, and we need to be flexible and cognizant of the fact, and I know the Minister of Municipal Affairs is talking to his stakeholders.

I would also say this, that we relied on some consensus amongst rural municipalities and urban municipalities when we came up with this revenue-sharing plan for the province, a promise we made in the election and kept, Mr. Chairman, a promise that had been made by members opposite for a good long time that they never got around to keeping. So we'll be flexible as we work with municipalities. But I will say that when it relates to initiatives that will potentially engage the national government, we are — by their request — forced to use Statistics Canada numbers. We may have some flexibility on other matters; maybe the hon. member will bring those forward. I'll be happy to do my best to answer those questions as well.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Chair, the Premier, I hope he's more on top of things in government than he is answering questions, because he's always been a question behind and had to add a little bit to it at the end of each one.

When he talks about advertising and he was critical of advertising that the former government did about the province and within the province, both inside and out, I'm wondering in passing as I was listening to him — there's been many, many billboards around the province with his smiling face on it, put in place by the party saying, you know, we've reduced the debt by 40 per cent which is very good . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Higgins: — But, Mr. Chair, I would wonder if the Premier will have his smiling face on billboards when the debt starts to rise at the end of this year as projected in his budget. I'm sure he won't, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when he also talked about the per cap system of the distribution for operating grants for municipalities, he talked about a promise that they had worked on. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's easy to keep a promise when the previous government did all the work. There was a great deal of groundwork that was put in place and . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Chair, a great deal of work went into the preparation for the final revenue-sharing formula, groundwork that was done around many round tables that were held over

many, many months. It wasn't thrown together like a quick environmental plan, Mr. Chair. So a lot of work went into it.

The Premier also made the comment that the only numbers acceptable for revenue sharing and for distribution were the per cap numbers. But I've been told that Alberta, if your community funds itself, a census of its community, that those numbers will be considered by government to use for distribution on a per capita basis and also that in British Columbia, that they use a process of not only building from Stats Canada — which is always a lag time of four to five years before you will see new numbers — that they will do some comparisons with health numbers within the province and use that for distribution of provincial funds across the province.

So I was wondering if the Premier would have a look at it and give it some consideration for municipalities in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, as far as I can tell — and we just had a meeting with SARM; I just had a meeting with the city mayors — to the hon. member, I would say we just had a meeting with the city mayors where they thanked the government for the revenue-sharing deal. And we had a meeting with SARM, and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] was there.

We had another meeting with the SARM directors not very long ago; a number of MLAs attended. And I can honestly say . . . and I'm not discounting that this may be an issue and that we would be prepared to look at it. But I can honestly tell the hon. member we just have not heard this concern from municipalities. Again I'm not discounting that it exists. And would we be willing to look at some changes? Potentially we would be, Mr. Chairman, if the stakeholders are interested in it and again if it accommodated the federal situation.

I would want to correct the record though, Mr. Chairman. The hon. member seems to think that all work on the municipal revenue sharing was done. And then I would invite the hon. member to take — hopefully she asks another question — to tell us exactly what formula was in place if the work was all done. The most difficult thing about municipal revenue sharing isn't saying you're going to do it; it's actually getting it done. The most important thing about long-term, own-source municipal revenue sharing is figuring out a formula that makes sure that revenues grow with the province when the province grows and contract if the province is not growing.

Well this didn't exist. Again, Mr. Chair, there wasn't a formula that existed. It wasn't agreed to by the parties. In fact it was this government, it was this government that proposed one point of the PST. It was this government that offered that to municipalities and, I think, was well regarded, well received by our municipal partners. Then of course the negotiation took place over the share between urban and rural and what part would be implemented in phase 1 and implemented in phase 2.

I will say that the hon. members opposite made a commitment — as they did many things just before the last election — that they would get it done and may have initiated some meetings. That hon. member from Douglas Park was the minister, I believe, and I think he had engaged in some dialogue and asked officials to engage in some dialogue that was not a formula. So

there was a lot of work to be done.

And you know, she started her question talking about party advertising. Mr. Chair, let me just say this. The billboards she refers to were paid for by the Saskatchewan Party. And there may be billboards in the future that promote what we're trying to do for the province when the debt continues to go down in the future, when income taxes and other taxes continue to go down, and when investments go up.

Compare that if you will — since she's brought up the subject of party advertising — to her own advertising for the leadership, where if you look very carefully at the end of it, it says, and I quote, "Deb Higgins is the NDP's best chance for taking on Brad Wall and ensuring [and get this] that the NDP takes its rightful place on the government side of the House." That's an advertisement from that hon. member.

And therein lies the problem for the NDP. They have learned precisely nothing from the last election, Mr. Chairman. They've learned no contrition. They've learned no humility. They stand over there and publish their own party advertising that says it is their rightful place to be on this side of the House. It is owed to them. It is an inalienable right for the NDP to govern this province.

Mr. Chairman, we take a markedly different view. We believe it's up to the people of the province to pick who their government is. And we think, Mr. Chairman . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — And we think this. We think that we want to make sure that we earn the choice they made. The people of the province made a choice on November 7, 2007. They didn't choose those who think it's their rightful place to be the government, like the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow. They chose another party. And we're going to work very hard to earn that choice in the weeks and the months ahead. And again, we know the date for the next election when they will be able to choose again.

But I hope, for the sake of the hon. member who's engaged in a leadership campaign, that she can learn a little bit from an election loss, that the NDP can learn just a little bit of humility and a little bit of an understanding that they ought not to take anything in this province for granted, lastly the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Chair, I'm very glad that the Premier is reading my election for the leadership website and looking at the information that's been put out. I know he looks for good ideas wherever he can find them, so he's not above taking them from there.

Mr. Speaker, one other question that I have for the Premier: has the process used by the Government of Saskatchewan for RFPs [request for proposal] changed in the last 18 months?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, I thank the hon. member for the question. The issue of RFPs and tendering government work

is important to the government. And the member is right. We do look for good ideas wherever we find them. We noted some ideas already discussed in the leadership campaign — not from the hon. member but from her rivals. One was about an idea for electric tractors, which the hon. member for Kindersley . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The hon. member says the length of the cord is problematic for it. But who knows? Honestly though, who knows what technology may come from that.

And, Mr. Chairman, I will tell that hon. member we will continue to take good advice wherever we find it, including from members opposite.

And on that point, just before I get more directly to the question, we hope that members opposite will join the all-party committee that this Assembly has tasked with looking at the issue of renewable and other sources of energy, Mr. Chairman. We had said that the NDP, with their EDP [energy development partnership] proposal, had some good ideas with respect to engaging the province on talking about future generation needs in Saskatchewan and how we can make sure they're sustainable and affordable. And I think the principle of what was proposed was a good idea by members opposite.

We have now passed in this House a resolution engaging the committee, the all-party committee in that same process. So that's a good idea that we've taken from the NDP.

Mr. Chairman, the RFP policies of the Government of Saskatchewan have not substantively changed since the previous administration. There were occasions under the previous administration where there was no competition at all for certain contract work they've done, some in Executive Council that we're aware of and other pieces of work done and tendered to certain consultants.

We have engaged in the competitive tendering, in competitive requests for proposal, and requests for information processes, Mr. Chairman. But as was the case with the previous government, there may be occasions where there some was some sole source contracting done with consultants. And the ones I can think about in particular that were discussed in this legislature last week were consultants who had been sole sourced by the previous administration and who were doing follow-up work on some of the work they had done previously and seemed like the logical successor. But perhaps the hon. member has specific questions, and if she does, I'll do my best to answer them.

[16:15]

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, if I just might preface my question with a few remarks that in our parliamentary system, it is usual to have an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly or parliament, in this case the Provincial Auditor, to ensure that the funds that are expended by the government are in fact expended in the way that the government said they would be spent so that the Legislative Assembly would then have some comfort in terms of how the money has been spent before they provide approval

for future budgets. That's a tradition in our parliamentary system.

It took about 85 years, I believe, in our system to move from a point where the funding for the auditor's office was made truly independent of government by moving it to a review of the Board of Internal Economy. I think this was done in 1990, I believe, Mr. Speaker.

So I was very surprised in a recent Public Accounts Committee meeting in January — January 20 to be exact — to have government members of the committee saying things like, you know: "I think as the government, and we do this with every ministry, to every department, to go in and say lookit, where are the efficiencies?" in speaking of the auditor's office, and then goes on to say:

And the auditor's department is really no different in that respect . . . But I think that's still part of what we want to do, is to make sure that each department is looking for efficiencies that they can bring to the government . . .

And then another member goes on to say — and I think misrepresenting something the auditor had to say — that, you know if you're going to have the Auditor General of Canada look at review practices and so on, he said ". . . we wouldn't be prepared as a government to finance that."

And you know, I'm doing a very quick overview of some of the statements that were made, and members can refer to the Public Accounts of that day, but the attitude of the members seems to be one of that the auditor's office is just another department of government. And the question I have for the Premier is, what message is the Premier sending regarding the independence of the auditor's office?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, we want to, obviously, be well served in this legislature and in this government by the independence of the Provincial Auditor. And questions from members on either side of the House about whether or not any office, including the auditor's office, is running efficiently or not I don't think belie the fact that the government's priority . . . or undermine the principle of this government which is that there ought to be independence on the part of the Provincial Auditor.

We relied on him to expose a number of issues in the previous government when we were in opposition. We rely on him to hold us accountable as well, Mr. Chair.

Witness, for example, he wants to talk about the importance of transparency in the financial accounting and the planning of the government. We inherited a government that had stopped the practice of four-year projections in their annual budget, if you can believe it, Mr. Chair. They had completely stopped telling the people of the province about the government's four-year plan or projections about revenues and expenditures in the province of Saskatchewan. We have immediately reinstated what was, I think, a long-standing tradition of the Romanow administration and very much a part of fiscal probity and good planning and transparency to make sure that four-year planning

is in every budget. And as long as this government is serving the people of the province, it will be in every single budget, Mr. Chair.

With respect to the specific issue the member raises, I have not seen the transcripts of the debate in Public Accounts. I can only tell the member this. From what I heard from what he said, it sounds like members are concerned about the efficiency of all arms of the government, as well as supportive of the independence of certain arms of the legislature, officers of the government, including the officers of the legislature, including the Provincial Auditor.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Can the Premier tell us what his rationale was in raising the question of the independence of the auditor's office in that committee meeting?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, I'd ask the member to repeat his question and explain, please.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well again, what was the Premier's rationale in having his members raise this question of independence in the committee meeting in January?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, I didn't raise with our members anything that would have gone into the debate that ensued in Public Accounts. There was no conversation between me and members of the government who serve on Public Accounts with respect to the issue that he raises.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well then the question I would have, would the Premier be so kind as to ensure that the government caucus in fact respects the issue of independence of the Provincial Auditor's office, that we don't slide back in the kind of view of the Provincial Auditor that we saw in the 1980s in Saskatchewan.

What is his view, for example, with respect to the Public Accounts Committee? Is it his view that the Public Accounts Committee is simply another committee of the Legislative Assembly? Or is it his view that the Public Accounts Committee has some special purpose in terms of scrutiny of the government spending?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — No, Mr. Chairman. We want obviously to enable the independent officers of this legislature to do their job. And we've appreciated the work of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner. The majority government members of this House initiated his reappointment.

We obviously want to support the work of the Ombudsman. The majority members on this side of the House, together with members opposite, initiated his reappointment.

Mr. Chairman, I can point out quite . . . In vote 28, the Provincial Auditor's vote, Mr. Chairman, we see appropriations that have grown by \$300,000. That's an indication of our support for the auditor.

I don't know what is being inferred by the hon. member. I wasn't there. I have not read the transcript. Unlike the previous government, there was no . . . Maybe this was the practice in the previous government: maybe the previous government, maybe

the former Premier used to direct his members to do certain things in the Public Accounts Committee. I don't know. I can assure the member . . . Maybe that's why we got things like SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] and Murdoch Carriere and all of the long list of issues where transparency was sorely lacking on the part of members opposite. Maybe that's what happened under his government.

This Premier in this office doesn't engage in influencing members of the Public Accounts to speak to the issues that the hon. member has raised.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, a question to the Premier. Leading up to the last election, it was your party's position that once elected, you would implement spot loss hail. You had a review of crop insurance. Spot loss hail was not something that your government has chosen to implement. And I'm wondering if you can give us the rationale for a decision which really is breaking one of your promises.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, it's true that we campaigned in the last election on our desire, should we be elected by the people, to improve the crop insurance program. For a good period of time it had been neglected by the previous government, and we saw the circumstance of coverage decreasing and premiums increasing and no apparent effort or desire on the part of the previous government to keep up with the demands from the agriculture sector that were changing of their crop insurance program.

There was questions in the legislature about spot loss by members on our side of the House when in opposition, but what we campaigned on was a desire to improve the crop insurance program, Mr. Chairman. As was the case with so many Saskatchewan Party promises, it's a promise that we've kept in 18 months. The review is complete and now we have \$155 million increase in crop insurance funding which I believe is unprecedented and I hope that hon. member, as the agricultural critic, would want to support.

One of the changes that did not occur, there was no move with respect to the spot loss hail issue. Mr. Chairman, the campaign commitment was to review and improve crop insurance. It's a promise made, Mr. Chairman, and a promise kept.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Chair, your party spent a lot of time leading up to the last election talking about implementing spot loss hail coverage if you were going to become government. And what's curious is that as soon as you had the opportunity to do so, you weren't able to implement this particular promise that was made by all of your members in rural Saskatchewan and certainly across the province and in rural constituencies.

Now I hear them yipping and yapping over there, you know. And one of the things I've learned is, if you throw a rock and

you hear a yelp, you know you've hit a dog, Mr. Speaker. Well obviously we've hit a dog over there because there are a lot of people in our province, particularly rural Saskatchewan, that are curious as to why this government has not implemented that particular election promise.

They're also curious as to why there's been very little support for the hog industry in this province. And if you look at the numbers of producers in this province, they have dramatically dropped since this government came to office. Now if you look at the number of hog producers, we see very few hog producers remaining in the province. And if you look at the number of livestock producers, you see a significant drop in the number of producers. And we've lost about a third of our herd. Can the Premier indicate to us what the hog industry and the livestock industry can expect, given their very sorry record thus far?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I admire — I do — I admire the courage of the member for Nutana. And I admire her ability to put that question with a straight face especially considering, Mr. Chairman, that she was involved on the very, very front benches of a government that made a special craft out of ignoring rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Who took to new heights, Mr. Chairman, any government's ability to ignore such an important segment of the province of Saskatchewan, rural Saskatchewan; who closed hospitals across rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman; who ignored calls for changes in improvements to crop insurance — that's their record; who did nothing on the education portion of property tax, year after year after year; who were in Mexico when federal agricultural programs are being planned in Canada and affecting our farmers, Mr. Chairman — that is their legacy; who ripped up GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] when they were first elected, Mr. Chairman. That is the legacy of that member opposite.

She served on the front benches and the Executive Council of the government that could have made a lot of different choices. They could have done more than talk about education property tax relief, but they didn't. They could have done more than talking about crop insurance programs, but they didn't. They could have done more than just talking about being engaged with the federal government on new agricultural program for producers, but they didn't.

So I will happily, happily go through the list of things that our government has been able to achieve for producers, acknowledging while I do it that the plight of the cattle industry and the hog industry is growing, especially that is the case with the hog industry in Canada, with unique pressures and new pressures as a result of H1N1 virus.

But, Mr. Chairman, I will gladly point out to that hon. member that the Minister of Agriculture's budget saw an unprecedented increase of \$177 million this year; that there's a \$20 million increase to the crop insurance program, bringing the program budget to 155 million total; 5 million in new provincial funding for a new federal-provincial Growing Forward agreement; 9 million to transfer the administration of AgriStability, to bring it back home, Mr. Chairman.

And as for cattle and hog, while we are very disappointed with the actions of the national government to not join with our program, we didn't just ask them to do something. When they said no, regrettably, we acted, Mr. Chairman. We acted within weeks of our government being sworn in with a \$90 million loan program for the cattle industry and the hog industry. And then just earlier this year we moved, Mr. Chairman, on a \$71 million cattle and hog support program.

Mr. Chairman, the program is not the solution. The solution would have been more help from the national government, in part, and the solution also would have been borne up, I think, on a track record inherited from the previous government that is better than it is.

[16:30]

Mr. Chairman, perhaps the most important rural issue that a provincial government can deal with— because a lot of them are federal in nature; they deal with trade issues — the one area where the provincial government has some control, almost a unique control to deal with in terms of agricultural support, is in the issue of education property taxes.

We don't need the federal government to move on that issue. We don't have to worry about WTO [World Trade Organization] to move on that issue. We don't have to worry about international trade agreements to be able to move on that issue. We can as a government if we choose, we can have MLAs if we choose, who when they campaign on reducing taxes, property taxes for farmers, act on it when they have the chance to do it.

And that member opposite campaigned in the last election for a party whose education portion of property tax plan completely ignored farmers in the province of Saskatchewan. So I think she will forgive, I think she will understand if rural Saskatchewan, if farmers, if ranchers, if hog producers, if SARM, if APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan], take her questions and comments in this Assembly with more than a grain of salt. Because, Mr. Chairman, their record is talking, and the record on this side of the House is acting.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Well you know, Mr. Speaker, it's fascinating how the Premier likes to forget that it was the NDP government that moved to a 60/40 for agriculture producers in the province of Saskatchewan at a time when we didn't have oil at \$140 a barrel, Mr. Speaker. We moved to a 60/40 in the late 1990s and the early part of this millennium, Mr. Speaker.

And in fact agriculture producers, both those with cultivated land and pasture land, enjoyed what the SSTA [Saskatchewan School Trustees Association] had been calling for, where 40 per cent of the taxes for education would come from the local landowner and 60 per cent would come from the province. That was not the case for those people who lived off farm in towns, villages, and cities — that was an area that we had work to do.

The other thing I will point out to the Premier, at a time when oil was at, if we were lucky, \$50 a barrel, there was a significant increase in the livestock industry in this province. In fact we

grew the herds. We saw a significant growth of our cattle herd in the province. Now we also saw a significant increase in the number of hogs that were being produced in this province.

Now 18 months after this government comes to office, we've lost a third of our herd and the hog industry is in the tank and there are very few hog producers relative to what there were 18 months ago. So the Premier can say that they've done all of this work in the area of agriculture. I do note, I do note that the budget increase that these members have implemented in the Ministry of Agriculture is all around risk management. It's around AgriStability and changes to crop insurance.

Now the member from Humboldt will say, well that's what they want. I think I recall, when the NDP was in government, CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] was always funded, Mr. Speaker. CAIS was fully funded by the NDP government. CAIS was funded 100 per cent. It was funded by the NDP government.

Now they like to have a different spin on it but, you know, the record is the record. And they can run around and mislead people as much as they want. But every budget, the CAIS program in the province of Saskatchewan under an NDP government was fully funded.

So can the Premier please tell us, given that there's been such a tremendous loss of our cattle herd, given that the number of producers that are producing hogs in this province have been reduced dramatically, is there any hope for those livestock and hog producers from this government?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, just for the record, the oil forecast in our budget is \$48.75. That's the oil forecast. She's talking about what they didn't do at 50 bucks a barrel.

You know, that hon. member who asked the question may want to explain to rural Saskatchewan why they couldn't move on property taxes when they were . . . What was the stabilization fund at when you left office? I wonder whether the hon. member can tell us — 500, \$700 million? How big was the mountain of money?

It's funny. That member often points to the billion-plus dollars this government inherited. Well it didn't just occur on November 7. If it was there on November 7, that money, it was there on November 6. It was there on October 6. It would have been there, largely, in September, especially based on their own numbers.

Well she's saying it was. Then where was their help? Then why didn't they do anything? We knew the cattle industry was struggling. We had to put together a loan program quickly after forming government to the tune of \$90 million. The hon. member in her own heckling from her seat acknowledges, admits to the fact that they had the means. They just didn't have the will or the desire to step in for rural Saskatchewan. And that's the difference. That's the difference.

Mr. Chairman, as we speak in terms of hope, and we know that it takes more than \$40 a head or what we're able to even pay for hogs, but we know \$11 million worth of cheques are going out as we speak. That's for hogs alone. Some will say, well that's

not enough, and you know they're probably right. We would like to have topped that up with another 60 per cent from the federal government.

But when you combine all the initiatives of this government, Mr. Chairman, when you combine the education portion of property tax, when you combine the goodwill that I think is engendered by long-awaited improvements to crop insurance, when you combine the fact that we've moved in southwest Saskatchewan with respect to a drought aid program in terms of a well-drilling program, when you combine the fact that we moved on the gopher issue on behalf of producers and rural municipalities in the province, when you look at all of those things I think that's why you have people like Dave Marit, the president of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, saying this was the best budget in the history of the province for rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman.

So there is work to be done. Is there hope? Well there's \$11 million worth of cheques going out to the hog industry. Thanks to the SARM administrators there's aid going out to the cattle industry. We're going to keep advocating with the national government for better long-term programs and for help with producers and, Mr. Chair, under the leadership of the Minister of Agriculture I think the best hope for farmers and for rural Saskatchewan is that those members are over there and the hon. member, the minister, and these members are over here, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to join into the questioning this afternoon. Throughout this session, Mr. Chair, we've heard from a number of Saskatchewan people who are quite concerned with how the Sask Party's grad retention program is leaving a large number of graduate students out in the cold, how they're not benefiting from the program.

When the Sask Party brought in their retention program they made two errors. The first error was excluding out-of-province graduates, and to their credit they fixed that problem so that the program was more similar to the previous NDP program that was available to people across the country. The second problem they made was excluding graduate students, master's and Ph.D. graduates — the very individuals, when we talk about a knowledge economy, the people that are so important to fostering and growing that.

A few weeks ago in committee I had the chance to ask the Minister of Advanced Education some questions about the graduate retention program. And I asked the minister if he was open in the future to expanding this program and to ensuring that all Saskatchewan students are treated fairly, ensuring that physiotherapists, M.B.A. [Master of Business Administration] grads, and M.A.s [Master of Arts], anyone pursuing graduate degrees, Mr. Chair, that these individuals would receive the benefit. So my question to the Premier today . . . And the minister, when I asked that question, he said he was open to the possibility in the future.

My question to the Premier is, is he open to this possibility? And if there is agreement on this issue, if they do understand, if they have heard from people through petitions and through visits to this legislature and through their offices, if they have heard that this is a major concern for graduates here in the province, where is the bottleneck? What is preventing this program from being fixed and operating as it ought to? Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, thanks. I want to thank the hon. member for that question. He has been deliberate and focused in his effort to, I think, improve what is already a very good program.

The challenge is here that there's not a consensus amongst deans — even amongst, I would expect, some of those involved in postgraduate studies — as to the best way to ensure that this is the best environment for that kind of postgraduate study. And certainly we want to be a leader in this regard.

I would say to the hon. member that governments can also invest in research and development. Governments can invest in direct student financial assistance. And here our government's record is, I think, an improvement over the previous administration's record in terms of that support.

I think we can all do better. I think that's part of what Innovation Saskatchewan's going to help achieve. It's a part of what the innovation agenda of the government will achieve.

The hon. minister has said that he's open to further improvements and, you know what, he's got a track record on this issue of improving the program. We've heard him say in the past that perhaps the government should look at expanding the initiative to out-of-province postgraduates. That work happened. The review occurred and, Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to report that minister came back and recommended we should make that expansion.

That case was clearer though, I would admit, than with respect to expanding the program as it exists to postgraduates when there may be other ways to ensure that Saskatchewan is a leader in this regard. I would say . . . And there'll probably be more questions from the hon. member. The short answer to his question is no, we wouldn't rule that out. I wouldn't rule it out. It's one of the options that would be before the government in trying to make sure we have the very best climate possible for postgraduate studies and a climate that attracts postgraduate students and retains those who wish to remain in the province.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Throughout this session, we've also heard, a topic has been the issue of tuition. And this year we saw the NDP tuition freeze lifted, and students on university campuses are now facing tuition increases.

While in the budget it was advertised as a 3 per cent tuition increase, we've seen in recent days when the rubber hits the road, actually not all students are being treated in the same manner and that the increase is certainly affecting some students more than others. In the colleges of Law and Pharmacy at the University of Saskatchewan, tuition will be going up 7.5 per cent — so considerably more. More than double the 3 per cent that was suggested.

Through committee and through question period I've had the opportunity, Mr. Chair, to ask about the so-called tuition management system or strategy and what this is about. And I've asked in committee to have this succinctly explained.

To the Premier: with this tuition management system, can students in Saskatchewan now expect every year that tuition will be going up 3 to 7.5 per cent? Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, there's been a number of comments in the wake of the provincial budget. We've had people like university president Peter MacKinnon basically saying it's time to proceed responsibly, proceed on a year-by-year basis. It's time for the provincial government to properly fund universities and provide some longer-term funding so that we can, in fact, have the lowest tuition rate possible.

You know — and, Mr. Chairman, notwithstanding the freeze of the last couple of years — what people can expect from this government is something quite markedly different from the record of the NDP where, over the course of their government, tuitions increased at the University of Regina by 88.6 per cent and where tuition at the University of Saskatchewan increased by 99.2 per cent.

Mr. Chair, we see this budget providing \$23.5 million to post-secondary institutions to limit those tuition increases to an average of 3 per cent. And I noted the comments of I think it was the U of R [University of Regina] students' union president who said — and obviously they don't want any increase at all — but they said, the spectre of 10 or 20 per cent is one thing; 3 per cent seemed to be more reasonable. That's the tuition rate hike that our funding would prescribe, knowing that there will be other decisions by the institutions that may see those tuition increases vary.

But, Mr. Chairman, I'm proud of the government's record of investing in post-secondary institutions and taking a longer view of the importance of affordable education and well-funded institutions, rather than what might have been the political expediency of tuition freezes that former New Democrat ministers of Finance said were not the right way to go, that governments who have lifted freezes have admitted were not the right way to go.

[16:45]

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Certainly in times of economic uncertainty it's important that access to affordable, quality education is a priority for the government, a priority to ensure that we don't squander our future prosperity here in the province.

Reading *The StarPhoenix* on the weekend, members of the Assembly and members of the public would have read the story on the cover that talked about the need at the university to shave \$10 million yearly from its operating budget going forward on an ongoing basis. Clearly, Mr. Chair, the \$10 million needs to be made up from a variety of areas, and faculty, staff, and students are concerned and want to ensure that the quality and the accessibility of education provided on our university campuses remains the top-notch level of education that it is.

With this \$10 million that needs to be shaved from the budget on an ongoing basis, there will be belt-tightening, one would assume in a variety of areas, from a variety of revenue sources. As costs are reduced, there will also need to be the need for increased revenue. And once again, Mr. Chair, this takes us to the issue of tuition.

We've seen with the tuition management system that was put in place this year an advertised increase of 3 per cent, but we've actually seen an increase for many students of 7.5 per cent. So my question to the Premier is: with this ongoing belt-tightening, how much will his government, how much will they allow tuition to increase next year? Will 7.5 per cent be the new base increase?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, we're going to keep — with respect to next year's tuition levels and funding — we're going to keep this government's promise to fund post-secondary institutions in a way that's consistent with a province that has a growth agenda, that understands the importance of those institutions as evidenced by our first two budgets where those increases occurred. And I noted the chairperson of the University of Regina talked about the generous increase in the provincial operating grant of 6.3 per cent or \$4.9 million. I noted University of Saskatchewan officials talking about the generous level of funding from this government and increases that came forward.

Mr. Chairman, my understanding of the story the hon. member is referring to, and I read it as well online, in *The StarPhoenix* report of the University of Saskatchewan undertaking its own internal review to find savings and efficiencies while they continue to deliver affordable and quality post-secondary education here in the province and to students from around the world . . . And by the way, I think that's what we all should be doing. That's what the Government of Saskatchewan should be doing. That's what all post-secondary institutions should be doing. If we can find ways to find efficiencies while still providing affordable, quality services — in this case post-secondary education — why wouldn't we do that, Mr. Chairman? Why would we as the government, why would I as the Premier want to discourage our universities from doing that?

What we can do for our part, and I think the hon. member hopefully would receive this well, what we can do from our part as a provincial government is to properly fund these institutions, is to provide a longer term view of the funding that's required by them so they can deliver those services and keep tuition low.

I noticed that in the case of the University of Saskatchewan's effort for efficiency, our minister's already engaged with the students' union president, with the university. I know they want to work together on what this might mean so the priorities of accessible education but quality of education can be achieved. I thank the member for his question.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to move to an area which I think of the issues that I want to raise with the Premier today, this is perhaps the one that I view as the one of most significance. But let me say before we get there, someone ought to just keep a little *Hansard* of today's proceedings for future reference.

I listened with much interest as the Premier was addressing some of the issues raised by my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana around the agricultural file regarding support for our livestock industry in the province, regarding property tax. Now I'm quite used to the fact that this government, as many new governments will do, engaged in a fair bit of revisionist history. It seems to be a great capacity of this government to revise history.

You see I heard from . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There, I heard it again — 16 years, nothing happened. And yet they blame us for everything. You know, even the Premier has admitted that something happened in 16 years. So I understand revisionist history from a new government or an aging government as they are now certainly doing.

But you know, Mr. Chair, I thought this was a very telling thing. Maybe the Premier could just clarify the record here. When I became the premier of this province, the property tax on farm land in Saskatchewan demanded 60 per cent from the farm land; 40 per cent was paid for by the province. When I left office, 40 per cent was paid by the farmer off the land, and 60 per cent was paid by the province. That change occurred, Mr. Chair, and now the revisionist history over there says, no, it didn't. Well I think the record will stand.

But what concerned me in the Premier's response was this notion that the former government, the former government had a . . . The member from Wood River seems to want to engage in the debate. He should do it more often, as opposed to from his seat.

Mr. Chair, the Premier indicated that a substantial amount of money was in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Now he's had a change of heart from when he first came to government and described the circumstance as stark. But no, no, no, he now describes a substantial amount of money was in the fund. But then he implied, in his comments to the member from Nutana, that our government should have spent that fund out, that we should have spent those dollars, leaving a new government with nothing in the bank.

Well now that's something that members present should ought to watch for in the future. Because as we approach that 2011, I recommend that members in this legislature today and future members and members of the public ought to watch that any surplus that may be accruing isn't just spent out in an effort to win an election.

So I think the Premier needs to be very careful about suggesting that everything that a government accrues by way of a fiscal stabilization, or whatever account name they call it now, that ought to just be spent out before the election. I think, Mr. Chair, that's an irresponsible approach to the provincial finances.

Now I want to move to what I think in my view are some of the

most significant questions that I'll want to address with the Premier today, and that has to do with our First Nations and Métis peoples. This is very, I think, straightforward — not a simple, but a straightforward question.

Can the Premier today indicate to the House when he might expect that real, substantive proposals will come forward from his government in partnership with our First Nations and Métis peoples around the duty to consult and accommodate? When can we expect to see some real, substantive proposals?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, with respect to the hon. member's preamble, will he not admit for this Assembly that in the last campaign their education portion of property tax plan had nothing additional for farmers, for agriculture producers? That's the fact of the matter. They moved on rebates. Well it is the truth. They moved on rebates. We actually built on their rebate plan in our first transitional budget.

But, Mr. Chairman, I welcome the scrutiny of *Hansard*. In fact, I would want to add into the record of *Hansard* with respect to our property tax relief, the example in the RM [rural municipality] of Winslow of a 10-quarter farm, under the Saskatchewan Party plan that's implemented — it's not a promise; it's not a report; it's done — a 2008 taxable assessment of \$298,100, the 2008 education tax, \$3,403; the 2009 education tax, \$2,364; the 2010 education tax, when fully implemented, \$1,306. You save — you being the farmer at this RM of Winslow, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees — save 61.6 per cent as a result of our plan.

Mr. Deputy Chair, that is a difference, and I'm prepared to have *Hansard* reflect the fact that in the last election campaign, each party proposed property tax relief. Only one party's property tax relief program from the election included farmers, and it was the Saskatchewan Party. And we have now delivered on that, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees.

With respect to the issue of duty to consult and accommodate, Mr. Chair, I'm looking forward to this discussion and hope there are a series of questions. Because even before we want to seek others from outside of our borders in Canada or even immigrants from outside of the country to come and help with our labour shortage, even before that, we truly believe we want as a priority to see the greater engagement in our economy of First Nations and Métis people.

And there are no easy solutions to this, I readily admit. There would have been practices of the previous government that worked, that had some success, ones that we have continued. There'll be other things coming forward from this government we think have great hope for success.

And by the way, it was interesting to hear in the preamble, if I may, the hon. member stand up and say, well the government now just blames us for what's wrong and takes credit for everything else. He asked the question at the top of estimates. Was he here for the answer, when I have said today and I will say it again in the future, I've said it in the past, that we need to give credit where credit's due — to give that previous administration credit for the things they did right. In fact I never and I'm not aware of other governments, other provincial governments, that have done it as much as the women and men

of this government who have said, the previous government got a lot of things right. So I'm not sure . . . I mean I guess part of being opposition is that you just can't be pleased. You can't be pleased to get credit; you can't be pleased to get blamed. And so it's just, sort of this shotgun, this shotgun approach.

But, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, we started an historic process, and an historic round table, led by my colleague and friend, the hon. member for Kelvington, the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations. We engaged in this process to develop a draft framework on the issue of the duty to consult and accommodate. And it is a process, not an event, to be sure. We're working carefully with First Nations and Métis people to advance the issue, to advance the duty to consult and accommodate issue.

We expect that round about early June will be the target date for the consultations that are happening now around the framework. There will be exploratory tables where we'll sit down with First Nations and Métis people and hammer out some areas where admittedly there are some differences. There are concerns amongst First Nations with the process that we have outlined, as there were with the process of the previous administration. And then we hope by fall, certainly by the end of the year, to make that draft framework the final framework in a partnership to move forward.

I began my comments by saying, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, that I had great hope for the duty to consult and accommodate process in providing some answers and solutions for all of us around the greater engagement of First Nations and Métis people in our economy. I believe that because of course the duty to consult and accommodate requires government to make sure that specific economic opportunities are part of this consultation, part of the accommodation.

Increasingly, I can report with pleasure to the committee and to the hon. member, that companies are more willing all the time to engage meaningfully in the process and see it as an advantage to have First Nations partners, people from our Métis communities as partners, because they need, frankly, suppliers, businesses to supply them in these resource developments. They need workers, and they're looking for partners. So I'm very hopeful about the future, notwithstanding the fact that there is a lot of work yet to be done and there are some difficult issues remaining to be resolved.

[17:00]

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I gather from the Premier's comments that we can expect therefore, or the legislation the people of Saskatchewan can expect, a more definitive proposal, if not an agreement, by the fall of this year. Is that . . . That's correct.

Then my question to the Premier is this: does he anticipate, does his government anticipate that at some point through this process there will be a serious discussion with First Nations and Métis communities about revenue sharing, about revenue sharing that may in fact be a component of the province's response to duty to consult and accommodate? Does the Premier expect that we will reach that point in time, that day, when revenue sharing is a reality for our First Nations and

Métis communities?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Chair, this is an important issue and I think it may highlight a difference perhaps between our two parties. And I invite the hon. member to state the position of his party on this particular issue.

When the letter from the minister went out to begin the consultation process on the draft framework on the duty to consult and accommodate, it was December 22, 2008. The outstanding issues identified by the ministry in her letter include the following: sharing in the province's economic growth; environmental stewardship; dispute resolution; traditional use, sacred site; territorial mapping; and finally, consultation capacity requirements.

We have said to First Nations that we want to talk about sharing of the benefits of a growing economy with First Nations and Métis people. But as late as last week, we were also very clear and upfront with our First Nations partners that when it comes to revenue sharing, this government supports and recognizes the NRTA [Natural Resources Transfer Agreement]. The resource revenues of the province of Saskatchewan are at the purview of the province, of the Crown, or the province of Saskatchewan.

And so, with respect to the term revenue sharing, we've been pretty clear that if it is formulaic, if it's tied to natural resource revenue sharing, then that is not the position of the government.

We are prepared to move forward, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, on these issues, including capacity building, including sharing in the benefits of a growing economy with First Nations people. You could make a strong case, when you look at the respective budgets of different ministries, that that happens obviously on a daily basis.

All of us as the people of the province share in the resource revenue of Saskatchewan. We all share very directly in what comes from those revenues. We share in the health care that comes from those revenues. We share in the infrastructure that comes from that resource revenue. We share in the education that's paid for by that resource revenue.

Beyond that though, in terms of a revenue-sharing deal with First Nations and Métis people, we've said that is not an area that the government is going to be moving. We have laid out where we want to move, aggressively, with First Nations and Métis partners in this letter of December 22, which I can supply to the hon. member if he has not yet seen it.

Mr. Calvert: — Yes, Mr. Chair, in fact I have seen it, and I'm aware of the government's list and I have been aware, and the Premier has been very definitive in this today, that his government does not foresee or . . . I don't know why members continually chirp from their seat.

Mr. Chair, the Premier has made a very definitive statement today . . . Well the member from Thunder Creek's the expert at it and we'd appreciate more contribution in other regards.

Mr. Chair, I did not hear in the Premier's answer . . . I understand his position, well the position of your government that revenue sharing is not going to happen, and it may well

have been the position of our government, but I tell you, new occasions teach new duties. And the fact of the matter is we have to go, I think, to a deeper explanation of the reason why.

We have a circumstance, Mr. Chair, where more and more we're recognizing that First Nations and Métis peoples represent a level of governance, and we respect that and we honour it. We respect the level of governance that is established by the province in terms of our municipalities. And we have over years developed significant revenue-sharing capacity. This government to its credit has in fact increased that capacity.

I am not sure that we may continue with the position that former government and current governments have held in terms of a fair revenue sharing with our First Nations and Métis people. And so I would like to hear from the Premier more of his thinking on the rationale why revenue sharing should not occur with First Nations and Métis peoples.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well I agree with the hon. member. This is an important debate to have, and I hear in the hon. member's question that . . . And I would presume as the outgoing leader, he's probably not wanting to presume on whoever the successor is on this issue, and so it does become a bit of an academic debate in terms of what the opposition's position might be, but I agree not an academic debate about what the position of the government is.

And so let me just say that we will look forward to — before I get into the specifics — we will look forward to a clarification of the position, Mr. Deputy Chair, of the opposition, the NDP, on this issue of revenue sharing. You know, when we've talked about it with First Nations leaders, it's frustrating for me because it sounds like we're engaging in semantics when we talk about sharing benefits of a growing economy or capacity building amongst the First Nations and Métis people so they can be more significantly engaged in our economy. It sounds like semantics, but it is not. It is not.

I seek the engagement, as Premier and we do as a government. And the Ministry of First Nations certainly seeks the greater engagement of First Nations and Métis people in our economy and understand that resource development affords the opportunity for that greater engagement. That's why we're looking in the discussions that will now follow, that will happen before the draft framework becomes a final plan for the government, the issues of capacity building, the issues of sharing in the benefits of resource development especially with respect to traditional lands.

But I don't think we necessarily agree that it follows automatically that First Nations, like municipalities, require — or at least the relationship requires — that kind of a revenue-sharing formula. I respectfully disagree on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. We know that municipalities are a creature of the province and First Nations are not. They are that; they are first peoples of this country and have a unique relationship with the Crown. Yes, in part with the province, but significantly with the national government.

So I think we are going to agree to disagree on the specifics of perhaps where the member is coming from. But we agree, I hope, I think we agree in principle. The levels of sharing then,

of benefits might be different that we are envisioning when we engaged in this debate. But I hope that the hon. member and perhaps members opposite will clarify this position and that this will form the subject of an important debate that we can have around the issue.

I will say again for the record, the long-standing legal position of the Government of Saskatchewan — including, I think, for the previous government which the hon. member has recognized — and of Canada is that First Nations surrendered the Aboriginal title when they entered into treaties, and the province took control and ownership of the lands and resources under the Natural Resources Transfer Act, the NRTA of 1930. Mr. Chair, that remains the position of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, it was our position, and it was my position, and I recall providing a similar answer. I urge the Premier and the government, given the significance to our province, to be open to all possibilities. Let us not close any doors in building a future for this province.

Let me say this to the Premier and ask him this question. While it was not perfect, an important agreement was signed between all of the provinces and the federal government in Kelowna. We called it the Kelowna accord. Fair enough. The new Conservative government decided not to proceed with the Kelowna accord. I do recall the prime minister at the time saying that that government would in fact provide a similar level of benefit, particularly to the First Nations communities across Canada that would have been benefiting from the Kelowna accord. It would have meant some large amounts of federal monies to the First Nations communities of Saskatchewan.

My question is to the Premier. In his judgment, has the federal government honoured its commitment after ripping up the Kelowna accord? Have we seen from Ottawa what he would hope to see in terms of support for our First Nations and Métis communities in the province, particularly First Nations in this regard?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair of Committees, I want to thank the member for the question and say this, that we voted — as opposition, I was leader of the opposition at the time — we voted with the government in this Assembly when the government chose to be critical of the federal government for not proceeding with the Kelowna accord. And the position, it has not changed. It's quite apparent though that the Kelowna accord is not going to be revisited. That's the case.

So what we've tried to do, from a provincial standpoint, is take the key elements of the Kelowna accord especially in the context of discussions, First Ministers' discussions that I've been able to be a part of recently in Ottawa and earlier this year and late last year. We've taken that opportunity — as the federal government was asking for advice about a stimulus package and about its funding priority for the budget — to indicate that we need to deal with a number of issues for First Nations in our province. Specifically we need to deal with infrastructure issues on-reserve. We need to deal with the issue of the boiled water warnings that exist unacceptably on-reserve in Saskatchewan. We need the federal government to be

funding, to taking its proper place in funding those infrastructure needs.

I took the position, on behalf of the province at that meeting of the premiers and the Prime Minister, that we needed some federal investment in housing. We still have a housing deficit on-reserve in our province. And I'm focusing on-reserve here knowing that the Kelowna accord was not limited to on-reserve but focused significantly on the on-reserve demands of First Nations, of our first peoples right across the country.

And I was grateful when, you know, Chief Joseph — with whom we've had animated agreements and disagreements on certain issues — I was grateful that he referenced recently, in the wake of a federal government announcement for 60 million new dollars in Aboriginal on-reserve housing, I want to acknowledge the fact that the Chief singled out the work we were able to do as a government to bring that forward to the premiers and to the Prime Minister. I hope that helped. I think it did.

It wasn't just me either. It was other premiers as well. Paul Okalik, the former premier of Nunavut, spoke as eloquently as I've ever heard anyone speak to these issues at that meeting, as did other premiers — Premier Doer in Manitoba and others. And we also engaged with the federal government.

So the principles of Kelowna, we continue to pursue. And we're not, in some cases, waiting for the federal government, Mr. Chair. We have taken the lead of the former government which quite appropriately stopped worrying about the jurisdictional fight with Ottawa and started funding some specific things with institutions like the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. We've tried to build on that investment, Mr. Chair of Committees.

We have also moved with respect to on-reserve education. Some would say, well don't do that; that's the federal government's responsibility. But rather than have this frustrating and inane discussion about, go to the feds, go see the province, no that's a federal, we've moved forward with investments in terms of adult basic education on-reserve. There is more work to be done, but what we've tried to do as a government is proactively seek the funding. The same, I could argue, would be true of the FNUC [First Nations University of Canada] funding. And the leadership's been provided by two ministers there.

So we've tried to pursue the principles that were agreed to at Kelowna and with mixed results in terms of federal government response. But recently, some very positive indication that on a bilateral basis, we're making progress and we're getting some federal investment on-reserve in Saskatchewan.

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. I guess I'd pick up where the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have left off with regards to the different efforts that have been made throughout the years to transcend jurisdiction — would be one way to put it — in terms of delivering services that are desperately needed by First Nations people in

particular, but First Nations and Métis people in the province and the question of different things that you take on-reserve or not. I mean certainly we as a government, in the fallout after Kelowna, took a decision very consciously that we couldn't wait on the feds any more, and we were able to take those decisions in terms of moving to funding on-reserve education, in terms of funding for SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], in terms of building on funding that had been there historically for FNUC, in terms of building roads to reserves, Mr. Speaker.

[17:15]

Certainly one of the different areas that were actively under consideration concerned housing and health care. We looked on with great interest to see the expansion of service with Muskeg Lake in terms of the long-term care facility that is now receiving funding as part of a pilot by the provincial government.

But another one that is in desperate need is housing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And certainly we looked with great interest on the words of Chief Joseph and what he had to say about the work that the Premier had done, and we welcome that work as well, Mr. Speaker, in the official opposition.

But I also note that in February of this year, when the talk was around the federal stimulus package and what was coming down the line there, that in the position that the provincial government had taken, the Premier was quoted widely in those days as saying "We are not calling on the federal government to do anything that we ourselves are not prepared to do."

At the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] special assembly in Prince Albert in the middle of February, there was a resolution passed by that assembly calling on the, referencing that very quote, Mr. Deputy Chair, and calling on the provincial government to, if there were dollars coming forward, to match them in terms of what the federal government was prepared to do. And certainly an obvious place to start there, Mr. Speaker, would be with regards to housing. And in terms of the \$60 million that has been put forward for the next two years, was there consideration on the part of the provincial government to match those funds in keeping with the challenge of the Premier at that time?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, we have, I think, kept the commitment we made. When I made those remarks that the hon. member is quoting from, principally they were about . . . they can be applied to the thing, certainly; I'm not taking issue with that. But principally they were applied to our request for the federal government to do something with respect to our cattle and hog sector and infrastructure investments.

And the case remains today. We were not just asking the feds to act unilaterally. We were prepared to do our own part, and I think we've demonstrated that as a government with the stimulus package. It was our own stimulus infrastructure investment announced in January and then what we've done to try to help our cattle producers and our hog producers.

The same can be said on the housing issue, I would argue, Mr. Chair. Whether it's a St. Mary's housing revitalization project

for about \$8.3 million that isn't directed on-reserve but will, I think, be of significant help to many First Nations people that are living on the west side of Saskatoon or the \$2.3 million, 12-unit housing development which will provide housing for Métis community in Prince Albert that was announced February 4, 2009, or student housing at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] in Prince Albert for the Prince Albert SIAST students — again there will be non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal residents of that. But it's going to benefit the increasing number of Aboriginal people that are attending our post-secondary institutions.

I would also say this, Mr. Chair of Committees, that the significant investment that our government has put forward to invest to an increased housing allowances for those who are most vulnerable in our province — too many of them Aboriginal, First Nations, and Métis people — the increase of up to 32 to \$119 per month and the housing supplement increased 36 to \$136 per month. The amount of money we've invested in that all speaks to the fact that we weren't just simply asking the feds to move on housing issues as well, that our provincial government is also prepared to act.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you to the Premier for that response. I guess I'd like to return to the question of duty to consult and accommodate for a moment if I could, Mr. Deputy Chair. Certainly the Premier has made some acknowledgement of the difficulty that that file is in right now and the fact that we've had a deadline that had been established for feedback at the end of February being pushed back to June, and the different things that have taken place on this file over the past year.

We've seen the blockades with Enbridge and the kind of uncertainty that that throws into the economy and the kind of division that that can represent in this province. We've seen different court cases come forward, Mr. Speaker, that again the First Nations and Métis people are trying to assert their constitutional rights and their rights as they see them under the duty to consult.

We've seen on the other hand numerous, numerous permits and licences go out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and again, First Nations and Métis people living in the midst of plenty in such poverty. And in terms of them wanting a fair share of the economy, if they're not going to get it through a politically negotiated process, Mr. Speaker, they will avail themselves of other avenues. And we've seen some of that already.

So in terms of where the talks are at right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan has rejected the position of the province of Saskatchewan. The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations has rejected the position of the province of Saskatchewan. Will there be any changes made to the position of the province of Saskatchewan in the days going forward to try and loosen or to break through this deadlock?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Chairman, there are unresolved issues and lots of work to be done. And I want to say this very publicly and on the record, the situation with respect to the various members of certain treaty regions, Treaty 4 in

particular, and others that were very much engaged with respect to the Enbridge project, made a case. Enbridge came to the table with goodwill. But a key facilitator in what was an agreement that has advanced both sides in this regard — a key facilitator and someone that I want to recognize for her leadership on that particular very difficult issue — is the member for Kelvington and the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations, who very much was part of the solution.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — There would be others who would want to foment some discord that may lead to other blockades or other issues. There may be others that want to do that, but I'm proud to be a part of a government and to be a colleague who is simply interested in finding a solution so that First Nations people can feel that they were fully engaged in that project and in others.

To be sure, there are other permeating issues that are yet resolved. That's why we're engaged in this consultation process. That's why we're going to continue to engage with First Nations and Métis people, and I hope that our government will be coming to a viable solution here in the months ahead before the end of the year.

And, Mr. Chair, it's interesting that this line of questioning from members opposite today, in light of the fact, in light of the fact that I believe a leadership candidate for that party has set the cause of relationships between First Nations and non-First Nations back further than anyone else that I can remember.

And you don't have to take my word for it, Mr. Chairman. I actually happen to think, though he may not admit it, that that hon. member who asked the questions with sincerity, I believe, in terms of his file, also didn't appreciate the actions of Mr. Lingenfelter when he took the people of Waterhen and Flying Dust for granted, Mr. Chairman. The record is pretty clear about what the chief of Flying Dust feels about that particular leader of the NDP. And for the sake of First Nations relations and that party, though it shouldn't concern us necessarily . . .

An Hon. Member: — No you shouldn't.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, the hon. member says, no it shouldn't. But let me just say then, in hopefully with the spirit of goodwill, that the member for Nutana, the member for Nutana if she's serious about better relations with First Nations and Métis people in this province, she better work even harder to get her candidate, the member for Wakamow, or any other candidate, elected the leader of the NDP who has set back the cause of First Nations people and their relationship with non-First Nations more than anyone I can recall in recent history, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was quite interested to hear the remarks from the Premier, and certainly there's a process under way that will deal with the circumstances around Meadow Lake and what's happened there and certainly any improprieties there are wrong and should be rightly condemned.

But I find it interesting to get a lecture on this score from the Premier, Mr. Speaker, because he's got in his caucus a person who's very consciously kept out of the members' statements over the past week and a half, that lost as a Member of Parliament for Churchill. And his reaction to losing that election, Mr. Speaker, was to talk about how First Nations were banana republics and how the election had been stolen on reserves.

So I guess if the Premier's looking to come forward with something around, you know, condemning these kind of activities or things that would divide the people of the province, perhaps he could tell us what he thought about the remarks of the now member from Meadow Lake.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we're going to find the exact quote. But as it turns out, there's another individual who has been frustrated by the electoral process and made some comments with respect to banana republics. And the comments came from the NDP leadership candidate, Yens Pedersen — who facing this phony membership scandal on the part of Mr. Lingenfelter who took for granted the people of Flying Dust and Waterhen — had this to say. Yens Pedersen said, and I quote:

“These are allegations of the most serious nature . . . They strike to the very foundations of our democratic process. This is the type of stuff that you expect to go on in banana republics and not in Saskatchewan.”

That is your leadership candidate, your former president of the party, Mr. Chair. And so I would encourage members opposite to understand that when people are frustrated about electoral process, they might assign that kind of description to the process itself, and not to any particular group involved. Apparently you can do that if you're a New Democrat, but you can't if you're a member of any other party.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. I think the Premier's stretching a bit to make the comparison, but you know, we understand how it's very much in his interest to try and do that.

I guess I've got something a little more recent, a little more real time in terms of the debate that's been going on back and forth across this Chamber, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier were talking about the question of resource revenue sharing, the member from Wood River was yukking it up about, well who wouldn't want revenue sharing. You know, the Scottish people . . . Who wouldn't want revenue sharing?

So I guess, you know, does the Premier equate the question of resource revenue sharing with what's happening with First Nations and Métis people in the province? Does he share the opinion of the member from Wood River in deriding it in that way?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, we've said pretty clearly

and have demonstrated by the consultation process under way that we're prepared to look at capacity-building issues. We're prepared to work with First Nations and Métis people and companies to ensure that they're engaged to a greater extent in the economy, that we are prepared to invest in post-secondary education for First Nations, to invest in education for First Nations, that we're prepared to lead in terms of attracting housing investment from the national government and make our own investments as well, Mr. Chairman. We have indicated that what happened under the previous administration, a duty-to-consult agreement that didn't involve any consultation with First Nations people, was not enough.

But, Mr. Chair, I want to be very clear here, and I invite that member to be clear as well, because I assume, unlike the previous member, he's not going anywhere. I assume that he's going to be in this House or plans to be in this House for some period of time, even in the new caucus, led by the new leader. And so I invite him to go on the record now, on behalf of his party, as the First Nations and Métis Relations critic, as to the NDP's position on revenue sharing in respect of the NRTA, in respect of what this provincial government believes to be the purview of the provincial government.

We are not changing that position, notwithstanding our interest in engaging First Nations people. Will he do that? He wants to talk about what members may or may not have said on the record. Will he put something on the record in terms of his party's position on revenue sharing for First Nations? Will he do that now?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — Order. I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — I've got a lot of questions and I've got a lot of things I want to say to the member from Swift Current, but because of the time situation I'm going to have to make sure that my questions are very short and succinct and to the point. But for the member from Swift Current, could you advise me as to, besides your own cabinet colleagues and your own MLAs, which other people do you consult when it comes to northern issues.

[17:30]

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman of Committees, as you know, we have a minister in place who is working with respect to working on the issue of Northern Affairs.

Mr. Chair, we have demonstrated action with respect to investment in northern Saskatchewan. I think back to the stimulus package that we approved in January where, from a population standpoint, a great disproportionate amount of the investment that we provided to municipalities for important municipal infrastructure projects happened as a result of this government's efforts.

Mr. Chair, we rely on the New North for important advice and counsel in terms of what's needed from a local governance perspective, and especially some of the utility issues that are being faced by northern communities.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to questions from that member opposite because, you see, the difference between our side of the House and that side of the House with respect to Northern Affairs is that we haven't just consulted with northern leaders and northern communities, we've acted. And I look forward to providing a list of that action and those investments to people of northern Saskatchewan.

I look forward as well to the hon. member from Athabasca perhaps providing a bit of an update in this House as to whether or not he still supports his preferred leadership candidate, Mr. Lingenfelter, who would so take First Nations people at Flying Dust and Waterhen for granted.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, let me give the member from Swift Current a bit of advice in terms of what he's done for projects or progress for northern Saskatchewan. So far we've seen from the Minister of Highways, cancelled road projects. A lot of projects were cancelled. We've seen our economic development regions cut down from four to two. We've seen our northern revenue sharing trust account capital budgets reduced, Mr. Speaker.

We also will see that the latest effort of the Sask Party in northern Saskatchewan is to try and get FFMC [Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation] to get rid of the monopoly without a game plan in place. We've also seen that they've cancelled a northern economic regional development fund, Mr. Deputy Chair. We've also looking at the whole notion of issuing permits without permission or knowledge of people impacted.

And, Mr. Speaker, you look at all the cancelled projects, all the non-action, and all of a sudden you begin to realize that the North is not being served — right from the Ministry of First Nations and Métis Relations to the Ministry of Highways.

Now one of the questions that I was going to ask, in northern Saskatchewan there is some trouble brewing on this whole notion of duty to consult between the Métis people, between the First Nations people, and the municipalities. On this whole notion of duty to consult all three groups want to be in a position to negotiate on the duty to consult.

To the member from Swift Current: what position are you taking when it comes to northern municipalities on the whole notion of . . .

The Chair: — Order. There's starting to be some conversations going on. I would ask the members to respect the member that has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, there's a number of examples very recently of our government engaging with the northern municipalities. Obviously the duty to consult and accommodate involves the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, and so therefore very directly and indirectly it involves Métis communities. And in some cases in southern Saskatchewan, Métis locals as well.

I note with interest that since this government came to office, and perhaps it's part of the discussions we've tried to advance with industry, that La Loche has come to an agreement with the

Oilsands Quest project. One that they're excited about should . . . and we believe not should but when that project starts to bear fruit economically for the province.

But I also want to acknowledge some of the, well the . . . that member has a habit of providing information which may not be fulsome to this Assembly. I think we saw that just moments ago, we're kind of getting used to it by now. I think we all got used to the fact that, we've all read the *Hansard* of when he was a Liberal member and how he used to absolutely take broadsides at the NDP government about terrible roads in the North. And we can go through some of them if he likes. And how they ignored the North.

And then he became the Highways minister and nothing really changed, Mr. Chair. He became the Highways minister . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — The member may want to . . . He never lets facts get in a good way of a rhetorical flourish. But that notwithstanding, the member may want to reflect on the New North grant that was offered in April to study feasibility for regional waste management for 50,000; improvement of electrical service to northern communities, \$15 million; and STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] bus service up north to northern Saskatchewan that was expanded. Yes. Amazingly enough, that was that bus line that somebody said the government might privatize someday. More than that, we've expanded services and we've done it right up in northern Saskatchewan.

Northern residents are going to benefit, of course, from investments in water and sewer projects. Improvements to the schools in Beauval, Buffalo Narrows, Pinehouse, and Ile-a-la-Crosse, \$1.2 million — that's May 2008. Cell coverage in Denare Beach, Pelican Narrows, and Pinehouse. You'd think that member, when he was on the government side, would have got that job done but they were too busy putting up them towers at a farm near Shaunavon for some reason. I'm not sure why.

\$22 million worth of highway improvements in Prince Albert, August 2008; government funding for a new school in La Ronge, \$17 million, September 18, 2008. More money for northern taxi operators, September 2008; 133,000 for the building communities program and a new culture and recreational facility in Sandy Bay. And the list goes on, Mr. Chair of Committee. Northern grants capital program renewed for a total of \$7.2 million, Mr. Chairman.

There's work to be done. We view the North . . . And I heard the Minister for Highways and Infrastructure, in the course of debate not very long ago, talk about the importance of investing in northern Saskatchewan because that's so much of where the wealth of the province is. That's where the economic activity is today in many respects and where it will be in the future, and so we have to make sure we're investing in the infrastructure in northern Saskatchewan. We're off to a good start, but I readily admit there's more to be done, Mr. Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Sask Party has provided a plan that provides very inequitable property tax relief to Saskatchewan residents. The facts are this: in Saskatoon and Regina, Saskatchewan's two largest urban centres, property owners are receiving either a tax increase, no reduction, or a marginal reduction. More, that's a status quo circumstance. There has been no significant reduction for property owners in either city.

But using the government's own data, property owners in the town of Canora, the Minister of Education's riding, are receiving a 48 per cent decrease. Does the Premier think this is fair and just?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Chair, for far too long in this Assembly . . . And I haven't been here that long. I've been here since 1999. But I certainly heard from my colleagues, the member for Kindersley who's been here a lot longer, and member for Cannington, been here a really, really long time, but I know, I've heard them talk about how it was a little bit frustrating for them to see day after day the then governing NDP drive a wedge between rural and urban Saskatchewan, how they would pit rural against urban Saskatchewan day after day, both in their actions and in their speeches.

Think about the question that that member just asked. The hon. member has apparently no regard for the fact that this is an assessment year. And so assessments are going to change in the province disproportionately, depending on where you are. If you are in an area where real estate values have climbed at a greater rate, assessments will have changed. And so therefore, had we not acted with our property tax initiative, taxes would have moved way up. But as we know now in terms of residences, for almost all on the residential side, taxes are going to go down, some more than others.

In a place like Canora or any other small town — where there has been growth, by the way — they're applying to our Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative to build new lots for homes. But still the growth has not been as exponential or as robust, I should say, as it has been in Saskatoon and Regina. And so therefore by definition, because of the forces of assessment, the same new tax system which seeks to address an injustice that I think is a holdover from the old system, and wants to do it over two years, by definition it's going to have some areas — rural communities for example and even some cities that haven't grown as fast — where assessments haven't changed as much, some will get less relief than others.

And in year two when we implement the plan, some of that will be addressed, but not all of it because we will still have this disparity in growth rates. That's the reason for this, I would say to that member. That's the reason for it. It isn't because the Deputy Premier represents Canora, as he would incredibly point out on the floor of this legislature. What are you inferring, member? What are you inferring, sir — that the Deputy Premier orchestrated the property tax relief to benefit his home community at the expense of people in Regina and Saskatoon?

I'll tell you what the Deputy Premier of this province did. He led, together with the member of Rosetown, an aggressive consultation process on the issue of property tax. And more to the point, he led in the cabinet and in the caucus and later in this

legislature the most long overdue property tax relief, the most long overdue tax relief this province has ever seen.

We have moved, sir, in areas where you lacked the courage to do it, and I'll defend our record on that issue with you any day, any week.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's worthy to note that the deputy . . .

The Chair: — Order.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I guess I'll bring to the attention of this Assembly that the Deputy Premier also rejected the actual Reiter report that was handed before him in that it, I'll remind the Premier, that in fact it doesn't cost less to deliver education in rural Saskatchewan; it costs more.

But to another topic, Mr. Chair, as it relates to teachers within our province: is the per cent increase that was provided to nurses, through the collective bargaining process, what teachers can expect through their next process?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, I know the member is in a hurry to change the subject, but if I just may. There were some quotes I think he should remember with respect to this government's move on property tax, which isn't easy. I mean, there are businesses in this province who are looking at an increase because of assessment changes, and that's why I don't think our work will ever be done on the education portion of property tax.

The good news is this: what we now have as a result of the actions of this government is a provincial tax, a provincial mill rate that we will be able to, as the province can afford it, adjust downward to ensure the competitiveness of our economy. But as for the steps we have taken, let me just say that the realtors of our province said, "It shows a government that isn't afraid to tackle big issues and make tough decisions. That's a very positive message after decades of delay."

Roy Challis of the School Boards Association said, "I think it's better than the other way." Dianne Woloschuk of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation said the government's \$241 million increase to the operating grant is a positive indication of the government's commitment to properly fund the pre-K to 12 education system. And finally, from the Regina chamber, "We're on the right track [he says of the province]. Before we were on the wrong track and now we're now moving in the right direction." With more work to be done, I readily admit to that hon. member. Phase 2 happens in a year from now.

Mr. Chairman, I'm not going to negotiate any contracts with teachers or any public sector employees on the floor of this legislature. And obviously we understand the importance of being able to retain and recruit teachers to the province of Saskatchewan, as well as nurses or other professionals. And we will let those on respective bargaining committees do the work of collectively bargaining the contract between the teachers and the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Premier will be surprised that my first question isn't about health. I'm looking at the report from the Chief Electoral Officer that was tabled in the House last week. And it has come to my attention that — actually came to my attention through a constituent and has come to the attention of the Chief Electoral Officer also — that there has been . . . A defeated candidate has used the electoral list, the voters list as a marketing tool to promote his business. And there is a constituent whose name was on the voters list and nowhere else, but because of this invasion of their privacy is in danger. The name on the list was kept just to the voters list. Everywhere else it was not on the list. But because this person has now used the voters list as a marketing tool, this person feels that they are now in jeopardy — either their person or their property.

I don't think it's funny. Those of you who are mocking this, I don't think it's funny. This person is extremely worried and has made the report to the Acting Chief Electoral Officer. And in the electoral officer's report on recommendations on voter registration, there are four recommendations about the limits that a voters list can be used for. And I'm asking the Premier if he will support the recommendations of the electoral officer and actually make this happen, so the next election this will not be able to happen at all from now on.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I would just say, Mr. Chair, that the hon. member raises a very important question if these events have transpired as she has highlighted them. And I think we all as individual members have an obligation and a responsibility to take these matters up on behalf of constituents.

I'm just hearing of this for the first time. I'm guessing that the Privacy Commissioner would be a place for the member to take this matter up, for them to look at it very carefully. I would say that the same would be true potentially of the Chief Electoral Officer for the province.

I would say that I think we all want candidates in political parties who respect the privacy of the voters list. That would be the case with our party. I'm sure it's the case with the members. But I invite her to use those channels to pursue this particular issue. And again, I don't know. Lacking the details or specifics, it's difficult to comment further at this time.

The Chair: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — I thank the Premier for his most recent response. I recognize that we are drawing close to the appointed hour, and of course we, in opposition, would love this to go on for hours more.

That said, I do have one issue that I want to raise with the Premier because it's not been clear the position of his government on this matter, and that is the potential or lack of potential of his government becoming a funding partner in any potential future nuclear reactor in the province. Now I've referenced comments that have been made by the minister responsible — that being the member from Thunder Creek —

on June 17 last year, 2008, when asked about the potential of the province having any involvement, any funding involvement in a reactor. He said, and I quote, "... the people of the province, zero ... this is not going to be built with taxpayers' dollars ..."

However, in November of the last year, November 27, that same member and minister said to the public, I guess all options are on the table.

So we've moved from a position of a categorical no to a position of now saying on behalf of your government, Mr. Premier, that all options are now on the table. He did say at the time he still favoured full private sector funding, but he did indicate all options are on the table and it could be "a partnership."

Then on December 1 of last year, of 2008, the same minister said, "SaskPower could be involved. We are not philosophically hidebound to do it in any particular way."

And so we see some movement and shifting of the position. He does indicate at that same period of time, in December 2008, that he says, "When the people of the province are educated to the risks involved in cost overruns and so on, they will agree that the private model is the best way to go."

Well, Mr. Premier, you'll know from the UDP report that a key finding of the UDP report would indicate that any reactor that has been built in recent memory, and I just quote the report:

To date, the cumulative risks of nuclear new build have been too large for the private sector to bear alone and governments have played some form of facilitation in the implementation of nuclear powered projects in all jurisdictions.

It's a very straightforward question. To the Premier, Mr. Chair: what is the position of his government in terms of public involvement or public funding, taxpayer involvement or taxpayer funding, for any potential future nuclear reactor in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, the preference of the Government of Saskatchewan, should there ever be a nuclear power plant in the province — and we want to respect the deliberations of the UDP and the all-party committee of the legislature that's going to be tasked with looking at not just nuclear power but solar, wind and other renewables, and hydrocarbons and hydro from other provinces — I would say that the preference of the Government of Saskatchewan is that the role of the government would be limited to a power purchase agreement, that we would be willing to purchase electricity from sources, from generators. That would be the case with respect to a potential nuclear reactor power plant, should one ever be sited in the province of Saskatchewan.

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just have a quick question. I know we're getting close to the end, but last fall, as part of the Throne Speech and part of the budget, the government announced great increases in terms of the

Saskatchewan Income Plan, now known as the seniors' income plan. And there were concerns raised at the time that, was there enough thought given to all the details of this plan.

Over the course of the past few months we've had letters sent to our office concerned about some of the fine print. And what I'm talking about ... And I know the government likes to talk about the fact that it's doubled the number of seniors who are in the seniors' income plan to 18,000, but we understand, and I've got the response from a written question that I asked about how many single seniors, type 1, living in special care homes receive SIP [seniors' income plan], and it's 730 in the past month. That's almost 1 in 20 seniors who receive SIP are in the special care homes and, Mr. Chair, unfortunately these folks only can receive a maximum of \$25 a month.

And the letters we're receiving as we see the promotions from the government that talk about "Seniors' Chat" here — I'm quoting from the Minister of Health who talks about, "I'm very pleased to tell you about an exciting new initiative that provides a huge boost." Well in fact it's not a huge boost for 730 seniors and, in fact, the irony of this, Mr. Chair, is that many of these, if not all of them, in January received an increase on their fees at the special care home of \$20 a month. So not only did they not see more money, they actually saw less money.

And my question is to the Premier: will he look into this? This is one that many seniors are saying is grossly unfair. And will he look into it? Will the cabinet look into it and remedy this as quickly as possible? Thank you very much.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I want to thank the member for his question. We probably don't have to go into the past. At least I'm sure the hon. member doesn't really want to revisit what has happened with the SIP program since 1992 when the consumer price index rose 41 per cent but the SIP was never increased by the government.

We've not only increased the assistance, but the member will know we made changes to the threshold so that more would qualify, 10,000 more seniors will qualify. Now because this is dependent to some extent on the income for certain seniors, some seniors benefit more than others. Some seniors who have a higher income are going to benefit to a lesser extent than other seniors who have an income.

So that's one of the challenges with the program as it was constructed originally. I would say though that it's more than passing strange that this could go unadjusted for a decade and a half, for a decade and a half by the previous administration and then the line of questioning or the line of attack or criticism is, well it's not enough for everybody.

I think you could fairly say there's never enough in terms of what could be provided for people who have need, but there is an income testing component to this depending on what seniors earn, and we have 10,000 seniors who are now getting a benefit of some kind that never benefited before. And we have significant increases in the actual payment for others, not for all admittedly because of the income situation of each senior citizen.

The Chair: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal

Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are rapidly approaching the appointed hour for our adjournment; therefore, I just want to take this opportunity before we depart, and I'm sure the Premier will want to do the same, in expressing our thanks as an opposition, my own personal thanks to the officials who have joined the Premier today in the Chamber, who have assisted the Premier in his answers and comments. But I want to say, Mr. Chair, that they are in many ways representative of the entire Saskatchewan public service and so, by issuing and offering our thanks to them in this Chamber today, we do offer thanks to the entire Saskatchewan public service.

I want to extend best wishes to Mr. Garven as he returns to work at the University of Regina. I want to congratulate both the Premier and Mr. Moen who will be taking the responsibility of deputy to the Premier. I think on both cases a very wise choice — my congratulations to both.

I have appreciated the time that the Premier has given to us this afternoon. I have memory of not being let off the hook quite this easy in terms of the time allotted, but I appreciate the Premier's answers, I appreciate his stamina, and I do want to wish him well — at least up until 2011. So thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, I want to take this opportunity, before we vote these estimates off, to thank the officials that have joined me here today, and I'm grateful for the help they provided. And I also especially, through Mr. Garven, thank the rest of the civil service of the province of Saskatchewan who have to deliver on the things that we decide on here in this Assembly and in the cabinet, and do so in a professional manner with service to the people of the province as their number one priority.

I think it is still very true of Saskatchewan that we have a civil service that other provinces look to for leadership and example, and we only can hope to provide — all of us in this House, I know — provide the leadership that ensures that that tradition would continue.

Mr. Chairman, I am particularly mindful of the fact that I've had two Premier's estimate sessions with Garnet Garven who has served his province mightily as he helped the brand new government find its way and get established, and really laid the groundwork for us to be able to achieve the campaign promises that we offered up not very long ago now — just 18 months ago — and also to ensure that the footing we had was solid in terms of providing good governance, one that is, as he often would say, one that is reflective of the values of Saskatchewan people.

And perhaps it's a little unorthodox, but because this is the last opportunity I'll have to sit beside him in estimates, I would just ask, invite my colleagues to thank Garnet publicly for the work that he has done. Thank you, Garnet.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, I'm going to have the

opportunity I hope later this week to ask for leave to make a few comments about my colleague, the member for Riversdale, the Leader of the Opposition and the former premier, and I am looking forward to doing that.

No matter what happens in the course of debate over estimates or whether or not, regardless of what might be read into comments from me or others, that there was much accomplished under the hon. member's leadership for the sake of the province, things that we are benefiting from today as a government. No matter what may be read into that by members of the House or anyone else, I can just say for the record it is sincerely meant. We have had those conversations, frankly, privately.

I am mindful of *The StarPhoenix* editorial as well, not long ago, that called us the luckiest government ever, the new government ever. Still, we are endeavouring to do the right things with that good luck on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan.

And I hope to be able to add a little bit to these remarks about my friend, the hon. member for Riversdale, on the occasion of his last or near-to-last appearances in this Assembly later this week. So I thank him for the questions that he has asked today. I thank all members for their questions as well. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I guess we are prepared to vote these off when we have the opportunity to, after officials leave. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — We're on Executive Council. We're under central management and services, (EX01) for the amount of 4,875,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Premier's office, (EX07) in the sum of 549,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Cabinet secretariat and cabinet planning, (EX04) in the sum of 1,516,000, is that sum agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Communications office, (EX03) in the sum of 1,484,000, is that sum agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. House business and research, (EX08) in the sum of 481,000, is that sum agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Members of the Executive Council, (EX06) statutory vote, is that sum agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for 12 months ending March 31, 2010, the following sums for Executive Council, 8,905,000.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Vote 10 agreed to.]

The Chair: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of committees.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the committee to report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried. This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 18:04.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wall	3023, 3024
Calvert	3023
Cheveldayoff	3023
Trew	3023
Harpauer	2024
Van Mulligen	3024
Eagles	3024
Weekes	3024
The Speaker	3024

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Iwanchuk	3025
Forbes	3025
Morin	3025
Brotten	3025
Vermette	3025

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Two of Canada's Greenest Employers	
Ottenbreit	3026
Tribute to the Best Neighbourhood in Saskatoon	
Atkinson	3026
Saskatchewan Co-operative Fisheries Conference	
McMillan	3026
Celebrating Literacy and Fostering Learning	
Wotherspoon	3027
Family First Radiothon	
Michelson	3027
United Way of Regina Tribute Luncheon	
McCall	3027
Saskatchewan's Forest Industry	
Bradshaw	3027

QUESTION PERIOD

Supply of Physicians for Stem Cell Program	
Junor	3028
McMorris	3028
Utility Rates and Greenhouse Gas Emissions	
Trew	3029
Heppner	3029
Morin	3030
Effect of Power Generation on Greenhouse Gas Emissions	
Taylor	3031
Stewart	3031
Cheveldayoff	3032
Environmental Plan	
Calvert	3032
Heppner	3032

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Support for High-Needs Youth in the Saskatoon Area	
Harpauer	3033
Forbes	3034

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice	
Kirsch	3034
Standing Committee on Human Services	
Hart	3034
Standing Committee on Private Bills	
Allchurch	3036

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 94 — <i>The Profits of Criminal Notoriety Act</i>	
Morgan	3034
Bill No. 63 — <i>The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Amendment Act, 2008</i>	
Harpauer	3035

Bill No. 66 — <i>The Witness Protection Act</i>	
Hickie	3035
Bill No. 49 — <i>The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2008</i>	
McMorris	3035
COMMITTEE OF FINANCE	
General Revenue Fund — Executive Council — Vote 10	
Wall	3036
Calvert	3037, 3045, 3056
Nilson	3043
Atkinson	3045, 3052
Higgins	3048
Van Mulligen	3051
Brotten	3054
McCall	3059
Belanger	3062
Wotherspoon	3063
Junor	3064
Forbes	3065

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Premier

Hon. Bob Bjornerud
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Crown Corporations

Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Minister of Government Services
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and
Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for the Information
Technology Office

Hon. June Draude
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs

Hon. Wayne Elhard
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
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