



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

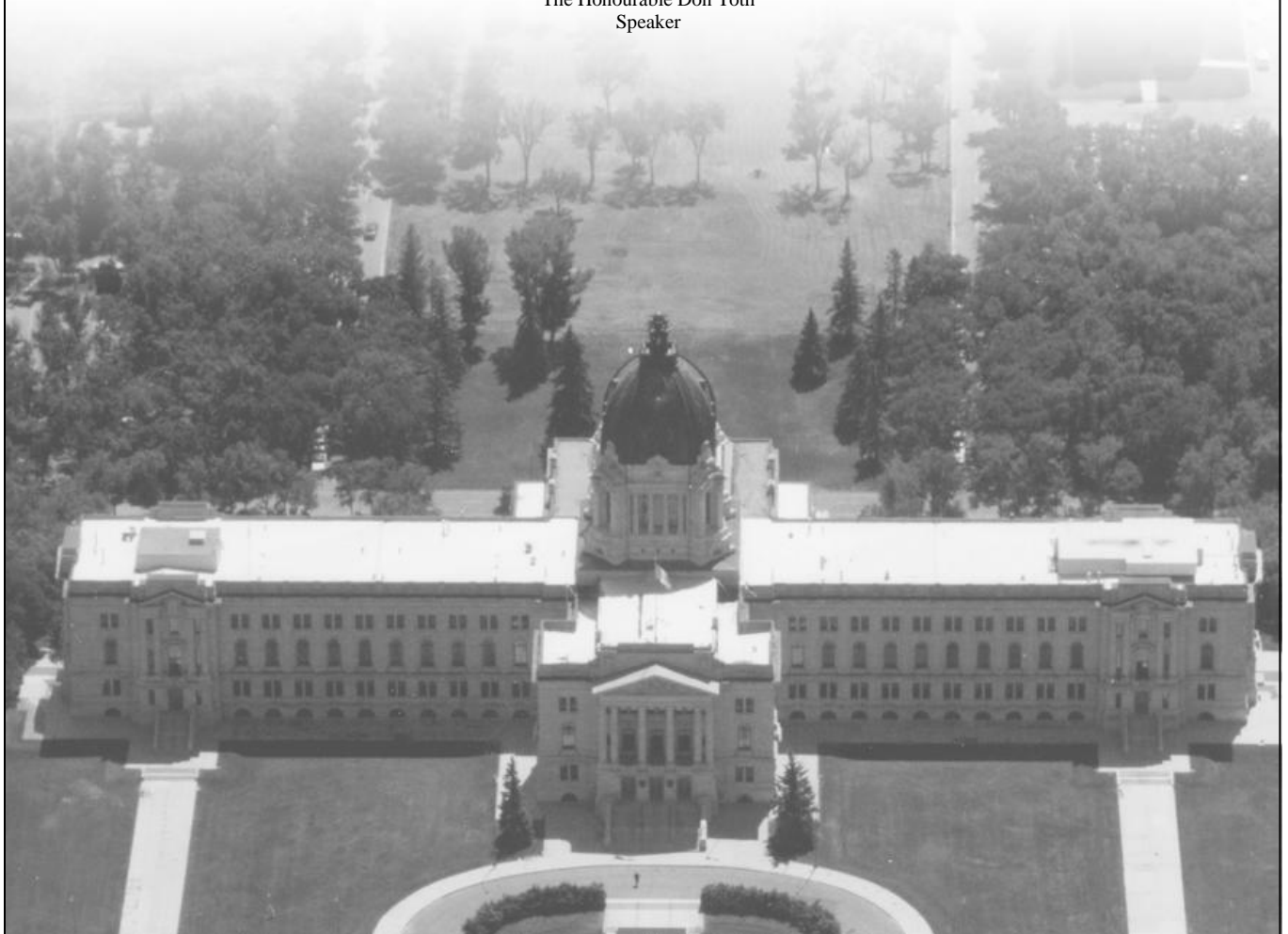
of the

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 — Dwain Lingenfelter

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
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
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Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
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Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	Ind.	Saskatoon Northwest
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
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Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation 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, Mr. Speaker. I request leave of the Assembly to make an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was former British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli who coined the oft-used phrase, “I am prepared for the worst but hope for the best.” That phrase really encapsulates the mission of Saskatchewan’s H1N1 working group, Mr. Speaker, consisting of representatives from ministries and Crowns. This working group toiled at the outset of the pandemic, or what was projected to be a pandemic right through until, Mr. Speaker, it was dealt with through the vaccination program. We have had a chance in this Assembly to thank those in the Ministry of Health who were in the bunker, for want of a better word, right over at T.C. Douglas, the T.C. Douglas Building.

But, Mr. Speaker, there was a cross-ministry group that was involved in this effort right from the very, very beginning, identifying first of all the need from a vaccination standpoint, from a public awareness standpoint, from a communication standpoint. There was the need to make sure that Crown corporations were involved, Mr. Speaker. There was a need to ensure that ministries were involved. And so I want to thank the group that’s joined us today for their leadership in this regard. They themselves represent many behind the scenes who were also responsible for the very efficacious approach that the government was able to take towards H1N1, again not because of the elected members, but because of our professional civil service.

Seated in the gallery today are Mae Boa, Tom Young, and Judy Orthner from Corrections, Public Safety and Policing; Lauren Donnelly, Mark Wyatt, Marg Moran McQuinn from the Ministry of Health; James Hoffman from the Crown Investments Corporation; Shannon Creighton from SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance]; Nancy Cherney from Executive Council; Scott Brown from the Ministry of Agriculture; Mr. Speaker. Bill MacDonald from ITO [Information Technology Office]; Cathy Bulych from Social Services; and last but not least, Ken Ludwig from the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Speaker, again I just want to thank this group of women and men who served the province so very, very well through the H1N1 pandemic.

We had a chance to meet this morning. We were discussing lessons learned from the H1N1 effort on the part of the government. We were also discussing steps for the fall and of course the approach of another flu season, and what the government will be able to learn from this to better deliver on that for the people of the province. And I just want to thank them for their work on behalf of a grateful province, Mr. Speaker, and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to welcome the working group that did so well with the H1N1 pandemic preparedness and following us through it in the months that it was upon us. And I’m looking forward to seeing anything that comes out about what we learned. And I’m sure that the group will be ahead of the curve again in this fall season coming up, and whenever we see a pandemic coming, I think the work that they have done will serve us well in all of that.

And I particularly want to say hello to Mae Boa, and she’ll know why. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to ask for leave to do an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The Deputy Premier has asked for leave as well for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all of my colleagues. Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery, I believe way up in the top row is a number of students, a large group representing three high schools in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these students are student representative council members, and they’ve been invited to take part in the youth mentorship program that is jointly developed by different groups here in the city. They have come from high schools in Stanley Mission and in Pinehouse Lake and at La Ronge. And, Mr. Speaker, these students have travelled from across the North, as you can tell, to spend some time in our capital city and learn about Saskatchewan’s provincial government.

Mr. Speaker, Cameco Corporation has partnered with the Government of Saskatchewan along with the Government House Foundation to provide an opportunity for these students to come to Regina for the period May 9th to 12th. It’s a fine opportunity for these young women and men to consider what a career in government has to offer.

This morning, these students had an opportunity to spend some time with His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, as well as tour the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] training academy. And looking at the agenda for this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and

tomorrow, they're going to have two very busy days meeting with a number of individuals, and they conclude on Wednesday morning with a breakfast at the University of Regina and then proceed back to their home communities.

So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming this group to Regina and to their Legislative Building.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join the Deputy Premier in welcoming all the students from La Ronge, Stanley Mission, and Pinehouse. I think it's really important for them to be here to watch the Assembly, and I'm always very proud when northern people come to visit. And I welcome all the students here.

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

So I really hope you have a very pleasant visit. And I point out to all the students throughout northern Saskatchewan that visit here . . .

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

Don't be afraid of this Assembly. This is your Assembly. And one of these days, Mr. Speaker, I predict that a young, aggressive student, him or her will become the next MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Athabasca or Cumberland. And the message we have for them today is, don't be afraid of anything here; this is our Assembly, the people's Assembly.

And I'll ask all members to welcome this fine bunch of young leaders from northern Saskatchewan to their Assembly today. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, I introduce Ms. Annie Whitehead. If you'd give us a wave, Annie. Annie is not only a good friend of mine, she's also my constituency assistant, a very integral part of our team back in Yorkton. I ask all members to welcome Annie to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask all members to welcome to you and through you, two individuals seated in the Speaker's gallery. I'm speaking of course of Vivian and Sandra Fowler. Both hail from the Eyebrow region. They're very proud of family and community.

Bearing this out, Mr. Speaker, Sandra Fowler won the Southern Saskatchewan YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] Rural Woman of Distinction award this past Thursday evening in Regina. And these two individuals are here to observe the proceedings of the legislature and to have a quick visit with their granddaughter and their daughter, Hillary Aitken who's doing a fine job as a researcher with the NDP [New Democratic Party] caucus. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming

these two important women to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the legislature, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce a group sitting in the east gallery. Mr. Speaker, these are all members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1400. And the majority of this group have been locked out by their employer, XL Beef in Moose Jaw since September 18th of 2009. Prior to that, they'd been laid off in April of 2009.

And joining us today are Daniel Papuc, Ron Rumble, Michael Jabs, Julio Yanes, Jayson Skinner, Matt Abell, Bev Arrance, Syd Klein, Gord Miller, Dustin Peebles. Also staff rep for Local 1400, Darren Piper and Kathryn Hiller, who is the education coordinator, along with the president of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1400, Norm Neault.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great deal of pleasure to have them here. But I'm sure many of us in Moose Jaw, and I know the group themselves, would much rather be back at work at the XL beef plant, and hopefully it opens soon, Mr. Speaker. I ask all members to welcome them here.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to join the member opposite in welcoming these guests from Moose Jaw. And like all members of the Assembly, we wish for a resolution to this outstanding difference and that the individuals can get back to work in Moose Jaw. Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I ask all members to join me in welcoming these individuals to their legislature.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the east gallery, I draw your attention to a group of grade 4 and 5 students that are here from Gladys McDonald School. There's 21 of them in all. Their teacher is Donna Raiter. And along with them there are not one, not two, not three, but four people who I absolutely say are not chaperones. They're here because they have a keen interest in the Legislative Assembly. These people with an interest in the Assembly are Greg Staruiala, Cheryl Rogoza, Ashley Hollinger, and Cecilia Jacobs.

So I ask all members to join me in welcoming this fine group from Gladys McDonald School to the Legislative Assembly. I look forward to catching up with them at 2:30, and then I'll be spending a bit of time with this wonderful group from Gladys MacDonald School. Please join me in welcoming them.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of the Legislative Assembly, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Heather Malek here in the west

gallery. A TV and film editor here in Regina who, among thousands of others, is concerned about this government's decision to privatize SCN, the Saskatchewan Communications Network. She and a number of others had an opportunity to visit Weyburn this weekend and there were a number of citizens there in Weyburn who shared her concerns. So I ask all members to join me in welcoming Heather to her Legislative Assembly today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Yes, I'd like to, to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, introduce the northern students that are here from the North and join my colleagues in welcoming them to their legislature. And just to make a point, it is the Cumberland constituency that a lot of the students are here representing and I represent.

So I just want to make sure, give you a warm welcome, and wish you all the best. I hope you have a good time, a learning opportunity and challenges and some interesting questions that you may present to all the different groups you meet with today. Ask all you want. Like the colleague from Athabasca said, don't be nervous. Ask the questions, and hopefully we can all provide you the answers. I'd just like to welcome you to your legislature.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned over the condition and the safety of our highways. This petition pertains to Highway No. 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and the junction with No. 1 Highway. This particular portion of the No. 10 Highway is a year-round route to tourist destinations, as well as it serves three major inland grain terminals. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to construct passing lanes on Highway No. 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and the junction of Highway 1 in order to improve the safety of Saskatchewan's motoring public.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Balcarres, Kelliher, Regina, Cudworth, and Balgonie, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition from people who have heard that current studies show that venous anomalies that restrict cerebral spinal blood flow returning to the heart is more common in MS [multiple sclerosis] patients, and that they've heard that despite the overwhelming positive outcome, testing and treatment of

venous anomalies is still not approved in Saskatchewan for MS patients. And they do believe that MS patients should receive equal access to health services. The prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan cause the government to immediately recognize the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and support the rights of people with MS to receive diagnostic services and recommend a treatment related to chronic cerebral spinal venous insufficiency or CCSVI by a qualified medical practitioner.

And the signatures on the petition are from Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present yet another petition with respect to rural water issues in Saskatchewan. A government agency has ordered the town of Duck Lake to upgrade their water system, and this has come at an exorbitant price that Duck Lake residents now have to pay for clean, safe, and available water, Mr. Speaker, amounting in monthly bills of upwards of \$165 a month. Mr. Speaker, and it's causing them great hardship, and we're even hearing that there are residents that now have to look at moving out of the community because they can't afford the monthly water bills.

[13:45]

And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable 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 now 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.

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again here today to present petitions on behalf of residents from across Saskatchewan who are concerned with the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the two consecutive \$1 billion deficit budgets put forward by the Sask Party and the billions of dollars of debt growth under the Sask Party and projected over the next so many years, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for its damaging financial mismanagement since taking office, a reckless fiscal record that is denying Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities,

institutions, taxpayers, and businesses the responsible and trustworthy fiscal management that they so deserve.

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

Now these petitions are signed by concerned citizens of Estevan, Bienfait, Balcarres, Theodore, Kamsack, Canora, Preeceville, and Pelly. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Women of Distinction Awards

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This past Thursday evening in Regina I had the pleasure of attending the 29th annual Women of Distinction gala awards. Mr. Speaker, since 1981 the award gala has recognized women whose outstanding achievements contribute to the health and future of our community and are an inspiration to all. The YWCA Women of Distinction nominee is a woman who displays a substantial and significant contribution in her field of endeavour, whether locally, nationally, or internationally.

There were many deserving women nominated, and I am sure that the judges had to make the difficult decisions. Mr. Speaker, I would like to personally acknowledge Stephanie Carlson. Ms. Carlson had the distinction of winning the Education and Mentorship Award for her incredible work in creating rape kits at the Pasqua Hospital.

Another female worthy of recognition in community leadership and enhancement is Barbara Hildebrandt. Barbara is the driving force behind Dress for Success. This is an incredible program which strives to promote the economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support, and career development tools to help women thrive in work and in life.

Mr. Speaker, I would like this Assembly to recognize all the award recipients and nominees for the countless hours of hard work and dedication. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, May 6th, earmarked the 29th Annual YWCA Women of Distinction Awards here in Regina. Since 1981, the awards have recognized the outstanding achievements and contributions that women have made to our communities and our province.

The 12 award winners this year and indeed all the fellow nominees offered absolutely impressive resumes with accomplishments raising from environmental protection, encouraging physical activity, fighting cancer, advocating for victims of sexual abuse, and everything in between, Mr. Speaker.

Doris Knight took home the Jacqui Shumiatcher Award for the arts, and U of R [University of Regina] president Vianne

Timmons was recognized in the leadership and management category. Other victorious women included Deanna Ratcliffe, Stephanie Carlson, Michelle Yaskowich, Jenna Gall, Carla O'Reilly, Elita Paterson, Tania Bird, Barbara Hildebrandt, Dionne Warner, Mary Kolitsas and June Zimmer. Eyebrow's Sandra Fowler was awarded for her contributions to a rural community. Fowler has long been involved with her area school board, health board, community development, the Terry Fox Run, and has been a pioneering female leader for her entire life.

Mr. Speaker, the Lifetime Achievement Award went to a formidable community leader and a woman that is no stranger to this House, former NDP MLA, Joanne Crofford. Crofford was recognized for her long and successful political career, as well as her contributions to the arts community here in Regina. Along with bringing together 600 people and raising \$40,000 for the Regina YWCA, the awards were a salient reminder of the strong spirit, determination, and innovation that women in this province possess.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in congratulating all winners, nominees, nominators, and organizers of the YWCA Women of Distinction Award. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Autism Services Spring Gala

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend there was a very important event held in Saskatoon, the 12th annual Autism Services Spring Gala. Mr. Speaker, our government realizes how important it is to support those suffering from autism spectrum disorder. ASD affects people from all walks of life as well as their families, friends, and caregivers. Roughly one out of every 150 Canadian children is affected by ASD.

While there has been progress in research, care, and education, we need to learn more about the causes of ASD and the most effective treatments and interventions.

I was proud that our government brought forward a budget this March that included \$2.5 million in new funding to enhance autism services. Our government realizes that there is more work to be done, but we believe we are on the right track.

The Autism Services Spring Gala is just another example of the people of Saskatchewan coming together to help one another. This event is a wonderful way to shed light on ASD and in the process raise funds to aid in the research of this disease. On behalf of the government, I would like to congratulate all the people that put this year's spring gala together and thank everyone that attended. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Participation in Debate

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it's a harsh reality of life that no matter the nature of your quest, it doesn't matter how much training you have if you fail to rise to the occasion when the

spotlight is on you. We saw that happen in this very Chamber last Thursday, Mr. Speaker. The member from Sutherland was supposed to be all geared up to rip into the NDP for simply telling the truth, but she failed to rise to the occasion and her colleagues were left scrambling.

It's puzzling, Mr. Speaker, because the member from Sutherland always has so much to say from the comfort of her seat on the backbenches. But when the spotlight was turned on and she was given her 15 minutes of glory, she failed to rise to the challenge. In the past when she defended the Sask Party's lack of action on the children's hospital, she said that time was needed to find the best spot for the parking lot.

Well okay, Mr. Speaker, maybe the member passed on her opportunity to shine because she was planning a little adventure, tromping along the South Saskatchewan River bank scouting the best spot for the parkade. Or perhaps she chose not to participate in the debate because she is finally realizing that the Premier's knack for running everything he touches into the ground is hurting the provincial coffers and leading to a multitude of broken promises like the funding they cancelled for the children's hospital.

Either way, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the Premier's team can't manage a speaking list, can't manage a balance sheet, and certainly can't manage our province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Thunder Creek.

Physician Recruitment Strategy

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to tell my fellow members and others about a great success in physician recruitment. Mr. Speaker, two family physicians are headed for Assiniboia. Both are from the United Kingdom and will arrive within the next three months. In addition, a husband and wife team will be coming to Moose Jaw. Originally from South Africa, the couple is moving to Moose Jaw from Newfoundland. Dr. Cheddie, a general surgeon, is expected to arrive in September; Dr. Singh, a family physician, will arrive as early as next month.

Mr. Speaker, this is good news, but there's more work to be done. We have committed \$3.5 million to a physician recruitment strategy to enhance efforts to recruit and retain physicians and build sustainable medical practices throughout the province. The new physician recruitment agency will act as a one-stop point of contact for physicians seeking to set up practice in Saskatchewan. And we have increased the enrolment of the College of Medicine and are on track to implement our commitment of 100 undergraduate seats and 120 residency positions within this term.

Today we welcome the four physicians who are coming to the Five Hills Health Region. Their recruitment is a shining success as government, health regions, and communities work together to make Saskatchewan the most attractive place for physicians to call home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Globe and Mail Interview

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, we heard a few weeks ago from the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporations of Saskatchewan] that Saskatchewan holds 20 per cent of the natural resources on the globe. She was wrong of course, Mr. Speaker, but if political spin were a natural resource, the Premier would be responsible for at least that percentage in *The Globe and Mail*, and there is the Premier, boasting of a biblical proportion list of resources in Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I hope his hand wasn't anywhere near a bible when he gave this interview. For example, we read in the article that in his early career he operated two businesses. What he failed to leave out were four words at the end that said, right into the ground. The Premier talks in this article about a virtuous circle here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but then he lodges a vicious cycle of spin when he tells the national press his goal is a debt-free province.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier has no plan to pay down the province's debt because his own budget documents prove by showing the province's debt growing by 55 per cent by 2014. Mr. Speaker, the Premier's budgeting is another vicious spiral of debts and deficits that will be costing Saskatchewan's families for decades to come.

The Premier did speak a true word, Mr. Speaker, when he said in the article, politics will soon be over for me. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, even November 2011 won't be soon enough for Saskatchewan citizens who are now growing tired of the Premier's spin. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Positive Economic Outlook for Saskatchewan

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, the hard work of Saskatchewan people has continued to have a positive effect on our provincial economy. The latest report from the Conference Board of Canada proclaims Saskatchewan's economy is "Firing on all cylinders." Mr. Speaker, the report states, and I quote, "... public and private construction investment continues to grow unabated. Several ..."

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I'd ask ... The member from Athabasca will come to order. Government members have been listening while opposition members ... and the opposition members for their part, in general, have. I would just ask opposition members to allow the member from Moose Jaw North to make his statement without interference. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

Mr. Michelson: —

... public and private construction investment continue to grow unabated. Several private construction projects are entering their peak development period, including Loblaw's \$200-million Regina warehouse and distribution facility, and Mosaic's \$1.7-billion potash mine expansion.

Job creation follows these large projects, Mr. Speaker. There are 521,700 people working in Saskatchewan this past April, an increase of 8,900 over the same period in April of 2009. Full-time employment increased 12,400 during the same period. Mr. Speaker, a report by the CMHC [Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation] today shows that the construction starts for single family dwellings were up by 182 per cent. The multiple units increased by 463 per cent in April of 2010.

Mr. Speaker, these reports stand in stark contrast to the negative news releases coming out of the NDP caucus office. While the NDP tries to sell their negative spin, the people of Saskatchewan have done an excellent job of continuing to move this province forward. Saskatchewan's positive economic outlook is a direct result of their optimistic . . .

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

Before we move into oral questions, I'd just like to remind our guests that you're certainly welcome to be in the chambers or in the galleries to observe the proceedings, but I would ask members to refrain from any involvement in the debate whatsoever.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Support for Agriculture

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, last week the Canadian government issued a report on the forecasting of farm income for 2010. And in that report, Mr. Speaker, they indicate that net farm income in the province of Saskatchewan for 2010 will decrease by 55 per cent. This at a time when power rates, because of the mismanagement of this government, are up 18 per cent in the last 14 months; diesel fuel for the farm is up 24 per cent this spring; durum prices have dropped from \$10 a bushel to 4; wheat prices from 10 to 5.

Can the minister tell the Assembly — but more importantly, the farmers of Saskatchewan — what plans he has in place for the problems that will face farmers right across this province as a result of this drastic and very quick change in farm income and increased cost to production?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

[14:00]

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I think he knows as well as I do farm incomes go up and down and have for the last 100 years right across the province of Saskatchewan.

I think some of the optimistic things that are happening in the province right now is we see in the hog sector right now where prices are better right now, Mr. Speaker, than they've been probably in the last three or four years — in fact to the point now where hog producers in this province are actually starting to recover and make a dollar, Mr. Speaker. We see the cattle prices still depressed, Mr. Speaker, but at the same time with the high dollar we see cattle prices actually starting to move a

little bit in the right direction. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, on the grain side, we probably have more grain right now on store in this province than we've had for many years due to two years of fairly decent crops right across the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that the farmers in this province are somewhat optimistic at this point of the year. We have ample moisture to start this crop off and I think right now things are looking half decent in the agriculture sector.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, while the hog prices might be improving a little bit, the problem is the minister has allowed a good percentage of the hog producers to go broke in the last two years since he became minister. That's the problem. Today we see the president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture saying, and I quote from last week when the report came out:

The government's own forecasts show deep losses for many commodities and highlight that the business risk management programs currently in place were not designed to function with today's unique set of economic circumstances.

The minister is correct; the prices do go up and down. The question is, Mr. Minister, what are you doing to plan for the problems associated with the rapid decrease in prices for grain and the increase in the production costs? What's your plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the member opposite would even mention hogs in this province because their solution, I would presume, would be to pick one part of an industry — like Big Sky Farms in this province — due to the detriment of all the other hog producers in the province, invest about 25 or \$30 million of taxpayers' money, and where has that got us, Mr. Speaker? We see Big Sky has gone under and we've lost about 30, in excess of \$30 million of taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker.

We don't invest in individual businesses out there, Mr. Speaker, at the expense of all the other businesses in the same industry. What we do do is we make improvements to crop insurance. We didn't cut spot loss hail; that was the members opposite. We did a review and we've made some improvement to the crop insurance program. We're working with producers on both the livestock sector and on the grain side, Mr. Speaker, and trying to improve programming right across this province for every producer in this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget the federal government followed the example of this provincial government and announced they were cutting agricultural programs by 45 per cent, that at a time when farm income across Canada is predicted to be down by 91 per cent. In this province we've seen the budget for Agriculture cut by 20 per cent or \$100 million being taken out at the very time when the Canadian Federation of Agriculture is saying there's a crisis on the horizon.

My question to the minister is this: why would you choose to cut support for farmers when we're looking at a reduction of 55 per cent in net farm income?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite had been watching close, a year ago the provincial budget for Agriculture went from \$303 million to 483 million. Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite, when he was minister of Agriculture, had paid attention, he would know that it's the federal government projections that put the cost to the AgriStability program every year. It's the federal government that put the price to grain for the crop insurance program. And due to that added expense, last year . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was due to the federal projections . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. The Speaker just no sooner called the House to order than the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre entered into the debate. The individual that's been recognized is the Minister of Agriculture. I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before, the federal government — as the member should know and I think does know — the federal government projects what the AgriStability program will cost and we budget accordingly. The difference, from that government when they were in power to this government, is we fully fund the programming right upfront, Mr. Speaker. That wasn't happening under the previous NDP.

So, Mr. Speaker, yes, AgriStability went away up last year. And between crop insurance, grain prices dropping, and AgriStability costs going down, our budget did go down, Mr. Speaker. But for all we know, they'll go right back up next year. And, Mr. Speaker, we'll be there to fund those programs accordingly.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, this speaks to the math of this government. The minister says that while 55 per cent drop in farm income triggers that minister pulling out \$100 million of budget in the Department of Agriculture . . . The minister should quit talking to the Premier because math is not the Premier's strong point.

My question to the minister is this: have you approached the federal government since this report was released and asked the federal government to restore the 45 per cent they have announced in cuts and put your \$100 million back in to make sure farmers are taken care of and their needs are met as they face a radical drop in income and increase in the cost of

production?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — But, Mr. Speaker, think what the member opposite is saying. We take the \$100 million that was saved from the AgriStability program this year and put it into other programming. Next year the projections go up another 100 million to replace where they've gone this year, and we'll have a budget over excess of \$500 million for Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, that would be about double any year that the NDP were in power, when the average was about \$250 million.

So I'm amazed that the member opposite would ask for that many dollars to go into programming when there has been no cuts to the programming, Mr. Speaker. It goes directly on what the federal government projects the payouts to be for AgriStability and prices to be for crop insurance.

Mr. Speaker, wildlife compensation program is a good example — a program we have never had in this province, even with 16 years of NDP government. Producers were asking for it. We brought it to the table and we funded it, Mr. Speaker.

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

Long-Term Care Facilities

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the government: who in the government can confirm that Amicus Health Care Inc. has been given the green light to build a long-term care facility in the city of Saskatoon?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, when we look at the long-term care facilities that are around the province and the need for more beds in some areas, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the deterioration of some of our long-term care facilities over a number of years of former government, that they simply neglected them, it is a big challenge in the province to make sure that we have the proper complement of beds in the proper locations, Mr. Speaker. We're looking at options in all of the areas to . . . in some areas to . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I ask the members to allow the minister to answer the question. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — We are looking, Mr. Speaker, in some of the rural communities to replace facilities that are antiquated, Mr. Speaker. We've announced 13 of those. We are looking in Saskatoon at how we can best meet the need there. Right now we're using some of our acute care beds for long-term care. That's not the proper use of that space. It's not the proper facilities for housing long-term care. We're looking forward to Oliver Lodge coming online real soon, Mr. Speaker, and we're also looking at other options that will certainly meet the demand of long-term care in the various areas, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well yes, Mr. Speaker, they certainly are looking at other options. Now non-profit organizations operating in health care are required to raise 35 per cent of the cost of construction from their own sources, such as Oliver Lodge — they're presently holding bake sales to raise their 35 per cent. The government then contributes the other 65 per cent of the building costs.

Mr. Speaker, we've been told, in the case of Amicus, the cost of constructing this facility is instead being backed with a loan guarantee by the Saskatoon Health Region.

To the minister: can he confirm that the Saskatoon Health Region is providing a loan guarantee for 100 per cent of the cost of this \$27 million facility?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, when you talk about long-term care, right now in our system we have a number of variations of long-term care delivery within the system, Mr. Speaker. We have faith-based already within the system — Lutheran Care obviously is a faith-based that provides . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — As I said, there is faith-based delivery of long-term care within our system, Mr. Speaker. There's also variations of long-term care. There are affiliates that we contract through, the full cost of the contract through like Extencicare in other communities, Mr. Speaker, that aren't owned by the health region but are funded through the health region. There are a variation and a real variety of long-term care delivery within the system, Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to look at all the options to provide the best possible care for the citizens here in Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there are indeed 19 affiliated organizations for long-term care delivery in the Saskatoon Health Region, and no doubt many of these 19 affiliates would have been interested in the same kind of deal the Saskatoon Health Region was able to offer Amicus.

To the minister: has the government or the Saskatoon Health Region offered to back 100 per cent of the health capital construction for other affiliates, and if not, why not? Why not an exception and why the exception for Amicus only?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, there's a variation and real variety of long-term care facilities within the province, whether it's . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I would ask the opposition members to

allow the minister to respond to the question placed by the member from Saskatoon Nutana. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, there is faith-based care, Mr. Speaker. There are affiliates that aren't faith-based that are, as I said, a variety of mixtures within the system. What I do know, that after many years of NDP government the long-term care facilities were absolutely neglected in our province, absolutely. In rural Saskatchewan after community after community, whether it's in Kelvington, whether it's Biggar, whether it's in Rosetown, whether it's in Radville, Mr. Speaker, Kipling, there are a number of facilities that were neglected. We've moved on that . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Even the Speaker is not that far removed but it's becoming difficult, especially at times, to hear and I'd ask, I'd ask the . . . There's a half a dozen opposition members continually interjecting from their seats. I recognize the minister to complete his response.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said, there are a number of facilities that needed to be replaced. We are moving in that direction. There are also areas in the province that certainly need more beds as we look at the demographics as we move forward.

What we are interested in, Mr. Speaker, paramount, the number one priority is to ensure we have the best delivery of care within the system that we have today, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the lawyer acting on behalf of Amicus is Rod Donlevy. Now Rod Donlevy is the brother of Joe Donlevy, the chief of staff to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, can I ask this simple question: what discussions have taken place between staff in the Premier's office and the proponents of Amicus, and has the Premier's office directed that this project be done?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, there is a Catholic Health Corporation within this province that has delivered health care in this province for many, many years, dating back to the Grey Nuns Hospital here in Regina and many other facilities around this province, Mr. Speaker. They're involved in Estevan, Mr. Speaker. They were involved in Humboldt. The Catholic Health Corporation has delivered great care.

Now I'm surprised that the members opposite are saying that a certain family is running this whole program. That's absolutely ludicrous, Mr. Speaker. It's through the Catholic health foundation or organization, Mr. Speaker, and Amicus is just part of that. We are not guaranteeing any loan for Amicus, Mr. Speaker, not whatsoever.

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

Treatment for Multiple Sclerosis

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, last week a group rallied at the legislature to raise awareness of the research being done that demonstrates the connection between chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, or CCSVI and MS. The research has been dubbed the liberation procedure. Today a number of the group are in the gallery and on the floor of the legislature.

And, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: is he aware of the research being done? And when can Saskatchewan MS patients expect to be able to access the liberation procedure?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all our thoughts and prayers go out to anyone in the province that suffers from MS. We have a higher prevalency here in Saskatchewan than most any other jurisdiction around the world. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I can cite a couple of family members, young women that are suffering from MS. And hearing the debilitating effects that that has on their life, young women with young children, and the impact that that has.

I think everybody around the world is heartened by some of the news — early news, very early news — that's coming out regarding the liberation treatment and other advancements regarding MS and the treatment of MS, Mr. Speaker. I want the people of this province to know that our government will be there in every way that it could possibly be there to help the advancement so that we could prove the efficacy of this treatment and help treat people that are suffering from MS here in Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, it's been discovered in approximately 90 per cent of people with MS that the veins draining blood from the brain are blocked and that's causing an iron buildup in the brain. In Saskatchewan no screening is taking place to determine if there is vein blockage in MS patients. MS patients here in Saskatchewan have no recourse of action and are being told to be patient.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why are patients with MS not being allowed to access screening and the treatment that opens the blockages and allows the blood to flow freely?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, these treatments are in the early stages. Through the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, the Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation are working on a study that will help further this research, Mr. Speaker, and look at the efficacy. The MS Society themselves are saying that there needs to be a much larger group studied before we can say that this is as effective as what we all hope it will be.

But, Mr. Speaker, our government is there, committed, with the Saskatoon Health Region, with the City Hospital Foundation in Saskatoon to see research done and move this project ahead, Mr. Speaker. Because we certainly understand how important it is for Saskatchewan residents to find a treatment for MS.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The research being done at the U of S is a small group of people. The world will be way ahead of us if we don't do something fairly quickly.

Mr. Speaker, the rally last week called on the federal government to provide \$10 million to the Canadian Institute of Health Research for CCSVI and MS research. The liberation procedure may be groundbreaking research that could drastically alter the lives of MS patients for the better. It needs to be looked at soon. And it needs to be looked at very thoroughly.

To the minister: has he spoken to his federal counterpart to lobby for funding for CCSVI and MS research? And is the provincial government prepared to put extra money into the MS research and the CCSVI research?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is part of the overall national picture when you look at research and improvements that can be made. As the member opposite said, this is a groundbreaking research. It really has started, I think probably over I think in Italy, that this is kind of a bit of a breakthrough. But it is early, early in the trial basis, Mr. Speaker.

And I won't take much counsel from the member opposite. The member opposite, back about eight months ago, was wanting us to run around with HINI vaccine to every outbreak around the province as if that was going to cure the problem, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we stayed the course. We did an excellent job on HINI. We're going to be staying the course with research on MS and making sure that our province is part of the research done across Canada so that we can find the treatments for MS.

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

Efficiency in Government

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier took notice of a question last sitting and I am very pleased to provide an answer. It was regarding Mr. Dale Botting. Mr. Botting is not on salary with Enterprise Saskatchewan. Mr. Botting has a six-month renewable contract for specific investment attraction services and the development of innovative partnerships. This is a logical continuation of his past work, his expertise, and experience in the field of investment attraction. Mr. Speaker, the contract is less than his final salary as CEO [chief executive officer] of Enterprise Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, the interim CEO continues to receive his

salary as senior VP [vice-president], marketing and communications. I would note that Mr. Dekker also continues his responsibilities with marketing and communication. That means it is actually costing the taxpayers less, and I would say that's pretty efficient, Mr. Speaker. As far as the member's notion that this was done behind the scenes, Mr. Speaker, I would remind him that we were so secretive about this that we issued a news release . . .

The Speaker: — The minister's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate very much the minister repeating his March news release to the Chamber.

The Deputy Premier will know that the question to which he took notice for had to do with the efficiency secretariat, which started out in the Minister of Finance's office and then now seems to have moved to the Public Service Commission office without any news release, Mr. Speaker.

And so this quiet movement of the efficiency secretariat from one point to another was part of the question, but more importantly the question was: has the efficiency secretariat reviewed the situation of two deputy ministers working for the department? The Premier's comments about efficiency on one hand, and spending more on the other, Mr. Speaker, has the efficiency secretariat reviewed this matter and do they concur with the Minister of Enterprise?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite talking about the efficiency secretariat, that was discussed in the budget that we brought forward. We didn't have to put out a news release because it was discussed at that time.

I said last week and I will repeat, that the efficiency secretariat looks at projects that deal across ministries. And I gave as an example the project of accounts payable. When it comes to the individuals, they are looked at within their own ministry. We talked about the workforce adjustment strategy, ensuring that we have people that are doing a job and not duplicating. I am very positive . . . [inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker, the members opposite heard from the Minister of Enterprise, saying there is not a duplication of jobs. There's people that are carrying out their jobs as well as somebody else's.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the work that we're doing right now is a good example of what we're doing in government to make sure the taxpayers' money is spent wisely.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, so we've got two deputy ministers in the department. We've now got three ministers answering the question. We haven't got a single answer back yet, Mr. Speaker. This may appear efficient on the other side, Mr. Speaker, but I don't think to the public that's the case.

The efficiency secretariat, Mr. Speaker . . . Two questions and I'll relate it to Enterprise Saskatchewan as well: Mr. Speaker, when was the efficiency secretariat moved to the Public Service Commission, Mr. Speaker, and why was it done so?

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, has the efficiency secretariat now reviewed this proposition of 18 sector teams, three strategic issue teams, a board advising this government, and the government not accepting the advice of the members of any of those teams, boards, or committees, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite again aren't letting the facts get in the way of their rhetoric. We've already said that there is not two people doing the job over there. We have somebody hired that's been carrying on a consulting job and we actually have people that are still carrying on their job within Enterprise.

Mr. Speaker, the work that we are doing within the efficiency secretariat was well established and was talked about during the budget process. I am very pleased there are initiatives that are coming forward right now, not just payables but in other areas where we make sure taxpayers' money is spent efficiently and that we are getting good value for our dollars.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Saskatchewan Government Insurance Celebrates Saskatchewan Roughrider Centennial

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to stand before you and talk about a very proud moment for two long-standing Saskatchewan institutions — SGI and the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

As part of Saskatchewan's community and long-time supporter of the Roughriders, SGI wanted to do something special to help Rider fans celebrate their favourite team during their centennial celebrations.

Mr. Speaker, SGI is giving the world's greatest fans the opportunity to display their Rider pride on their vehicles by introducing an official Saskatchewan Roughrider licence plate. Mr. Speaker, let me say this is more than just a licence plate. It's a way for fans to pay tribute to the Saskatchewan Roughrider organization.

Rider plates feature the team logo and the phrase, "Pride Lives Here." The cost for the regular Rider plate is \$50 plus GST [goods and services tax], and fans can buy a duplicate plate for the front of their vehicle for an additional \$20 plus GST. There's also an option to personalize the plate with five characters or less for \$125 plus GST. This covers the initial fees associated with personalized plates and the Rider plate. For those that already have a five-character or less personalized plate on their vehicle, they are not forgotten in this initiative that's very exciting. They can transfer their plates to a Rider

plate for the fee of \$70 plus GST.

After covering the administrative costs of the plates, any net revenue earned from the sale of the Rider plates will be given to the Saskatchewan Roughrider Football Club to continue to help the team flourish. Future generations of fans will also be able to partake in the display of Rider pride for years to come as fans will be able to purchase this plate not only this season but for many seasons to come.

Mr. Speaker, I think this initiative cannot be more fitting for the people of Saskatchewan as Rider pride is woven into the fabric of who we are. SGI is giving us the opportunity to take pride on the road and showcase the passion we have for Saskatchewan Roughriders. Mr. Speaker, I am proud of SGI's commitment to the people of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

With the training camp just a few weeks away, the new Saskatchewan Roughrider licence plate will start a drive to a successful season that will end in November in a Grey Cup championship win in Edmonton. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for supplying the ministerial statement in advance of the comments here today. Certainly the announcement that is put forward here today by SGI as it relates to the Saskatchewan Roughriders is one that we support, Mr. Speaker.

I know that just a few short weeks here from spring training is an exciting time in Saskatchewan and it's sort of that rite of spring where you're starting to plan to look at some of the new talent that will be on the field. There's been many new changes here this year, and I know we anxiously await seeing this year's team come together.

What I know about the Saskatchewan Roughriders, Mr. Speaker, is that they are a huge part of Saskatchewan's fabric. And what I know goes on across Saskatchewan is that right now at this point in time, many young men and women are inspired, Mr. Speaker, by the Roughriders and are dusting off their cleats, are working in their respective communities and small towns across this province, hitting the weight rooms, and watching their diets, and of course studying hard, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that they're as able and ready to play this year as they can be.

I think specifically of — and this goes across our province right through the North — but specifically I wish the Martin Monarchs in Rosemont and the Luther Lions well who will be conducting their spring camps here right away.

And of course Rider Pride in Saskatchewan runs incredibly deep. As we look forward to the coming year, we certainly are excited about the centennial for the Roughriders, and we wish President and CEO Jim Hopson all the best. We wish Coach Miller the best with the upcoming season and of course General Manager Brendan Taman. And of course that being our front office, it's nice to note that two of those individuals are in fact Saskatchewan born and bred, Mr. Speaker. And that's a thing of pride for our team, just as it is to see the great Saskatchewan

content in the players on the field. Mr. Speaker, they're an inspiration to all of us. They better our community.

And it's not just football season, Mr. Speaker, that these football players are working to inspire Saskatchewan people. We know through the winter that a complement of these players are travelling the many, many communities and schools across this province bringing forward a message of positive living, of health, of wellness, and it's a message that's inspiring.

I know that I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to seeing the Roughriders, I believe, play in Edmonton in November, Mr. Speaker, that being the time and location of the Grey Cup. We wish the team well. I like the motto "Pride Lives Here." Mr. Speaker, this speaks beyond football, Mr. Speaker, and represents our province and our producers and our entrepreneurs and our people of our province in so many ways. And, Mr. Speaker, with all that said, Mr. Speaker, I simply remind you that green is the colour and football is the game. Thank you.

[14:30]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Private Bills Committee.

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Mr. Kirsch: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Private Bills to report Bill No. 904, *The Orange Benevolent Society Amendment Act, 2010* without amendments and to present its seventh report. I move:

That the seventh 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 seventh 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: — Carried. I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill and that the Bill be now read for a third time.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I'd ask members to come to order and allow us to move, proceed so we can hear what's happening on the floor. The member has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 904, *The Orange Benevolent Society Amendment Act, 2010* and that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed to third reading. I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 904 — *The Orange Benevolent Society Amendment Act, 2010*

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood that Bill No. 904, *The Orange Benevolent Society Amendment Act, 2010* 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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

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: — We're in Committee of Finance. The first item of business is the estimates for Executive Council, vote 10, found on page 67 of the Saskatchewan Estimates book.

Before we begin, I would like to advise the Committee of Finance of the process. First I will invite the Premier to introduce his officials, followed then by calling the estimates. Then the Premier can make, if he has any, his opening remarks.

I will now recognize the Premier to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair of Committees. I will just give you notice at this point that I have no introductory remarks. We can get right to questions from the hon. member. But it is an honour for me and a privilege to be able to introduce officials that have joined me to answer questions here from the opposition in Executive Council estimates.

To my left is the deputy minister to the Premier, Doug Moen. To my right is Reg Downs, the senior advisor in Executive Council. Bonita Cairns, director of corporate services in Executive Council has joined us. James Saunders, also a senior official within Executive Council. And then because I also, as you know, Mr. Chair, have duties responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs to the government, our assistant deputy minister for intergovernmental affairs, Dylan Jones has joined us as well, Mr. Chairman.

I look forward to a frank exchange, questions and answers for the duration of the afternoon.

The Chair: — We'll start with Executive Council, vote no. 10, subvote (EX01) central management services. I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the Premier and his staff for being here today to dialogue and answer questions about what I expect to be a broad-ranging array of questions likely dealing with many of the departments in government, with the finances of the province. Some things we know. Some things we hope to learn and glean from the Premier today.

And it's pretty obvious that we live in a province rich in resources, rich in people, and that in the election of 2007, we were at a pinnacle in the economy — if you look at the number of oil wells drilled or gas wells drilled, housing starts, vehicle sales — that '07 and '08 were at the height of the economy or that the Saskatchewan economy had ever risen to. And during the period of '09, of course, the world recession that most people knew, Saskatchewan would have to deal with.

It seemed surprising when the budget was read in '09 that the Minister of Finance at that time laid out a strategy that would cause Saskatchewan, as he said, to avoid the recession. And a lot of business people, and especially people from other parts of Canada and the world, wondered out loud how it would be possible for a province that exported 90 per cent of everything they produced — whether it was potash, grain, or other manufactured goods — would be able to avoid the impact of the recession when they were exporting their goods into a world ravaged by a recession.

And our Finance critic, Harry Van Mulligen at the time raised that issue and said, are you sure we're not being overly optimistic on the '09 numbers because obviously China, India, United States, where the bulk of our goods were being exported are in recession and shouldn't we be a little bit more cautious.

I just wanted to ask the Premier, in retrospect, looking now at that period of '09, the budget that was being prepared and read about a year ago in this Assembly, how is it that the people

sitting around you now and yourself weren't simply able to read *The New York Times* or other newspapers and come to the conclusion when ships were lined up in the ports in Shanghai and other parts of the world not unloading goods from, and resources from not only Saskatchewan, but from a broad base around the world, how would you ever come to the conclusion that you would avoid and not be involved in the recession?

Now we know that in retrospect the economy which the Minister of Finance predicted to grow, I think, 2 per cent in '09 actually contracted by 6.3 per cent. I think that's the biggest mistake made in a budget in any of the years that I can remember — an 8 per cent mistake on the estimate on the GDP [gross domestic product] of the province. I don't know that any other government has got it that wrong.

The only other province that had that kind of a contraction . . . I think Newfoundland had even a greater contraction, but Saskatchewan fared the poorest of all the provinces with the exception of Newfoundland when it came to the economy in '09. And during that period what many of the people found fascinating is to look at the billboards and hear the speeches about the booming economy, that somehow the economy was booming during '09.

And members laugh from their seat because they think making a mistake on the economy of 8 per cent is funny, but the fact of the matter is that the people of the province don't think an 8 per cent mistake on the GDP of the province is funny.

But I just ask the Premier, how did it become that you got the numbers so wrong in '09, and how can we count on the numbers in '10 being even any more accurate than that?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, Mr. Chair, the questions the member raises relate to the budget previous to the one we're considering in estimates today, but it's fair enough to have them asked and debated again today. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think in the Speech from the Throne last fall, in the Speech from the Throne the government readily admitted that the forecasts for potash were wrong.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding what that member will stand and say in this Assembly, the counsel that we received for the price for potash came from not just industry but officials in ministries of the government, many of the same officials that were here when the previous government was in office. That is the fact of the matter. Officials and industry believed certain revenue projections. I think as late as last week at the annual meeting of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Mr. Doyle was reaffirming that it was the position of the Potash Corporation that the estimates provided by the government were reasonable, that the Potash Corporation was also surprised.

Now I know that that member opposite when he was a minister, at the end of his time as a minister, went in and demanded a senior executive job from the potash officials of companies in the province. Maybe it's because he has this magical crystal ball that none of the officials actually currently employed in the potash industry have, because he knows more than all of them and he knows more than all of the officials.

That said, that said, a significant mistake was admitted to by the

government in terms of a revenue projection. Mr. Chairman, our government took immediate steps to deal with that drop in revenue. We tightened the belt, Mr. Speaker, of government finances. We did defer some projects, Mr. Chairman. We made some adjustments with respect to the financing of the government so that we could maintain the healthiest financial balance sheets in the Dominion of Canada from a provincial government perspective.

I would also point this out, Mr. Chairman, that the member's language has changed markedly since his first speech at the end of that recession in November of this year, his first session, where he described the economy of the province as being in a free fall. That's what he said . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well he just said, it was. This is why that member is so out of touch with the people of the province. Because during what he called an economic free fall, the economy of the province of Saskatchewan created a record number of jobs — get that, Mr. Chairman.

[14:45]

During the middle of this recession, the international recession that we were not immune to, but during that recession when that member was saying the economy was in a free fall, Saskatchewan women and men were busy creating more jobs than ever were created in the history of our province, Mr. Speaker.

Well it's true. When that member says Saskatchewan's economy is in a free fall — which was irresponsible to say the least on the part of the members opposite — while he was saying that, do you know what else happened in the province of Saskatchewan? We were breaking building permit numbers set in 2008, a record economic year. That's what was happening in the year he described as a free fall.

Do you know what else happened, Mr. Chair, in the year that he described as an economic free fall for the province? We turned around 17 years of NDP-enabled decline and set the population record for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's why, that's why, that's why, Mr. Chairman, the people of the province have little time for the kind of backtracking and negativism that we see from the member since he came back from Calgary. He is out of step with the economy. He is out of step with the notion that when potash sales stop, there will be a precipitous decline in GDP.

But there is more to this economy than one resource. There is oil and gas. There is agriculture. There's the innovation sector, Mr. Chairman. There's the service sector, category after category. Jobs were created, Mr. Chairman. That's why the people of this province say whatever happens, whatever potash revenue calculations happened in the past, the important forecast for the province of Saskatchewan is that that member never sits on this side of the House again.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the one thing we do know is that in the dying days of the Devine administration, when he was working in the back offices as a political hack and he was leaving to go because he knew the rats were fleeing the ship, he headed back to Swift Current. And he walked in and demanded a \$150,000 grant for the guitar museum. That's what he did.

The fact of the matter is he had to . . . He needed a little hand up; he needed a handout. The great free enterpriser needed a little gift, so he went and demanded \$150,000 to start up the country western music hall of fame. That's what he did, public money. And you know what happened? He went to Swift Current and he opened the museum.

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. I just started to listen to the line of questioning. I think we're dealing with Exec Council. I would ask the member if he would stay with what we're dealing with, Executive Council estimates. I recognize the Opposition Leader.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Yes, and when he opened the centre in Swift Current and took taxpayers' money — which he never repaid, never repaid any of that money, Mr. Chairman, which obviously is part of their record of the finances of the province — he estimated how many people would come and visit the centre, paid for by the taxpayers. And he estimated that 30,000 people would come. And he was wrong because only about 2,800 came, 2,800 people. Now that sounds like the potash numbers, Mr. Chair. He got that number about as correct as he got the potash numbers. The fact of the matter is that this Premier doesn't get the numbers right very often.

I want to ask a very specific question to the Premier. Can he tell me how many oil wells were drilled in the province in 2007, and how many were drilled in 2009 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Better than yours. Better than yours.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Mr. Chair. Well let me deal with the preamble, then I'll answer the question directly or at least commit to get the member the exact specifics that he's asked for.

He mentioned about my former role as a ministerial in this building. He's mentioned it often, Mr. Chairman. Fair enough. It's absolutely part of what I did. And it's interesting to know that in his own party, there's been a minister of Finance whose sole experience — unlike anybody on this side — only qualification to be the minister of Finance was to be was that he was an assistant in this room.

But here's what is even better, Mr. Chair, because he keeps using this as a preamble. What's even better is that the current member for P.A. [Prince Albert], for P.A. Northcote, for P.A. Northcote, I think the former minister of SPUDCO's [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] son-in-law's sole qualification . . . Now and remember this, Mr. Chairman, that that Leader of the Opposition has already gone around the province announcing his cabinet, Mr. Speaker. Can you imagine the hubris? He's already been announcing his cabinet.

And I don't know if members opposite know this, but he's already made the member, who only ever was a ministerial staffer in the building, he's made him the minister of energy resources, Mr. Chairman. Nothing could be worse for the industry than that. We're going to do everything we can to make sure that never happens, Mr. Chairman.

I remember, I remember at an event we had at Husky Oil where we went to attend the opening of Husky Oil, the member

opposite was there. The critic was there. I had to introduce the critic to the oil industry . . .

[Interjections]

The Chair: — Order. Order. We're going to be here for four hours. And in fairness to the person that's asking the questions and also to the person that's answering them, I would ask that the yelling be kept very low so the members can ask and not lose their voices. And it's starting to get loud and I can't hear, and I'm sitting right here. I can't hear the person that's asking the question or the person that's answering. So I would ask the members to act with respect to the person that has the floor. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm looking at the expression on the member for Dewdney's face. He's saying, what? He's already been announcing cabinet positions? He seemed quite surprised by that. But he has. I'd say to the member for Dewdney, unfortunately the Leader of the Opposition's already announced that he's going to be the minister of Energy if that party's ever elected to government again. I love the humility of the hon. member opposite, that he would already make that announcement two years away from a campaign.

Mr. Chairman, I remember, I remember two of the visitors that came to the hall of fame. I did have a management contract through my company, TCB Communications, Mr. Speaker, which worked quite well. My last client was able to offer me a full-time position at the city, and I took that, Mr. Speaker. And I would say this as well, that two of the visitors at the hall of fame, two of the visitors, two of the first visitors to cut the ribbon was Brian Sklar and the current Leader of the Opposition.

Oh yes, yes. Oh yes. He never ever misses a chance for a photo op, Mr. Chairman.

You know what? You know what, Mr. Chairman? It was the previous NDP government that approved the grant. Those kinds of grants to business are what we've ended on this side. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, mistakes are made. This side's learned from the mistakes. That side shows up for a photograph at the mistakes, Mr. Chairman.

With respect to the question on oil and gas wells drilled, Mr. Chairman, we'll get the specific numbers to the member opposite. It's likely that the 2008 drilling numbers may not have been as high as 2007. The member opposite should also note that land sales records, oil and gas land sale record was set in the same year that he's talking about, in 2008 of our government.

Since then in terms of activity in the industry, in terms of horizontal drilling activity in the province, Mr. Chairman, and indications of same, we've seen never a time in the history of the province where there is this much momentum in the oil and gas sector, Mr. Chairman. We want to keep that momentum going.

The previous administration did the right thing when they didn't change the royalty structure from the previous Devine

administration. The member, Mr. Cline, who's now out of politics, made some good improvements to the royalty structure, Mr. Chairman. We're trying to build on that success to develop and grow this important industry in the province, Mr. Chairman.

I'll tell you what doesn't help. What doesn't help the industry today is talk from the member opposite, who's applying for this job over here, about nationalizing the oil industry. That is what is not helpful and . . . Well the member looks like he didn't say that. We'll get into the details of it, but we should have a debate about the energy sector in the context of estimates, of Executive Council estimates. The bottom line, Mr. Chairman, is, what would be bad for the industry is the approach the member's articulating about a state-owned oil company, Mr. Chairman. We're going to continue working with the . . .

Well here it is just now, Mr. Chairman. From a leadership candidates forum for the NDP, April 2, 2009, here's what he said, and this sends a chill through the industry in the province, to the resource sector, not just to oil and gas but the resource sector. Here's what he said. This is the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, running to be the leader of his party:

In the Blakeney government, we set up SaskOil, we nationalized the potash industry. What I regret in many ways is that we didn't fight harder the privatization of those things that we did in the Blakeney era, allowing the potash corporation to be . . . [He just said, hear, hear . . . allowing the potash corporation to be] privatized was a big mistake.

Well the member for Dewdney says it was a big mistake, even though now there is significant more investment in the province. There are more families employed in that same company today than there ever was when it was a Crown, but the quote goes on. The member opposite said:

We fought it but I think there is a question of whether we fought it hard enough. We allowed the privatization of SaskOil which I think was a big mistake for the province as well. And we should get back . . . [Oh, here we go, Mr. Chairman, and we should get back] to the point of setting up an energy company that does our own drilling and exploration for gas in the province of Saskatchewan.

Strange, strange, Mr. Chairman, that he would be so concerned about fighting for SaskOil because what we'll get into in a later debate today is how, when he was comfortably ensconced at the oil company in Alberta, he lobbied his former colleagues in this Assembly — Mr. Axworthy, the minister of the time — to introduce legislation that allowed that oil company, the one he worked for, to have the golden share removed as a former Crown. And that head office, all those head office jobs, followed that member to Calgary, Mr. Chairman. That's the kind of deleterious energy policy we will not allow happen again in the province. Better yet the people of the province will not allow that kind of policy to happen again in the province.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite wants to talk about his bankrupt companies, and he's proud of it and how many people came, but the fact of the matter is, that he doesn't answer the only question I asked. I asked him how

many oil wells were completed in 2007 and how many were completed in 2009. Now you've got a whole passel of staff sitting around you, and I want to ask the question again: how many oil wells were completed in 2007 and how many in 2009?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, the answer to the member's question: in 2007, 2,297 oil wells drilled — this is the information I've just been provided — 2,297 oil wells drilled, '07; 2,824, '08; down significantly in '09, 1,610 oil wells drilled.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — So when we deal with facts, the number of oil wells drilled between the last year of the NDP and 2009 is down considerably.

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

[15:00]

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, when we deal with facts, when we deal with facts, the number of oil wells drilled increased significantly in the first year of our government. And then, and then when the biggest recession to hit the world hit the world in 2009, when the price of oil for a while touched into the 40's, West Texas Intermediate, when drilling was back across the country, was decreased across our country and around the world, yes the numbers went down, Mr. Chairman. So I'm not sure what Sherlock's discovered by that, but I'll be interested in the next question.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — What a lot of people are curious about is that you don't tell complete answers. You talk about things getting much better, but when it comes to natural gas, can the Premier tell me what, the number of gas wells drilled in '07 when Lorne Calvert was the Premier, and in 2009? What were the numbers then?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, similar, similar numbers frankly: 1,156, Mr. Chairman, in 2007 increasing to 1,221 in the first year of our government. And then when the price fell out of gas — something the member should know about — when the price fell out of natural gas, down to 233 is the forecast when we close out the numbers for 2009.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the reason the public is interested in these numbers is because they hear you talking about how everything has gotten better under your management. And they hear . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . well if you can spin that, if you cheer that, here's what the members are cheering about. The number of gas wells drilled in 2007 was 1,217, and they cheer about the fact that it's gone down to 330. And they all cheer for that.

That is a new definition of spin. How can you spin that going from 1,200 wells in '07 to 300 in '09 is something to cheer about? People in the province don't understand that or how you cheer when the economy contracts 6 per cent in 2009. It gets 6 per cent smaller, and the economists say we're now back to where we were in 2005 when you relate it to the GDP. And the members opposite cheer about that and brag about it and spin. And even the press here in Saskatchewan is now getting onto the spin.

And so the Premier now isn't spinning as much here, but he goes to Toronto. And what does he say in Toronto in the interview that he did late last week? He's talking about Norway and comparing how great we're going to be to Norway, which is by everyone's definition a social democratic government, has a mixed economy, has very large oil companies owned by the people, Stat Hydro which returns hundreds of millions, no, billions of dollars from investments around the world, from billions of dollars around the world.

And he's using this as an example of how he wants to operate here in Saskatchewan. And then he says, he makes another point. He said, and this is the title, "After weathering a commodities hurricane . . . [Saskatchewan Party] leader has his sights set on a debt-free province . . ."

Now why didn't you take your budget document along? Because you must have forgotten what is true here, because in your own document, here's what you say about the debt: in 2009, 7.7 billion; in 2010, 8.1; in 2011, 8.8; in 2012, 9.8 billion; going to 11 billion in 2013; and to 11.9 billion in 2014. These are your documents.

Now how do you spin that in Toronto? I understand how you do it because you don't think anyone knows you're there, so you can exaggerate like you did with the country and western museum and how you did with potash. You can't get away with that with the press here anymore, so you go to Toronto. And you say, I've got a plan to make the province debt free. That's what he said in Toronto. It's going to be debt free.

But here are the facts. In your own budget document — and members opposite know this because many of them will have read that — in fact your projections, the government projections, your Finance minister is projecting that between 2009 and 2014 the debt in the province will go from 7.7 billion to 11.9 billion. To the Premier: what were you referring to in Toronto when you said, we will be debt free? Based on what document, if not your budget document?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, I'll get to the member's direct question in a moment. I'll deal with the preamble first. The member commented on why members on this side of the House would be applauding with respect to the economic record of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Let's review, let's review, Mr. Chairman. In terms of population, here's the record of this government in power: 30,511 more people in the province, the fastest growth rate in 80 years. Here was the record from 1996 to 2000 when that member sat in the cabinet under the member opposite's term,

down 11,380. That's why we're clapping now in Saskatchewan versus what was the case before. Net in-migration now 21,731; net out-migration when he was the deputy premier, 32,749. School enrolment increase on this side, first time in 17 years. It decreased every single year he was in Executive Council, Mr. Chairman.

The reason they're applauding across the province and on this side of the House is that we've set our job creation record in the midst of a recession, Mr. Chairman. The Conference Board of Canada says today again we'll be a leader in economic growth across the country. Almost every forecaster is saying the same thing. We led the country in building permits last year. That's why this side and the people of the province are applauding.

Mr. Chairman, we led in manufactured goods sold, Mr. Speaker. That's why this side of the House and the people of the province are cheering. We have the fastest growth rate in terms of weekly average earnings, Mr. Chairman. That's why this side is clapping. And the people of the province never want to go back to when members opposite oversaw the decline of what should have always been a leading province in the Dominion of Canada, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, when we came to office, there was \$6.8 billion in debt, general debt in the province. There was about 1.2 billion cash in the bank account. Today there is . . . Well there's going to be news on this shortly. The number is probably going to move up after the year is closed, but the minimum \$700 million cash in the account and the General Revenue Fund debt of the province is about 4.2.

The reason for that, Mr. Chairman, is that this government, because we were listening to Saskatchewan people, paid \$2.6 billion of debt off of the books of the province. Now that member asked the question based on how can we talk about a plan for a debt-free province? Well in terms of the first two years, a reduction in General Revenue Fund debt of 38 per cent is a pretty good start, Mr. Chairman, and more work to come.

I would also say this, the member opposite likes to use summary financial numbers. These are the numbers he likes to use. Let's have a look at the summary debt of the province of Saskatchewan in the last year of that government. The summary financial debt in the last year when members opposite sat at the Executive Council, the number, \$11.4 billion, Mr. Chairman. The number today after just two years of this party in government, \$9.2 billion, Mr. Chairman. So it's amazing. The member asks us well why do you put up those billboards that say you've reduced the debt by 38 per cent? Because we have reduced the debt by 38 per cent, Mr. Chairman. That's why that's well-received by the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Well they're asking again, why? They've asked again, why? So let's go over it again. The former minister of Health from North Battleford is heckling. He sat at the cabinet table and presided over the following summary financial debt for Saskatchewan — \$11.4 billion. He's now heckling at a government who's reduced that debt to \$9.2 billion, Mr. Chairman. That's the fact of the matter. These are the facts of the matter.

Mr. Chairman, part of the reason that we can talk about

continually reducing the debt is because we've already said that's a priority of the government. The member says where's the plan for debt reduction? Where is the plan? I'll tell the member. While he was still in Calgary, the very first Act of this government was *The Growth and Financial Security Act* that prescribes what, Mr. Chair? That prescribes that more than half of any unbudgeted surplus automatically goes to debt reduction. That's why the debt's already down by over \$2 billion.

There's going to be unbudgeted surpluses in the future, I believe, I believe, Mr. Chairman, because the economy continues to move forward because of the economic momentum, credit the people of the province and the economy of the province. We are going to continue to reduce debt over the objections and the heckling of members opposite, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: — I recognize the Government House Leader. Go ahead with your point of order.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Committee Chairman, members opposite, while the Premier was speaking, were utilizing unparliamentary language in this House, particularly the Opposition House Leader, the member from Regina Walsh Acres, the member from P.A. Northcote, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that you ask them to apologize and withdraw those remarks.

The Chair: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request that you check the official record and make your determination from the record, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. As I mentioned before, the level of heckling was starting to get out of hand and it makes it very hard for me to hear. I would ask that members would refrain from heckling and be respectful to one another. If some member in the heat of debate, if some member in the heat of debate going across the floor yelled something that could be viewed as unparliamentary, I would now give that member an opportunity to stand and apologize.

With that, I guess since I couldn't hear because of the heckling, I will control that if I have to. I will ask members not to exchange in verbal talking across the floor and just to recognize and respect the people that have the floor. I recognize the Official Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to just go back to page 62 of the budget document, budget summary where it indicates very clearly that between 2009 and 2014 the total debt of the province will go from 7.7 billion to 11.9 billion. And I just want to compare that with what was said in Toronto, that we were in a program to become debt free, and how this page in your budget document showing a drastic increase in debt matches the

words you said in Toronto.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, well first of all I think I was in Saskatchewan. I was doing an interview with somebody who came from Toronto because, you know what, the national media, the international media have been coming to the province increasingly. Not because of the Government of Saskatchewan, but because of the amazing success story of our economy. The same economy that the member opposite said was in a free fall. Even when he was saying those nonsensical things in this Legislative Assembly that bore no resemblance to fact, that frankly were irresponsible in terms of what we all want for the province — future economic growth.

While he was saying those things, the world wanted to know about the Saskatchewan story. Part of that Saskatchewan story is debt reduction. Part of the story for the province of Saskatchewan is the payment of \$2.6 billion in debt for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well he says, we left you that, the NDP left you that. Then why didn't they pay off the debt, Mr. Chairman? Why didn't they pay off some debt? Do you know why, Mr. Chairman? Because they wanted to try to buy votes in the election with that pharmaceutical program that was roundly rejected, because they wanted, Mr. Chairman, a slush fund.

Do you know what we did with the resources of the province of Saskatchewan? We paid off \$2.6 billion in debt. That's why we can make the comment to *The Globe and Mail* or anywhere . . .

The Chair: — I would ask the member from Regina Walsh Acres not to be yelling from the back. I'd recognize the Premier, who has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — And, Mr. Chairman, the reason we can talk to *The Globe and Mail* about a long-term debt reduction plan is that it's written into the legislation of the government, the first Act that we passed, prescribed in law, debt reduction with half of any unbudgeted surplus to the province. We actually exceeded that requirement in our first two years. That's how we got to \$2.6 billion.

Mr. Chairman, I would say this: that the forecast summary financial statement of debt, including the Crowns, in the NDP's last budget, 2007-2008, was \$11.4 billion, Mr. Chairman. That was the forecast summary of financial debt under the NDP, Crowns and executive government — \$11.4 billion. That's what they left behind. Today the province of Saskatchewan summary financial debt, including the Crowns, \$9.2 billion.

[15:15]

We have a record of paying down debt. We're going to continue to pay down debt because of the strength of the economy, because of the business women and men of this province who continue to lead the country in almost every single category. It's prescribed in our legislation. It is the vision of this government that we would continue to exceed the national average in population growth and that we would systematically reduce the \$11.4 billion in debt we inherited from the NDP.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, it's obvious that the Premier will not deal with his own budget document that shows the debt increasing, and increasing significantly, over the next five years. So we'll leave that. He won't respond to the facts because he is too busy spinning a story. And what's amazing is that his backbenchers and cabinet ministers all cheer when he's giving out information that is less than accurate as it would relate to his own budget document. He will not go to page 62 that showed the debt going from 7.7 billion to 11.9 billion. That's his document; that's the Premier's document, but he won't deal with that.

My question to the Premier is: on oil production, since the Premier came to office, can he indicate, based on barrels per oil a day, what has happened to the production level of oil in the province of Saskatchewan, '07 to '09? Can you give us the average daily production of crude oil?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member was I think an executive, some say an executive, at an oil company. So he will know the context for all of these questions has a lot to do with price. I'm sure he will know that. The price for West Texas when it's \$120, West Texas activity drilling is going to be higher than it is if it's at \$50 West Texas.

Well the member for P.A. Northcote, who's already been named by the Opposition Leader as the Energy minister, has just offered a pearl of wisdom that to say, to say that the price of oil dictates how much oil is drilled, that that's spin, Mr. Chairman, that's political spin. That's why the people at that Husky announcement in the oil industry didn't recognize him, Mr. Chairman. And if they did recognize him and know what that member was going to make him if they ever won government, they'd be very afraid, Mr. Chairman. It's interesting how supply and demand, how supply and demand and microeconomics become spin with the member for P.A. Northcote.

Mr. Chairman, notwithstanding the change in price, notwithstanding the change in price, in terms of barrels production we have: 2,007, 156.2 million barrels up to 161.0 million barrels in our first year in government of 2008. Down again, down again to 151 million barrels but, Mr. Chairman, not significantly down. When you consider the differential in price, you'd see that the barrels production even in '09, and these are still estimates, is only down 5 million barrels from 2007. But we went up in our first year to 161. The production of oil in Saskatchewan went up to 161 million barrels, Mr. Chairman.

I'll tell you the biggest threat to the ongoing health of the oil and gas sector, Mr. Chairman, and it's been well noted, including in the editorial pages of *The StarPhoenix* by a columnist at that particular paper. And I'm going to quote, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to quote from his, from his recap of the member opposite's energy policy that he has offered to the people of the province. And I'm quoting:

Lingenfelter's declared yearning for a provincial Crown oil company will help put to rest suggestions that he's a freebooting capitalist who would turn the NDP sharply to the right. Now he looks more like one of [those] . . . New

Democrats who nationalized . . . scared off investment for decades to come.

Mr. Chairman, the editorial goes on to characterize the member's energy policy as "crazy talk." I think we'll stick with what we have, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, what's crazy talk is the member opposite going to talk to the *Toronto Globe and Mail* and talking about having the province debt free when his budget documents, when his budget documents say that the debt is increasing. That's crazy talk. What's crazy talk is the Premier of this province talking about keeping chiropractic services insured and then cancelling them. That's crazy talk.

And what's interesting, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that oil production in the province has actually decreased, has actually decreased since he became Premier. Now he hasn't said that to anyone.

The Premier goes to Toronto and he travels to Calgary and he says, do you know what? We're going to overtake Alberta, going to overtake Alberta. Well I have a chart here that it's not quite there yet. We're producing this year in '09, last year, 423 million barrels of oil a day. That's down, that's down 4,000 barrels a day from 2007 under the Calvert government — it's down 4,000 barrels a day. And yet if you listen to the Premier spin, you would think that oil production has increased dramatically in the province. And the fact of the matter is it's gone down.

Now I don't know how many members opposite know that or whether you just blindly follow the Premier. And when he says oil production is up, it's actually down by 4,000 barrels a day from the day he took office. By the end of '09 — the Minister of Energy will know this — the oil production has actually dropped. And that has nothing to do with who's in government; it's got to do with the fact that oil production has gone down.

Now the member can say that all the oil companies would move here after the defeat of the NDP government, but the fact of the matter is, oil well drilling in the province has gone down, gas well drilling has gone down, production has gone down. It's gone down in this province while in Alberta it's actually increased. Oil production in Alberta, in that same period of time, has gone up.

Now he can talk about conventional oil and pick and choose, but the fact of the matter is, oil production overall in Alberta has actually increased in that two-year period when you include conventional and oil sands and oil . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, well why wouldn't you include all the oil? Most people do.

The Premier will want to exclude; he will want to exclude. But the fact of the matter is, and the Premier should know this, and he laughs like a . . . well I won't say what he laughs like, from his seat. But the fact of the matter is oil production is decreasing in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now on conventional oil, he's correct that it's decreasing faster in Alberta. Conventional oil is going down in both provinces. You're like the guy in a race who's running backwards slower than the other person. That's how you're gaining and that's how you're winning. You're like a kid. And the reason the books aren't balanced in this province is because you don't know how to read a balance sheet. That's the problem, my friend.

And whether it's the Country Music Hall of Fame, which you didn't do a very good job on reading the balance sheet, or whether it's Last Stand Adventure, which I understand didn't go bankrupt . . . You just wound it down and it just went broke, just went broke. Because most people, when you have a going concern, you don't just wind it down. If you have a Kentucky Fried Chicken place and it's making money, you sell it. You don't wind it down.

Or if you have an oil company that's producing 1,000 barrels . . . [inaudible interjections] . . . Well you have a Minister of Finance who knows a lot about, and he should be proud of it, because he ran a business. But you don't just wind it down. You sell it. Now the reason the Premier didn't sell the Last Stand Adventure company and wound it down is because there was nothing to sell. It had gone broke. And he quibbles over whether we use the word bankruptcy or broke. And I'll give him this: we should have said he had one company that went bankrupt and one that went broke. I'll give him that. He's accurate on that.

But when it comes to running a \$10 billion budget, we should know whether oil production is going up or down — and it's going down. And I'd ask the Premier if in the year that we're comparing, '07 to '09, can he give me the gas production? Did gas production between '07 and '09 go up or down under your management?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, I know the member will understand. I know the member will understand. Sometimes a person gets elected to public office and you have to wind down the thing you were doing, especially if you were intricately involved in the business. Maybe you have to have an auction of your farm because you can't do everything you used to do on the farm so you've got to wind down that part.

Mr. Chairman, sometimes what's worse, Mr. Chairman, what's worse is that if you used other people's money, like the taxpayers' money, and you say you get engaged in a potato business or some sort of gas arbitrage nonsense — one was SPUDCO, one was Channel Lake — what was that, Mr. Chairman? Was that a wind-down or did that member just go broke on behalf of taxpayers in this province? I wonder which one it is, Mr. Chairman.

We can talk about . . . I'd be happy to talk about either of those, be happy to talk about his decision, which I respect. Obviously that member does not have the time to be engaged on his farm like he used to be so he's winding down. He had an auction, Mr. Chairman. That's what happens sometimes. You get elected, sometimes you have other duties, and you can't do all the things that you did, Mr. Chairman.

Now it's interesting that the member said, the member was comparing Alberta to Saskatchewan. He was comparing both conventional and non-conventional oil assets. Mr. Chairman, when we talk about in the future potentially overtaking Alberta, we're not . . . We're talking about conventional oil. And unlike the member, we're not talking about offshore oil or olive oil or palm oil, we're talking about conventional oils, assets in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman, I would also say that in direct answer to the member's question — and this is an incredible line of question — let's consider what's happened to price, price per gigajoule of gas, price for West Texas Intermediate dropping like it has never dropped before in the face of a world recession. The likely impact of that is going to be a reduction in the wells drilled. That's what happened in Alberta.

That's what happened in Alberta. And get the Alberta number for natural gas, Mr. Chairman: 2007, 10,679 was the number. In 2007 in Alberta, it dropped to 4,184. Well why would that be, Mr. Chairman? Why would that be? Would it have anything to do with the fact that the price for natural gas dropped by more than 100 per cent in some cases, Mr. Chairman, from over the high levels of double digits per gigajoule to 4 and \$5 a GJ [gigajoule], Mr. Chairman? Would that have an impact on the number of oil, of gas wells drilled?

It did have an impact in Saskatchewan, to be sure. Mr. Chairman, natural gas is important to industry to the province. It's not as important as oil but it's very, very important. And production indeed dropped in 2008 and in 2009. Mr. Chairman, that's the record. And the record is the price for natural gas fell, so activity across the world in terms of drilling for natural gas fell.

I think the hon. member is going to want to stand in his place and support some initiatives coming forward from our government that will apply some innovation with respect to royalties on the gas side. We know the potential of shale gas. We've seen it right across North America. We know we are blessed in this province, as we are with so many other resources, with the shale gas resource. We need to make sure our royalties are right. The royalties we inherited from the NDP government may need some tweaking to see some increased investment in this sector.

And I know that would be a substantive debate to engage in. Rather than start up our own government-owned oil and gas company, like a SPUDCO, like a Channel Lake, I'd be interested in hearing the member, the Opposition Leader's ideas for natural gas royalties. He does come from the energy sector. He may have some ideas, Mr. Chairman. We're currently working on some innovation. If he wants to add to that, this is a great forum and I invite him to do that, Mr. Chairman.

[15:30]

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chairman, I know that the public are interested in the fact that the Premier has finally today said oil production is down from when he came to

office. Natural gas production is down. Oil wells drilled are down. Natural gas wells drilled are down. Land sales are down.

And finally, after all his spin, he is admitting that the economy of Saskatchewan in '09 contracted by 6 per cent. Oil wells being drilled are less, gas wells less. And finally today, if you take away all the spin that he's doing on the surface, underneath he admitted some interesting things today — that oil production is down, gas production is down. Wells drilled are down. Potash production is down, and the economy of Saskatchewan has contracted by 6 per cent last year. Now after all the bravado and getting red and yelling, this is the . . . Mr. Chairman, we find that this is what we determined today.

Mr. Premier, I want to turn to the issue of *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* that's being debated hotly across the province. And we have many letters from former members of the Department of Agriculture and Environment who say that the idea to sell this land certainly didn't come from the department. And the minister will I think say it didn't come from her personally. But if it doesn't come from the department and it doesn't come from the minister's office, who in the world decided or instructed the department to prepare the legislation that would sell off 3.5 million acres of sensitive habitat land in this province without consultation with the public at large?

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. Just with respect to the member's preamble, let's be very clear on conventional oil production. When he was last in the cabinet of this province, the difference in terms of conventional oil production between Saskatchewan and Alberta was that they held a 121 million barrel lead on the province of Saskatchewan . . . [inaudible interjection] . . .

Well the hon. member wants to talk about when Mr. Calvert was the premier. The lead had narrowed to 35 million barrels, and now the lead for Alberta is down to 12 million barrels, Mr. Chairman. That's why we say, that's why we say we are . . . We believe, we have faith in the industry. We have hope in the resources of the province. We have a commitment to the industry to continue to make sure we avoid crazy talk like the member opposite when he wants to nationalize the oil sector. And with those things, we do believe we will catch Alberta as the number one producer of conventional oil.

Member after member has decried that. The gentleman that the hon. member says will be his Energy minister said, that's crazy. Even though the gap has narrowed in 10 years from 120 million barrels to 12, only 12 million barrels difference between Alberta and Saskatchewan, they kind of, they've been mocking this fact over on the other side of the House.

Do you know why, Mr. Deputy Chair? I'll tell you this. That is not well-received by industry. Because never mind what the government has to say, but you know the women and men that are involved in the oil and gas sector in my hometown, many of my constituents — the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy, the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford, the member for Lloydminster, the member for Estevan, increasingly more and more members around the province, the member for Rosetown-Elrose — they represent families who are building

the energy sector like it has never been built in the history of the province.

And, you know, Mr. Chairman, you don't have to . . . Obviously the member opposite doesn't want to take my word for it. He can check with RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] and their senior economists. He can check with CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce] and their senior economists about what's going to happen with respect to the resource sector in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, the member asks a question about who decided the . . . who made the decision with respect to the WHPA [*The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*] legislation currently before the House. Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, it followed the normal course. Cabinet makes a decision and the minister begins to draft the legislation. The minister reaches out, as she did in June, with letters to groups to comment on it. Mr. Chairman, that consultation has continued and we know that a number of groups are very strongly in favour of this.

Mr. Chairman, I had a chance to talk to some landowners just last night who have for 50 years been very, very able stewards of their land. They have only ever been able to lease it. They are happy to have the chance to purchase it. And they are happy to actually accept the easement, the conservation protection that will come from this legislation.

And, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, you know here is the NDP in action with a bit of sleight of hand. The member used the number I think of 3 million acres, intimating, implying that those 3 million acres, three and a half million acres will lose protection.

Mr. Deputy Chair, through the conservation easements that will in many cases make conservation a higher priority, increase penalties for violations, over 90 per cent of that 3.5 million acres will be protected, will benefit from stronger protection, Mr. Chairman.

The minister continues to consult with groups including last week, and I think that consultation's going to continue into the future. Mr. Deputy Chair, and we will have struck a balance between the desire on the part of these producers to be able to own this land — producers who have a great track record as conservationists themselves — and also the balance between the environmental priorities of our government and of the province, and that is the preservation of our wildlife habitat in the province, as it has been preserved by leaseholders in the past and now by landowners into the future with the government easements providing protection as well.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I have a letter here that was addressed to the Minister of the Environment on the proposed changes to the critical wildlife habitat protection Act. And this individual's name is George O'Bertos who's an agrologist who was involved in the establishment in bringing land in to be protected. And I want to read part of the letter. It says:

I was the land resource management specialist at the Department of Agriculture lands branch at the time these lands were being determined for designation under this Act. Because of my expertise in the field, I was chosen to work directly with the provincial wildlife biologist in determining which lands were designated as wildlife habitat protection Act lands.

My area of responsibility was mainly in the parklands and northern grain belt of Saskatchewan where many of these lands are located. My submission to you is therefore based on that study.

In the letter he goes on, Mr. Chairman, to describe how much of this land is not exactly suitable for farming and he says:

Your ministry must surely be aware the value of preserving natural habitat and wetlands, and how the loss of these is extremely detrimental to our environment. For the sake of citizens of our great province and for future generations, we're asking you to rethink your position on this issue.

In light of the fact of the hundreds of calls and hundreds of emails and letters that we're receiving, and I'm sure other members are getting these kind of calls on both sides of the issues — some supporting, but I would argue, at least in my office, many, many more opposed — that we take a breather on this Bill, that we withdraw it for the coming 12 months. And if we hold public hearings and the people who own the land — that is the million citizens in the province who presently own the land — are consulted and it comes back that there is general will to sell this land that the public now owns, that we would come back and have a debate here in the House.

But the fact of the matter is that nobody who has sent us letters or emails have said, we've been consulted. And quite honestly, everyone who has called us has said, nobody asked us. It's our land. We own it and nobody asked us if we wanted to sell it. And I know the Minister of Energy heckled across and said, but the ranchers want the land. And I don't dispute that, that the people renting it would like to have an opportunity to buy it. But before you sell property, you should ask the owners if they're in agreement.

SaskPower's another example of that. Where you have . . . SaskPower is owned by the million citizens of the province, and it might be that Northland Power wants SaskPower, but that's not a good reason to sell it. There may be arguments to sell property that's owned by the people of the province, the 3.5 million acres of land. I don't know what it's worth, but I would expect it's around — the member from Cypress would know — around 2 or \$300 an acre. And you know, a piece of grassland, a quarter section, probably 40 or 50,000 a quarter. And if my math is right that 3.5 million acres is worth something in the area of a billion dollars.

Now the question is, the public of Saskatchewan, if they want that billion acres of highly sensitive habitat land privatized and sold to individuals, and they may, but the problem is that nobody's asked the owner whether they want to sell. And I know members in the backbenches may for philosophical reasons want to get rid of that land, and that's fair comment.

But the fact of the matter is, before you sell the land, you should ask the owner. And it doesn't belong to the members opposite or to the members on this side. It doesn't belong to Ducks Unlimited or to the ranchers. It belongs to a million people, million extra people who own that land. And what should happen is there should be town hall meetings, discussions where people have an opinion and can come forward and express it. And my question to the Premier is whether or not, even at this late date, we can take a breather, pull the Bill. And if consultation takes place and there's general agreement we should sell the land, that it could be reintroduced in the next session of the legislature.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, when that member was in cabinet in 1996 and his government made the decision to sell 11 636 hectares or 25,600 acres with no conservation easements — none — not one conservation easement . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member from Regina Rosemont says, pretty rich. That's the fact of the matter.

Now he wasn't involved in that government at the time, but that's what his government did. Not a conservation easement on one of those acres. And there was land, in terms of wildlife habitat protection, at stake. And the minister responsible was Lorne Scott, was Lorne Scott. That was the member responsible, the minister. In fact he made the announcement. They passed amendments to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. Now were there town hall meetings? Were there town hall meetings? Were there town hall meetings? Mr. Deputy Chair, there was not.

That is not to say there should not be consultation. And if for any reason, if for reasons the groups involved feel the . . . many environmental groups who have, certainly who are properly motivated, have all the right motivations, if they need clarification, if they need changes made to this legislation that gives them a greater assurance of our determination to protect this habitat, to provide that protection, then they should have it. Absolutely. That's what the member's been working on. That's what the Minister of the Environment has been working on with these groups.

The Minister of the Environment has been . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . well, the honourable members say, two meetings. I can tell you this, Mr. Deputy Chair. There are some specific requests that have been made by these groups with respect to the legislation and my understanding is the minister is accepting those recommendations, Mr. Deputy Chair.

The desire on the part of the government of Saskatchewan is to allow for greater ownership of the people who have been stewards of this land for decades while protecting the environment, while protecting the environment. Ninety per cent plus of the acreage that we're talking about, unlike what the members opposite did in 1996, has conservation easement or is protected in a number of other ways in terms of the habitat of the land itself. That's the fact of the matter, Mr. Deputy Chair.

I had a chance on the weekend to be at music festival in Swift Current. There was a gentleman there whose father had began leasing land on a small holding, a small farm and ranch they

have north of Swift Current, quite small. And he made the point to me that they never broke that land. They're very, very serious about habitat protection. They always have been. Currently that land is in the middle of parcels that are deeded and they're grateful for the chance to consider, at least, buying the land. Their resolve to take care of the land won't change. In fact, Mr. Deputy Chair, you know, it's a fact in our province that when ownership happens, you're actually sometimes better motivated to keep care of that property.

The member for Moose Jaw Wakamow is chirping from her chair about slamming it through. In 1996 she should have phoned up somebody in her government and asked them why you're selling all of this acreage without an easement, without any protection at all. People would have, would describe that in a certain way, Mr. Deputy Chair — having one position when you were the government and then another position when you're in opposition.

The bottom line is the groups have some serious concerns. The minister's been working on those concerns. We want to strike the balance between habitat protection and allowing for private ownership of those who wish to purchase it.

[15:45]

And, Mr. Deputy Chair, it is true that this side of the House believes in our producers. We do believe in our ranchers. We believe in their track record of maintaining their own environment and their own habitat. We note, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, the Saskatchewan Environmental Stewardship awards that have been won in so many cases by ranches in Dinsmore, Meadow Lake, Stockholm, in Maple Creek, in Radville, in Beechy, in Lisieux, in Radville and Bethune, Cabri, Maple Creek, Glaslyn, Hallonquist, in Cypress Hills, Mr. Deputy Chair. These are families who have cared about their environment for a very long time and, more than cared about it, they have acted on it.

And we know, Mr. Deputy Chair, we will add actually to their diligence with our own protection, our own conservation easements that are actually — I would characterize them as — stronger than was previously available under the NDP. And we will strike the balance between land ownership, for a relatively small percentage of the acreage, and the environment of the province of Saskatchewan.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, my question had been to the Premier whether he would undertake to put a pause and hold the Bill off until this time next year. And after the consultation, the town hall meetings, that we would take the opportunity to move the Bill at that time if it was generally accepted by the public. But the Premier, maybe, when he rises can respond to that.

The fact of the matter is is that many, many people who were involved in 1996 know that there was no net loss of habitat land; that for every acre that was sold, another acre was brought back in. And the Premier knows that, and I would just ask that he would understand that there was no net loss.

And Lorne Scott, if he were here — a former MLA and somebody who worked in that area and is presently, I think, meeting from time to time with the minister, trying to bring a resolve to this issue — would be the one who would stand up and say there was no net loss in 1996, that land was exchanged.

And in many cases, less sensitive land was sold and more sensitive land was brought in under protection and net . . . When you talk to the biologists — the member from Regina South who will not understand this but — the fact of the matter is that we were ahead of the game in protecting land after the arrangement in '96 than we were before we sold land. And so if the Premier's going to talk about the '96 exchange, he should tell the whole story because it's an important message to give.

The fact of the matter is is that we have a number of letters and I just want to quote from a few. This letter is from Frances Hilderman from Regina, because it's not only rural people who are interested in this issue. Many people who live in Shaunavon or live in Regina are also interested in this issue. But Frances says:

As an urban dwelling Saskatchewanian, I hold the government-owned parcels of land very dear to my heart and critical to our wildlife. In addition, the rest of the province is privately owned and therefore unavailable for the enjoyment of the province.

They go on to say:

I've written a previous letter on the issue several months ago and was assured that no lands were being considered for sale.

So not only wasn't there consultation, the letters that were written by the Premier's government got responses from his government that said no land would be sold. And that is far from consultation. These are serious matters. And not only are we saying this, but members of the media are saying it, members of families across the province.

Here's another letter. It's an Anne Smith from Martensville who says:

This is a very important issue and it affects all residents, not those just from the concerned groups that will profit from this coveted deal. This is a very serious important issue, and I think that you would find that most residents believe that as well. How on earth did it get to second reading without the coverage that it should have?

And the letters . . . and I'll quote some of them into the record briefly because I think they're important to get on the record. But my question again to the Premier is: in light of the fact of many people arguing against the sale of 3.5 million acres that belonged to all the people of the province, the residents who live here now — but many of the letters indicate not only the group who live here now but the grandchildren and children who will come later and will want to have this land protected — that what gives us the right, without consultation, to allow for the sale of this 3.5 million acres?

I might add too, that as we go forward from the 1990s to 2000,

now in 2010, that protecting wildlife habitat is a much bigger issue than it was 20 years ago. And the Premier will know that, that whether you're in the Amazon and protecting forests or in the boreal forest in northern Canada, that actually protecting wildlife habitat is a bigger issue now than it was five years ago, 10 years ago, or 15 years ago when the exchanges that took place then even recognized that if you were going to sell some land, you replace it with other more sensitive land.

Can the Premier explain, first of all, why he wouldn't pull the Bill and do proper consultation? And what is the rush to do this? This land has been in this position for a long time. And what would it matter, 12 months to go out, consult, talk to people, and bring back a report? And if the overwhelming pressure is to sell the land, and we could prove that, we would be able to discuss it in a proper manner, fully consulted with the people of the province.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. You know, last week in this Assembly there was a considerable amount of debate about accurate information coming before the Assembly — as there rightly should have been. And there was some degree of concern on both sides, and a lot coming from members opposite.

The Hon. Leader of the Opposition just has stood up and said in reference to 1996 — he was a member of the cabinet and he will have the information — that in reference to 1996, there was a net increase in the lands added to protection by his . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well that is what he said, and we could check the record. No net loss, that's what he said, sorry . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, well I'm going . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . That there was no net loss. And he just said it from his seat again.

A big debate in this House, as there should have been, about standing on your feet and getting your facts right. Whether it's wilful or not wilful, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, the record, the record of history for 1996 is 25,600 — as I've said already — acres of WHPA land sold without any easement; 3,600 added back by the government in that year. That's the fact.

No net loss in . . . Now I hope he's going to take an opportunity to stand in his place and apologize to the House, and apologize to the House for what is not accurate information, because we've seen it time and time again in hyperbole in debate where that member just gets up and says something, including three and a half million acres being sold without habitat protection, including no net loss, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. There was a net loss to the habitat lands under that government in 1996 and, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, there was no conservation easements provided to the land.

Here's the other intimation, at least, that we hear from members opposite about this: that somehow if there is a change in terms of ownership of this land, even with stronger conservation easements provided by the government to protect the habitat for the future generations that he's talked about, that somehow there is less access to the land by the public. And I've got letters too, and I understand where they're coming from, letters from

people in our cities that are saying, well if you make this change, I won't be able to hike in the Qu'Appelle Valley if it's a parcel affected. I won't be able to enjoy the environment, to enjoy the habitat that's there. Mr. Deputy Chair, that's not helpful to the debate because it's not true.

Today leaseholders can post land. Today leaseholders who have paid their rent to the Government of Saskatchewan, to the people of the province, they can prevent hunting on their land. They can control access to their land. That happens today. It's always been the case in the province. Many of them of course choose not to do that, thank goodness. Many choose . . . And I don't fault the ones that do. They have good reasons to. But many have open access to their land for hunting. Many, it's on a permission basis for hiking.

You name the activity, Mr. Deputy Chair; none of that changes. And for members opposite to be trying to foment this concern and this fear that you can't access the habitat lands of the province if we make this change is nonsense, Mr. Deputy Chair. And it doesn't, frankly, help the debate at all.

I will repeat again, Mr. Deputy Chair, that consultation letters were sent out to stakeholders by the government in June. We invited their input, Mr. Deputy Chair. We understand that now the minister's been meeting with groups again, those same groups.

There's a number of very specific changes that we've offered to make. I'll go over those. I think it improves the measure, to be sure, Mr. Deputy Chair. It says that we're prepared to look at devoting a portion of the revenue from WHPA land sales to the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund. That's a good suggestion.

It says that we'd be willing to establish a Crown land conservation steering committee that could be made up of conservation and producer stakeholder groups together. So you'd have groups like the stockholders and Ducks Unlimited or the Nature Conservancy . . . [inaudible] . . . these very excellent environment groups together with some very excellent producers groups to provide a steering committee on conservation.

They asked that we would endeavour to apply the Crown land ecological assessment tool to all Crown lands in the province. I think that's also a reasonable request. The minister's looking at that request.

They've asked that we potentially protect under WHPA other unoccupied agricultural Crown land where CLEAT [Crown land ecological assessment tool] shows it to be either of high or moderate ecological value and, Mr. Deputy Chair, that's also a good suggestion. That's also a good suggestion.

The intent here is to protect the habitat of the province of Saskatchewan while affording ranchers and families, who have been stewards of that land for generations, for decades, to own, to own that land, Mr. Deputy Chair, and we're going to do it with a comparatively small parcel of land. We're going to apply the conservation easements to that land.

Mr. Deputy Chair, we understand that not everybody would in agreement with that. But, Mr. Deputy Chair, when you consider

the consultation offer back to last June, what's happening today, and what's actually in the fact of the matter — what's actually in the measure and not what's being referred to in a rhetorical way by members opposite, Mr. Deputy Chair — I think that the balance has been achieved. Now, because if we move towards this conservation committee, we can evaluate this going forward, Mr. Deputy Chair. And we would be happy to do that.

We would be happy to work with conservation groups and with producer groups to, on an ongoing basis, evaluate how this is working, how habitat is being protected . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member for P.A. Northcote's yipping from his chair again. It's a request that's been made by the groups, by the environmental groups, for this steering committee. And so, Mr. Deputy Chair, we may invite him on the committee because he has the answers to everything.

And, Mr. Deputy Chair, we think we've struck the right balance. We want to be vigilant about it, and we will be in the future, Mr. Deputy Chair.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The Premier I'm sure didn't intend to give information that wasn't accurate. But he will know that in 1996, the then minister of Environment who is sitting here kept track . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, but he was in cabinet. He was in cabinet. And Lorne Scott, Lorne Scott was the minister of Environment, that as the land was sold, every week we got reports on land coming back in. And at the end of the period, not in one year, but at the end of the period, the land was net the same. The same amount was sold as brought in.

And while I'm on my feet I would ask the Premier to table the document that he's referring to because he's giving information that isn't accurate. He's giving information again that isn't accurate to the Assembly. And we saw this last week where we had a motion of privilege where information given to the House was not accurate. So I would like the document the Premier's referring to tabled so we can see what it is he's referring to.

But I want to be clear. That in 1996, in that period when land was being sold, that it was being exchanged and other land was being brought in. And net amount remained the same. And it happened over a period of time. Not over one year . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well yes, because the land was sold over a period. Well the Premier shows how naive, how naive he is about the way this process will work. The land he's selling now. The land he's selling now . . .

[16:00]

[Interjections]

The Deputy Chair: — Order. Order. Order. I'm listening to this committee in stereo. I hear one voice over here, and I hear a number of voices over here. It's happened the other way around I might add. And we need to get this work done in a calm and more considerate manner.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The member will know that if this Bill passes, the 3.5 million acres will not be sold in 2010. Surely

he's not that naive. And surely he would know that in 1996, the arrangement made, the land wasn't sold and brought in in 1996. It happened over a period of time.

So if the briefing note that he's been given by his Minister of Environment is inaccurate and she's that naive that she's trying to say that in 1996 the land was, because the legislation was passed, all the land was sold at one time, it only speaks to the lack of knowledge about how this is going to work. The fact of the matter is if we pass this Bill, the 3.5 million acres won't be sold in 2010. It will be sold over a period of time. And that's what happened in 1996.

And my statement stands, and the Premier is absolutely wrong in that it was net. The land was net. What was sold, other land was brought back in in the deal that was made in 1996. The same as his deal made in 2010 — the transaction won't occur in 2010. Surely he knows that. Surely he knows that.

Well maybe that's why his two companies went bankrupt. Maybe that's why his two companies went bankrupt is because if he's that naive, if he's that naive that he doesn't understand how the sale of the land, after he passes this Bill, will not happen in 2010, then really we should be pulling the Bill. Then really we should be pulling it because it speaks to the inability of the Premier to understand the complication of selling off 3.5 million acres of sensitive habitat land.

And the Premier laughs from his seat. He thinks it's a joke. He thinks that privatizing this land is a humorous event. The fact of the matter is it's very serious, and that's why we're getting hundreds of letters and emails. And my question to the Premier again for the third time is: will he consider pulling the Bill so we can take the next 12 months to consult with the public?

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Chair, what we've just seen from the member opposite was forecast quite presciently by a columnist who covered politics, actually in 1996, the year that's apparently in dispute. And I'm quoting from this particular column, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well no, the member, well the members say they didn't want to talk about 1996.

The member raised 1996. He made some emphatic statements about it and now he's saying, well no, I didn't mean 1996; I meant for some nondescript period. He doesn't even know the period. He just knows that at some point they put a bunch more acres in that may have compensated for the massive, for the massive selling of the land or the removal of WPHA lands without any conservation easement.

Here is what that columnist had to say about the tactic we just witnessed, and I'm quoting. He said:

While Lingenfelter is never completely forthright and open about anything, there's always enough of a grain of truth to make almost everything he says plausible. And on the rare occasion when our "Premier to be" is caught in the middle of some falsehood he can argue that black is white like no other.

Mr. Chairman, those aren't our words. I read for the record a column that appeared. And we just saw it actually in action, Mr. Deputy Chair. The debate is a good one to have. Certainly we've seen questions and answers in this Assembly. We've seen it on the op-ed pages of the province. We should. We've had the media asking very good questions about this to the minister and to government members and to the opposition members.

Mr. Deputy Chair, I've said very clearly letters were sent out to the stakeholders in June to get their commentary on the proposed changes that we were going to make . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the Environment critic is saying no that they weren't sent out, and we know in fact that they were.

Since then, since then when groups have come forward with very legitimate concerns, Mr. Deputy Chair, we have worked through those concerns — not resolved every one, I'm sure, for every single group. But we're now at a point, Mr. Deputy Chair, where we've indicated four specific improvements, commitments we can make to ensure the protection of this wildlife land. We will do that.

In the meantime, the stock growers support it. The Saskatchewan cattlemen support it. The cattle feeders support it. The Equine Ranchers Association support it. The elk breeders support it. Whitetail and Mule Deer Producers Association support it. Landowners and lessee rights groups support it, CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business], bison association, horse federation, the Livestock Marketers of Saskatchewan. Other groups are being worked with by the minister now to accommodate some of their reasonable concerns.

We're going to move forward with this Bill. The Bill will pass. And, Mr. Deputy Chair, it will represent an important balance between our desire for habitat protection and to give ranchers, who are great stewards of the land, the right to own the land that they've rented in some cases for decades.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I take from that that the Premier is saying to the hundreds of people who are writing, thousands and tens of thousands who are concerned, that he will not withdraw the Bill. And so we'll move on to another issue where there's as much concern or even more, and that is on the health privacy issue.

And we have had a lot of calls and a lot of people referring this issue to our caucus, asking that we pressure the government and the Premier on this issue, that the health records of the public not be released. And I would like to ask the Premier whether or not he is reconsidering the idea to release health information of individuals and he'll back away from that idea and let the public know today that this was a wrong-headed move, that he hadn't consulted broadly enough with the public, and that today he'll announce that he's withdrawing this plan.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of

Committees. The . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Chair: — Order. Order. The Premier has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, the question's a good one. It's the subject of, has been the subject of significant debate in the Assembly and so it should be debated. I want to clarify here now for all members of the Assembly and anyone watching, the hon. member used the word "health" information . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well you know, now he's clarifying that too. Remember that quote from 1996.

Mr. Deputy Chair, none of this concerns health care information for patients, for any citizen of the province of Saskatchewan. Yes, it includes name and address information, Mr. Deputy Chair, and there is a significant difference. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as this initiative moves forward, we're going to be monitoring it together with the foundations who support the initiative because they believe they'll be able to perhaps more effectively raise money which has always been important to our health care system. We'll be monitoring it with the health regions themselves.

The minister has indicated we can have a look at this in a year to see if it's having the desired effect and also to examine the other side of this issue that's been raised by members opposite and others in the province. We know that a number . . .

An Hon. Member: — And the Privacy Commissioner.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — And absolutely. The member says, and the Privacy Commissioner. Absolutely. The hon. members will know that a number of other provinces have gone down this route, I don't know for sure but likely over the objection of their respective privacy commissioners. They've gone down this route and some have experienced some success with it. At least they haven't gone back on it. They haven't overturned those original decisions.

So, Mr. Deputy Chair, we'll be monitoring this very carefully to make sure that the objectives of the government in terms of helping foundations raise money, like raise money for the children's hospital or raise money in our tertiary centres or in the regions outside of our tertiary centres, that it's actually having its desired effect and that the issue of privacy for people is paramount. We will have a look at it again in a year, Mr. Deputy Chair, but we will move forward with the initiative as it's been laid out by the government in concert with the health care regions. Remember that this is not going to happen unless a health care region has an agreement with their respective health care foundation.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, could the Premier tell me what lists have been given out, how many agreements have been signed, and whether that process is under way at this time?

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, no agreements have currently been signed.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I'm wondering why the Premier then wouldn't take this opportunity to just put this on hold and take the time necessary to talk to the public because he must know by now that there are many tens of thousands of people who don't want any of their information released, whether it's health information, names, addresses. We have not had one call or one letter saying, would you make sure that my name is released to anybody. In fact the Privacy Commissioner makes the interesting comment, and I paraphrase, when he says that it could actually lead to less money being raised because of concerns that people have by having their names out in public that they have visited a doctor or a specialist or been in a hospital.

I think, Mr. Chairman, you'll understand how sensitive that is for young people, old people, who simply don't want any reference made to their illness or the fact that they were at a doctor. Or if they have any concern when they go to see the doctor, that somehow information may be released to the public. That it actually could have negative impact on health care. And these are the concerns that the Privacy Commissioner and health care givers are worried about.

And is it really true that we're so hard up in this province for health care money that we have to go to that length to raise money, especially in light of the fact that a few moments ago the Premier was talking about how the economy is going to be growing by leaps and bounds, and the resources, and what he said in *The Globe and Mail* about all of the biblical proportion of resources we have. The words he's using is about the economy growing rapidly.

Are we really sure that giving out this information is necessary? And couldn't the Premier at this point in time, because we have no deal signed, no agreement signed, simply back away from this wrong-headed idea?

I don't know whether it came from his Minister of Health or from the people trying to raise money. I'm sure they're asking for it in good intent. But his job is to protect the public at large. And I would ask him if he would take the opportunity today to announce that he is withdrawing this idea that he has very, very little support for in the public.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. You know, I think I dealt with the member's questions in my first answer. We don't agree on this issue. We're going to move ahead with the initiative.

I want to be clear though that members of the public can opt out. And I know that's the nature of the debate — opt in versus opt out.

But I would say if the member is getting letters from people who simply don't want even their name and address shared with

anybody, that he should forward those to the Minister of Health. We can ensure regions keep a record of that, so if the region that individual lives in and does indeed execute an agreement with their foundation that they do not wish their name and address to be released — that's the principle here, people can opt out of this — and I'm sure we would want to honour that request even if it's made now. There have been no agreements signed, but we would certainly be happy to refer those names to the regions so they know to not ever include those, the names of individuals should they ever be a patient in the system, Mr. Deputy Chair.

We know that this has been something the foundations have asked for. It's apparently working in other provinces. We're going to initiate this plan here in the province, there will be a review in a year, and we'll move forward from there.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chairman, I understand that some of the fundraisers want the information — and this isn't dissimilar from some of the people who lease land want to buy the land — but the question is do the people whose information you're releasing want you to release it? That's the more important question.

In the report from the Privacy Commissioner, just on the issue is this personal health information or not, I want to quote from his report where he says, "It has been suggested that the information that would go to foundations would somehow not be 'personal health information.' This is clearly inaccurate."

[16:15]

So just for the Premier, so he knows for the future because he was again not giving accurate information when he said that it was not personal health information, he disagrees with the Privacy Commissioner. Because the Privacy Commissioner does not agree with what you've said. And let's be clear about that in the Assembly, that this information, by the definition of the Privacy Commissioner, is personal health information that we're releasing.

And I quote again, and it's on page 10 of his report, it says: "It has been suggested that the information [you can put the Premier because he just said it isn't personal information] that would go to foundations would somehow not be 'personal health information.'" The commissioner is saying to the Premier: "This is clearly inaccurate."

So you should be careful about information you bring here to make sure it's accurate because what you said a moment ago wasn't accurate. By the Privacy Commissioner definition, this is personal health information. And I'd ask the Premier to correct that statement.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, I want to be very clear. When the NDP talk about personal health care information in the context of rhetoric and political debate, it's my view — and if I'm wrong here, if I'm wrong then the member can clarify

things — it's my view they're trying to stir up some fear that people's health care affairs in the system are being disclosed, Mr. Deputy Chair, the reason why they were involved in the health care system is being disclosed.

And at every single time I can or the Minister of Health can stand on our feet and clarify the record, which I did, I said, name and address. Name and address. Name and address. Every time I will do that because I'm not sure that's what members opposite tell people when they talk to them privately or would like people to believe about this initiative.

Mr. Deputy Chair, it is not the nature of anybody's involvement in the health care system that would be disclosed. It would be their name and address. And those members of the public have the chance to opt out of it, Mr. Deputy Chair. They have that option, I would say, now. We would want to work with those members of the public who have a concern, make sure in a proactive way we ensure that if there is an agreement with their foundation, that it not, Mr. Deputy Chair, that it not include the release of their names if that's their request. We would be happy to do that now.

Mr. Deputy Chair, I wonder if members opposite would clear up rumours that we've heard for some time, that the only thing preventing the NDP from actually moving on this was the provincial election, the last provincial election in '07, including health care foundations who at least were under the impression that after the next election this change would happen, a change that had been proposed and offered by the government to the Privacy Commissioner. Yes, commented on. But the rumours at least, Mr. Deputy Chair, were that the previous government was going to move on it. The election intervened.

We're going to review this in a year, Mr. Deputy Chair, to make sure we've struck the right balance between improving fundraising abilities of the foundation and also balancing off the privacy concerns of not just the Privacy Commissioner, but obviously the citizens of the province of Saskatchewan.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The Premier refers to the issue of personal health information as fearmongering. That's a new impression to give to the Privacy Commissioner because that's what he says. And to your comments that it isn't, that it isn't personal health information, here's what he says to you. Here's what he says to the Premier by way of this letter. He says, "It has been suggested that the information that would go to foundations would somehow not be 'personal health information.' This is clearly inaccurate."

That's what he's saying about your statement that this isn't health information. It is. It's their information, not yours. And it should not be up to them to come to your office and tell you that they don't want the information given out. You shouldn't give it out, and you should change the policy.

And then the public might trust and believe what you do in the future because right now they don't. They're concerned about this. They're concerned about the sensitive wildlife habitat. They're concerned about SCN and the selling off of that asset,

and we'll go to that later because there was no consultation there either.

But my question, Mr. Premier, finally: are you saying that the Privacy Commissioner is fearmongering when he refers to personal health information being given to the foundations? Are you saying he's fearmongering?

The Deputy Chair: — Order. Order. I would remind the Leader of the Opposition to direct his questions to the Chair and through the Chair. Mr. Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, the answer, short answer is no. But when members opposite engage in the kinds of things that we've seen them engage in in this Assembly, that's quite a different matter. Mr. Deputy Chair, do I believe, do I believe that members opposite are happy if people believe that yes, it's their personal health care . . . [inaudible] . . . about their stay in the health care system or their intervention in the health care system? Do I believe that that member would just as soon have them believe that? You bet I do, Mr. Deputy Chair.

And that's because, Mr. Deputy Chair, history informs the future. And we've seen how this member has treated matters like this in the past. In the very recent past, we've seen how he treats the personal privacy, or at least his campaign would treat the personal privacy of members of the Flying Dust First Nation. We've seen his concern for their decision whether to opt in or opt out. We have seen that.

We saw it in the nomination campaign he engaged in in Regina Elphinstone when Mr. Blakeney retired. We saw how he conducted his affairs in the Shaunavon constituency when he avoided, he avoided a wipeout because he got a separatist to run and split the vote, Mr. Deputy Chair.

These are the tactics of members opposite. Our debate on this regard, although we may not agree on every issue with the Privacy Commissioner, that's the nature of government's interface with privacy commissioners across the province. Our debate is not with him, but our debate is no doubt with that member and members opposite, Mr. Chair.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, if he were being truthful about the issue that we're dealing with . . .

The Deputy Chair: — Order. I would invite the Leader of the Opposition to rephrase his opening comment.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — If the Premier was being truthful about the information that we're . . .

The Deputy Chair: — I would invite the Leader of the Opposition to avoid the use of that language and apologize for it twice.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that comment. But the Premier should talk to the Assembly, if he wants to talk about records, about the \$3 million that he took from the Progressive Conservative Party that's before the

courts. And he laughs. He laughs about the \$3 million that is now in the courts.

And the member opposite will know, we should have an amnesty for the Premier. We should have an amnesty for him. If he paid back for the booze that he took while he worked here in the Assembly. If he paid back the \$150,000 that he took for the guitar museum. If he gave the 3 million back . . .

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Official Opposition is implying something illegal, Mr. Speaker. He needs to withdraw that remark unequivocally and apologize to this House concerning the Premier.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Official Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I would like to just refer that these items have all court documents supporting them. There have been newspaper articles about the alcohol saying there should have been charges laid, Mr. Chair. These are all things that are on the public record, and of the same nature as the comments the member made a few minutes ago in his rebuttal.

The Deputy Chair: — I would suggest, I would suggest to the member that any, any further suggestion that some illegal activity happened previously would be out of order — any suggestion. I would ask the member not to challenge the . . . We're dealing with this one right now. I would suggest that it's inappropriate to offer an indication that there is illegal activity, and I would ask the member to apologize for that. Stand and apologize, and we'll monitor the conversation going forward.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I would apologize for saying that the Premier had stolen \$3 million from the Progressive Conservative fund.

The Deputy Chair: — The member has to stand, the member must . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Chair: — Order. Order. The member must stand in his place and withdraw his comment unequivocally without explanation.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would apologize and withdraw my comments. Mr. Speaker, I want to refer back to the issue of the Privacy Commissioner and words that he said in his report and to the Premier, I just quote:

Our office has heard from a number of patients who have expressed dissatisfaction with the Regulation and who have declared that they will no longer contribute to the foundation in their community.

This was in the Privacy Commissioner's report. Did the government and did you as Premier take that comment into

consideration, and will you take it into consideration before you go forward with this idea to release health information on behalf of the public of Saskatchewan?

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the official Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, I rise on a point of order.

The Deputy Chair: — State your point of order.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, in the Premier's answer to the previous question, he made reference to the item of memberships in the Meadow Lake, in Meadow Lake during the leadership, and in his remarks were derogatory towards the Leader of the Opposition. I would ask that you make the Premier stand and apologize and withdraw the remarks.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Official Opposition was named in a court case, Mr. Speaker. It was in the media, Mr. Speaker. He was named in the actual court documents. Mr. Speaker, the Premier's words were accurate.

The Deputy Chair: — I don't recall the exact context of the comments made by the Premier, but I would remind all members of the House that we must not impugn the integrity of other members. And it's been happening with a fair amount of consistency here today and it has lowered the level of debate for this important discussion. There are important policy items being considered and I think we need to pay attention and focus on the matters before the House and leave the personalities and the insinuations aside.

I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — To the member's question: the regions are going, the foundations are going to be very sensitive to this fact. Again, because privacy of the patients is a grave concern to government, we want to provide the opt out provisions and they are provided here. We would be prepared to take note of those names now to make sure they're not part of any subsequent agreement with foundations and regions. I point out again that the regions do not currently have any agreements for foundations.

[16:30]

You know, Mr. Deputy Chair, it's interesting to note that there are other governments making this change as well. The reason for this change is to better enable foundations to raise money, which we know is crucial for a properly equipped health care system. Mr. Deputy Chair, the hon. Health critic opposite just said, fund it. Well foundations have existed for a long time in this province. It existed under the previous government, and those foundations were asking for this change in the past because they felt it would help.

Mr. Deputy Chair, I point out that effective April 1, 2010, in Manitoba, in Manitoba the NDP government is going to make

very, very similar changes in that province. The NDP government in Manitoba have responded to their health care foundations the same way that we're responding, Mr. Deputy Chair. We'll review the matter.

As for my remarks, Mr. Deputy Chair, it was certainly not my intent, my intent to reference anything illegal, any illegal conduct on the part of the member. In fact, that is not what I said. That is not what I said. I was simply talking about the practices of nominations and leadership campaigns that have been a matter of debate. And, Mr. Deputy Chair, the hon. members opposite will say, you know, here's why you shouldn't believe government members based on X, Y, and Z. It strikes me that when we say, in opposition, here's why you might want to divide by two what opposition members say, and we go through a past record, that we would do that as well, Mr. Deputy Chair. That's part of the, it's part of the exchange. But let me be clear. I certainly didn't allude to any illegal conduct on the part of the Opposition Leader, only the practices he's used in different leadership campaigns and in the nomination campaigns.

[Interjections]

The Deputy Chair: — Order. I have taken a few minutes to review some of the past rulings of the Speaker. And the Speaker has indicated that as it concerns the PC [Progressive Conservative] trust fund, that this matter is before the courts and any questions related to this matter are out of order. Given that this matter is reserved therefore and still active, all questions on this matter are out of order. That's the ruling of the Speaker. If members wish to question that ruling, just say so. The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to just say through you to members of the Assembly that in talking about the Meadow Lake membership or the PC fund, we're talking about, as the Premier says, we would talk about the 3 million in the PC fund. I'm not asking questions about it. I'm making reference to character.

Because if you're talking about memberships in Meadow Lake as speaking to character, then money that is in the PC fund speaks to character of the member from Kindersley and the Premier. And so if we're going to talk about issues that speak to character, like the PC fund or distribution of alcohol to ministers while certain people worked in government, then we can . . . If it's good for the government to talk about those issues, then it's good for the opposition to talk about them.

[Interjections]

The Deputy Chair: — Order. Order. The Leader of the Opposition has made his point. Would you please move on? I just said to the Leader of the Opposition that he'd made his point. We'll move on to another subject. I recognize the Official Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Based on your own ruling a moment ago, your statements moment ago about what's before the courts, you'd be well aware that the issue of the memberships in Meadow Lake are before the courts. So for the member to make those comments, Mr. Speaker, would be

out of line. You've heard him repeatedly make those comments, Mr. Speaker. I ask once again, you ask him to apologize and withdraw the comments.

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker or Mr. Chair, I would request that officials are here to give advice, not to heckle across the floor.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

[Interjections]

The Deputy Chair: — Order. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Official Opposition started to engage one of the staff members of the Premier in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Official Opposition knows that he needs to direct the questions through the Chair to the Premier and not engage in debate with the staff that are here available.

The Deputy Chair: — I would remind all parties in the Chamber of their role respectively. Members have the right to participate; non-members have no right to participate. And I would ask that everybody be mindful of their respective roles. There's been a lot of conversation across the way, most of which I cannot define or hear. And I think that it's important for the success and the work of this committee to move on with the order of business now before us.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, the issue of the release of personal health information as referred to by the Privacy Commissioner, I just want to read part of his report in his letter from Gary Dickson, Q.C. [Queen's Counsel], the Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner. He said a new regulation that is referred to by the Premier:

. . . is similar to the 2007 iteration. There is a significant change, however, in the new Regulation in the substitution of "personal health information" . . .

He also goes on to say, "I had not seen the new Regulation until a copy was emailed to my office at my request on April 13, 2010 at 2:47 p.m. by Saskatchewan Health."

My question to the Premier is: is he still believing that proper consultation had taken place on this issue with the Privacy Commissioner before this report was given to the Assembly?

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. To the member opposite, to members opposite I would say that, and I've said this publicly in the course of media interviews, that the government was certainly very aware of the position of the Privacy Commissioner. And I'm sure the Government of Manitoba, as they've made this exact same change, is aware of their specific privacy commissioner, perhaps, on the issue, in favour or against.

Mr. Deputy Chair, I know the minister has now since said that

although we were very much aware of the position and moved forward, he has said publicly that there could have been even another specific consultation after the draft, though we knew the answer. But still, form follows function, and I think the minister quite rightly said that's something that could have been done and would do that if he had the chance to do it again.

But, Mr. Deputy Chair, it's important to remember that when . . . You know, the substance of consultation is, do you know the views of the person with whom you're consulting, the body with whom you're consulting? Do you know those and understand what that position is and why that position is held by that body — in this case, an independent officer of the legislature? And the answer is yes, Mr. Deputy Chair.

Other provinces have moved forward with this, and again I come back to the reason. We want to better enable fundraising by foundations in the province of Saskatchewan. We want to make sure folks have the chance to opt out if they do not want to be a part of providing only their name and address to this. We're going to review it in a year to find out how we're achieving that appropriate balance, Mr. Deputy Chair.

In the meantime, we know the foundations support this. It's something they've been asking for for some time. We know how important they are to providing equipment in our health care system, the very latest equipment. We know how important they are to the children's hospital, which continues to advance apace notwithstanding communications from members opposite. We know how important the foundations are in tertiary centres and right across the province. And so we are going to move forward.

But we were aware of the position of the Privacy Commissioner. We were aware of his views on the matter and made the decision. And the minister has said we could have checked one more time in terms of this specific regulation. But substantively, because of consultations between officials and the Privacy Commissioner, we were aware of his position.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, another area that we have had a lot of concern expressed about changes the government's making as a result of this budget is the changes to SCN and the shutting down or the announced shutting down.

But I understand, and maybe the Premier can clarify, that SCN has now been continued out for a period of time. Is there a process of reconsideration by the government? Is it possible on this topic, even at the late date that we're at, that in fact SCN will survive and continue to play its important role in the economy of Saskatchewan in diversifying?

We know we have wonderful resources in terms of mining and all of those areas, but what really keeps the economy going into the future, and the new economy of the next decade and the next century, are things like the film industry productions in Saskatoon and Regina, the films that are produced here, the thousands of jobs that come with it. We understand that in the past year that has diminished in part . . . There are many things that go into it that I think part of is a lack of commitment by the

Government of Saskatchewan. Other provinces like Manitoba, they're actually picking up steam and growing very rapidly.

But my question to the Premier is, can he see his way, at this point in time, to give new life to SCN, admit that a mistake was made — nothing wrong with that — but go forward with the blessing of the Minister of Finance and keep SCN in place?

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. I want to say to all members of the committee that what's happening now, the evaluation of all of the proposals that have come in was always contemplated. In fact on budget day in the press releases that went out — members will know there's the broader press release for the budget, and there's some press releases around more specific initiatives — and the government quite clearly said on budget day that we would be open to proposals with respect to the ongoing operation of the assets as a broadcaster or the assets themselves.

Mr. Deputy Chair, that proposal did unfold. There was a request for proposal, as members of the Legislative Assembly will know. We've received 12 expressions of interest from parties. Some of them are about simply the assets, interested in just the assets of the former SCN, and some of the proposals are about the ongoing operation of SCN, of the former SCN in some form. Mr. Deputy Chair, it's important to point out here that the distance education function of SCN, it will continue with the help of SaskTel.

[16:45]

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The words are important as they always are. But is the Premier referring to requests for proposal or expressions of interest? Which? Because you're using both, and I think it's pretty clear that they're different, have different legal meanings. But is the Premier, when he says requests for proposal, meaning that? Or is he referring to an expression of interest?

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, what's specifically been asked for by the government is requests for expressions of interest.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I think that's what is important for the public and for everyone to know, that these are not proposals and they are different. And well the Premier has the strange look on his face as if to say, well no they're not, but the fact of the matter is, when he asked his officials, they're pretty clear that there is a difference between an expression of interest and a proposal because a proposal obviously would be detailed with financing. And again it keeps coming back to why we get into the problems financially in this province because we don't have an understanding of balance sheets and different expressions in

business. And I'm not going to go to the issue of the Premier's former businesses, Mr. Chairman, so you don't need to worry that at this moment.

But the fact is that . . . Can the Premier tell me how many expressions of interest the government has at the present time?

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, I believe I said that in the first answer. The number is 12.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — When the questions were being asked in the Assembly at previous times, the minister has been clear that he was attempting to receive expressions of interest. And I mean, in fairness I think the minister is doing as good a job he can. And I don't believe that, as some would say, that it was his idea. I just don't think a junior minister would wake up one morning and say, well I'm going to get rid of SCN. That isn't how it happens.

I think what happens is the Premier's office and the Premier's staff outline this kind of a concept and then drive it down to the minister's office and to the department. But can the Premier, knowing that — and we all know how that works — can the Premier explain why it's a good idea at this point in time to sell or transfer the multi-million dollar federally-regulated asset? Where did the research come from, or what research did the Premier do that took him to that conclusion that, at this moment in time, transferring that asset was a good idea?

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. The decision with respect to SCN, as were as a number of the decisions in the budget, relate to the overall budget of the government, obviously, and objectives that we had set for actually reducing expenditures. The only province in the country that was able to reduce expenditures in the budget was the province of Saskatchewan. And the analysis of the government, when we were making those decisions, was about priorities. And as you saw in the budget, our priorities involved — even though we were reducing the budget — an increase in the Education budget, an increase in the health care budget, and the second-highest Highways budget in the history of the province.

But decisions were made. On the chiropractic services, decisions were made. On whether or not the taxpayers should subsidize a television station, the decision was made. Mr. Deputy Chair, we knew there would be other sources of interest in that initiative that we undertook, that we would have proposals come forward from government. We knew that distance education could be delivered by SaskTel, which was an important function of SCN. And we knew that nationally governments, including the federal government, were looking at new methods of media, in terms of the development of the film and television industry.

This is a 20-year-old technology that we're talking about now,

Mr. Deputy Chair, and as we move forward, perhaps through some of the proposals that have been offered to the government but also through the government's initiatives — which I would point out have netted another television series being shot in the province of Saskatchewan — because of this, Mr. Deputy Chair, we're going to continue to work with the industry to grow the industry. It may not be the way that it's always been grown, but we're going to do that, Mr. Deputy Chair, together with the, Mr. Chair of Committees, together with the industry.

And I would also say that, you know, the government made some other decisions in the budget related to expenditures that netted an overall reduction in expenditures. Like I say, that's the only budget like it in the country. And, Mr. Deputy Chair, I think the people of the province of Saskatchewan appreciate the prudence and welcome the fact that we can make this claim, with respect to expenditures, that no other capital in the country can make.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Can the Premier tell the Assembly, Mr. Chairman, whether or not there was consultation with the board of directors of SCN in advance to the decision being made to sell off this asset? And what is the structure now? Who's looking after the operation?

[Interjections]

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I would ask that the members stop the banter going back and forth. We've had a pretty good debate so far, and I would ask the member from Athabasca to come to order. Order. Order. I'd asked the member, before, from Athabasca not to be yelling from his seat. I imagine he will have the chance to ask questions later. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, the answer to the question is there was not consultation. Mr. Deputy Chair, it was a budget item. And typically with provincial budgets, they're released and because of the sensitivity of financial information in budgets with respect to taxation or expenditures, those things are not necessarily the subject of consultation. There are currently about 11 staff at SCN, including the CEO, that are operating it, Mr. Deputy Chair.

I would say this, though. I just heard what the hon. member had to say about someone who has served the military in this country, and the member for Athabasca joined in. Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Chair, now would be a good chance for him to apologize. What about all of the other members of the Armed Forces who use public dollars to be trained and who are paid with public dollars to serve this country, some of them now in theatre, Mr. Chair? What are members opposite saying about the military personnel in this province? When they attack his record as a public servant in the military, are they also attacking theirs? That's what the people of the province have had enough of, Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Chair, and in 18 months, they are going to hear from the people of Saskatchewan because of tactics like that.

The Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Official

Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I have had many members of my family serve in the Armed Forces. I won't take anything from you, the little thief, the little thief from Swift Current.

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. I would ask . . .

[Interjections]

The Chair: — Order! Order. Order. Order, order. Order. Order, order. Order. This is starting, this debate is starting to deteriorate. I would ask the member, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw the previous remark and apologize.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I withdraw and apologize. Mr. Chairman, I'll tell you this. I won't take any guff from that Premier about the military. I support the military. I support the military in this country as much or more than he does any day. So don't lecture me about support for the military. I'll tell you that. I'll tell you that. When members opposite . . .

[Interjections]

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Your mike is shut off. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I will ask the members to all cease from yelling from their seats. I know we've been here for a while, and I know that tempers are starting to wear. But we're starting to get into personal attacks which is not . . . [inaudible] . . . of this House. I think the people that are watching it expect members from both sides to show respect for the process that's happening here. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Belanger: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I think what's important here is that I wear with great pride the fact that my father was a World War II veteran. And I had my older brother, two older brothers, that one served in the military for a number of years, I would say maybe 25, 26 years. He retired several years ago, four years ago, maybe five years ago, as a warrant officer in the air force. I have a younger brother that just recently retired who served . . .

The Chair: — I will ask the member to come to his point of order . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He's coming. Let him come to his point of order.

Mr. Belanger: — Allow my story to be completed, Mr. Speaker. And I have a younger brother that also served 27 years and retired as a master warrant officer, Mr. Speaker. And third, I had a sister that also served in the army for four years, an older sister. And, Mr. Speaker, I had another brother that couldn't serve in the military because — he was so disappointed — because he had fallen arches on his feet. And that was his dream. He could not join the army because of that problem. And, Mr. Speaker, I also had a young daughter that served in the navy . . .

The Chair: — I would ask the member to get directly to his

point of order, not making a speech.

[17:00]

Mr. Belanger: — My point, Mr. Speaker, is exactly the point I made earlier, that the Premier has no right to attack my family or my dedication. Nor does he have any right, Mr. Speaker, to make any comment about our commitment to the Armed Forces, Mr. Speaker. Many families, on this side of the House and everywhere else, served their army with distinction or served their country with distinction.

And my point is that that member from Wood River every day gets up and calls us communists, when my father and many other people fought for this freedom that we enjoy. And my point is he shouldn't be using the Armed Forces as a prop for his political purposes, Mr. Speaker. And furthermore . . .

[Interjections]

The Chair: — Order. I think the member has made his point of order. I think he's getting into adjourned debates. Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Mr. D'Autremont: — To reply to the point of order.

The Chair: — Make it brief.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Chairman, I don't know that there was a point of order even there. But the member from Athabasca was the one who raised the comments about our member, Mr. Speaker, who served for 20-plus years in the military, Mr. Speaker, insinuating that he had not had a real job and should not be given any respect.

Mr. Chairman, we believe that all members who served in the Armed Forces, in the police and fire, should be respected by this House, Mr. Speaker. And I ask that the member opposite apologize for his insinuations.

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. We've had a tradition of a little bit of heckling always being allowed in Committee of Finance, but it's starting to get out of hand. And this is what has happened, that we're getting into nothing but points of order.

I had mentioned before that the people watching here I think deserve our respect. So I would ask that we get back to the debate, and I will step on anybody that's heckling. I hate to do it, but if we can't do it respectful, we're starting to get into personal attacks on both sides.

So right now I would ask the members to stick with Committee of Finance, and we're on Executive Council vote. Up to this point, the debate was very good and I would ask the members carry on with the debate. I recognize the official Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, when it comes to SCN, the chairman of the board has clearly indicated that there was no consultation, no meetings. In fact, I understand that there was no meeting with the minister in the period running up to the announcement of the sell-off, even at any time during the two and a half years that this government was in power.

My question to the Premier is: is this normal procedure for your government to have agencies of government where the minister or the Premier doesn't meet with them for up to two years?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair of Committees. Ministers of the government — there have been two with respect to this file — have certainly met with the officials, have been briefed by officials on SCN's work in the province and the different kinds of programming that they provide. Certainly that's been a matter of course for the government and it's continued under the current minister. And of course then, other senior ministry officials will be in contact with SCN to determine the impacts, to be able to provide an analysis of some of the impacts of various decisions made on funding. But those meetings have transpired over the course of these two years with the minister obviously being briefed, the ministers being briefed by officials with respect to SCN.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not going to go in to all the detail of the things the chairman said about the lack of consultation and feeling of being slighted that people who work in government feel when they're not met with, when they're not talked to, when they're not shown appreciation.

And it's one thing to celebrate workers on occasion here in the Assembly. And I agree when the Premier does that, but it's got to be more than that. It can't just be superficial. You have to take the time to meet with boards. You have to take time to meet with the Chair of boards. And especially if you're going to disband an organization, I think it would be proper and fitting that meetings would have taken place, that thank yous would have been said to those individuals, because they're doing it in most cases as volunteers. And my only closing comment is that I think the minister, the Premier, whatever, even at this late date should do the kind of consultation with that board that is expected.

Mr. Premier, I want to turn to a moment to the services that many people in this province use on a regular basis. I think last year 125,000 people, Mr. Chairman, used the services of chiropractors in the province of Saskatchewan. Here again, I think, is an example of consultation gone wrong. There's two issues I think we want to talk to the government again about today: one is lack of consultation, and in the case of the chiropractors, consultation but ending up at a result that is actually the opposite of what the consultation was leading to.

And the Premier will know that consultation had gone on with chiropractors for a year. Many meetings and promises made and signatures on documents, and then the deal ripped up at the last moment. And the patients most affected, the 125,000 in the province, many of them on low income who simply can't afford to go and do the visits that they're required, and many of them will now choose to go to regular medical doctors.

And can the Premier tell the Assembly and the people of the province who and how was the analysis done on the cost saving? Because most people say, including the chiropractors,

that the saving of 10 million may save it in one area of the Health department but actually the true spending will actually increase by the number of patients who don't go to see the chiropractors but go to see a regular doctor whose payments are totally covered by taxpayers.

Can the Premier explain where this idea came from and at what point in time? Because obviously, the minister . . . Again I don't totally blame the minister because I think he was working in good faith. Otherwise he wouldn't have signed the arrangement or the staff wouldn't have signed the arrangement, and there wouldn't have been a press release talking about the conclusion of the agreement.

So can the Premier tell me where the decision was made to end this program and de-insure chiropractic services?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, the member's questions early on, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition's questions early on were about consultation. You know, he'll forgive the people of the province of Saskatchewan if they have a few questions about his measure of accurate or effective consultations. For example, Mr. Chair, a lot of people out there listening to that member ask the question, a lot of farmers would ask who did that member consult when he ripped up GRIP [gross revenue insurance program], when his government ripped up GRIP. They didn't say that when they campaigned in the election. They said nothing in that election campaign about GRIP. They ripped it up.

I wonder, Mr. Chair, if that member could tell members of this Assembly or the people of the province of Saskatchewan who they consulted with when they closed 52 hospitals in the province of Saskatchewan; when they closed the Plains hospital. I'd expect they say it was a matter of the budget decision that we made, Mr. Chair of Committees.

There's another long list of whether or not there was consultation, Mr. Chair, which we can get into. We can get into SPUDCO. We can get into Channel Lake. We could get in . . . And the member for Nutana is chirping from her seat. We can find out if the people of the province were consulted before they took their actions with respect to Murdoch Carriere. We could ask that question, Mr. Chair of Committees.

I just want to say . . . Well the members opposite say, can you even engage in this debate about what that previous government did? I have some news for the member for Regina Rosemont. They were in power for 16 years. They did some good things. I say so public. Recently they did some good things around business taxes. We have lauded them publicly for that. I did it as recently as last week. They did some good things around the royalty situation, Mr. Chair of Committees. I lauded that. The government welcomes that and says good things about that. We did that even in this committee meeting.

But they also have a record, Mr. Chairman, as a government for 16 years in this province, their record of out-migration, Mr. Chair, the record of Saskatchewan for the most part as a have not, of our loss of population, of a woeful job creation record. Yes, the record with respect to Murdoch Carriere and SPUDCO

and Channel Lake. So we'll acknowledge the things that they did that were good and we will hold them accountable still for their record when they were in government, Mr. Chair, which by the way is half better than what members opposite do in their current function as the opposition of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to chiropractic services, I will say this. We made a decision as a part of the budget. It was not an easy decision. We made a decision that other provinces have made across the country. Some have gone farther in their decision. Some have eliminated any sort of a subsidy at all to chiropractic services. Some, like Saskatchewan, are still providing some services. In Manitoba it's universal coverage, but capped at 11 visits, 12 visits. Here in Saskatchewan we've made a similar cap, but we've limited to people who are low-income recipients, Mr. Chairman.

The premise of the member's question is that health care costs will skyrocket now and, Mr. Chairman, that's . . . Well if I misunderstood that, I think he said that health care costs will increase. Mr. Chairman, I will say that this has not necessarily, as far as we've been advised, not necessarily been the experience of other jurisdictions that have done this. I would say that.

And secondly, Mr. Chair of Committees, I can also tell you that other jurisdictions will point out, while there is a drop in the use of chiropractic services early on after a change in the subsidy has occurred in those provinces, over time the amount of caseload builds back up again as patients begin to use the system.

So we've made the difficult decision. We're providing support for low-income people capped at, at the 12 visits a year, Mr. Chair, and we are obviously going to be watching that very carefully as it unfolds, Mr. Chairman. We note the experience of other jurisdictions. That factored into the government making its decision as part of a budget.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, the issue here is that negotiations went on for the better part of a year and conclusions were brought about, and the problem that many people have with this is that in this case, not that consultation didn't take place, but the consultation did and then the word of the minister, and, I might add, the word of the Premier, was broken. And that spreads very quickly.

And there's just a letter here that I would like to read into the record from March 29th, 2010. The letter is to Max Hendricks, Assistant Deputy Minister, Saskatchewan Health:

Dear Max:

I reference your letter to Dr. Shane Taylor, March 24th, 2010. Further to our letter of March 25th, 2010 to the Minister of Health, on which you were copied, the CAS has a request to make prior to our meeting with you scheduled for tomorrow to discuss the treatment of supplementary benefits, beneficiaries by chiropractors.

There is no point in meeting with you unless CAS has, in writing, assurance from the Premier that you are negotiating with the authority of the Wall government to make a deal that will subsequently be honoured.

[17:15]

These are not insignificant people writing letters. They're between the highest levels in the profession, with the deputy minister, talking about you, Mr. Premier. And what it says, and I quote again: "The issue is with the Wall government to make the deal that will consequently be honoured." Meaning that they are worried because you can't trust a deal made with your government. The letter goes on to say, and I quote:

No respect to you, Mr. Hendricks, but the CAS negotiated in good faith for almost a year with officials of Saskatchewan Health who had a mandate to negotiate from the Wall government. And yet this same government chose to renege on the agreement negotiated on their behalf. Using past experience with the Wall government as our guide, we have no confidence that an agreement reached with you or any official of Saskatchewan Health will be honoured by the government MLAs.

So you can see how trust is broken. It's not just that you need to negotiate and consult, but you have to do it in good faith. And what has happened here — on behalf of the 125,000 patients, and I believe 33,000 of them have now signed petitions — is that that trust and faith in your government has been broken. And to the Premier, again, because if this deal wasn't going to occur, why did he allow his minister to hang out on a limb while in another part of his government there was a decision being made to do something quite different? How does that happen in your government?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair of Committees. You know, it's a situation where the contract was being negotiated with . . . potential contract was being negotiated subject to ratification, Mr. Chair, subject to the budgeting process of the province of Saskatchewan. And the government made a difficult decision.

I'll remind members of the committee that the government managed to reduce overall expenditures of the government. There's no other jurisdiction in the country that was able to do that. Took some difficult decisions. This was one of them, certainly.

Mr. Chair, there's much . . . there's a number of other highlights in the health care budget that are evident of the choices that the government made that relate directly to the chiropractic services situation. There was the \$10.5 million for the surgical wait times initiative. Mr. Chair, there's the \$7 million for the Patient First recommendations; 2.6 million increased in cardiac care volumes; operating revenues for the Irene and Les Dubé Centre for Mental Health increased \$3.8 million. Mr. Chair, there were increases, overall increases in terms of health region funding.

We as a government took decisions that were difficult to make and, in terms of the negotiation, they were happening at the

official level, subject to the ratification of the government.

I wonder if the hon. member will comment. He would have served in the very first cabinet after that election where the government ripped up GRIP. How did he come to his decision there? Was there consultation? When he campaigned out in rural Saskatchewan, did he tell farmers that this was what would happen if they elected the government or was that a product of a budget decision that they made after the election?

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I don't want to spend a lot of time on this, but I will say to the member opposite, it had something to do with a record deficit left by his government, because he was working there at the time. And part of that deficit was the \$150,000 that he took to set up the guitar museum in Swift Current. And that huge deficit, it was the largest in Canada per capita and historians write about it all the time. And not only that, if you look back to the ministers that he worked for and where they ended up, I think 15 of them were charged including, I believe, the minister he worked for doing the work that he did.

So we can get into that period of time. And again, Mr. Chairman, I want to remind you of who brought up that era. And we'll get into it because I've got some editorials from *The StarPhoenix* that talks about things that were going on at that time, and I think the headline is something about jail time for people who were involved. And I'll get into that if the Premier wants to go back there. He keeps coming to these topics and then running and hiding when we come at him. But we'll talk about it if you want . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He laughs and wants to. Okay.

Where's *The StarPhoenix* editorial? I just want to read, I want to read this because it deals with his actions as a staff member. It was allowed to talk about that period so I'm sure it will be in order. This is the editorial and it refers to actions of our Premier while he was working in the government of Grant Devine. He wonders why there was a deficit and we had to make tough decisions.

Here's the headline: "Cause for jailing." "It's unfortunate Saskatchewan's public accounts committee doesn't have the power to throw people in jail." This is referring . . . This isn't my words. This is *StarPhoenix*. I'm going to read it again. "Cause for jailing."

It's unfortunate Saskatchewan's public accounts committee doesn't have the power to throw people in jail.

That's where the bureaucrats [the Premier would take note of that, "the bureaucrats," because he was one of them] and politicians responsible for the latest trilogy of horror stories to be uncovered by the committee belong.

The former premier's office had 24 employees, most of whom were political operatives, paid by other government departments and Crown corporations. That's not secondment of personnel; it's fraud. [It's fraud.]

The Saskatchewan Property Management Corp. paid \$133,000, not for its own advertising, but to cover the government's overall advertising bill. That's not creative accounting; [Mr. Chairman] that's fraud.

The Saskatchewan Liquor Board . . .

This is the important article here, Mr. Chairman. And you'll want to listen to this little article.

The Saskatchewan Liquor Board gave \$15,000 worth of booze to board's ministers. That's not a gift; it's fraud.

Now, Mr. Premier, if you want to go there and talk about that era and make this political, I'll do it. And I've got lots more. I've got lots more. But remember who started it. Remember who started. I've got many more of these quotes about what was going on at that time.

But, Mr. Chairman, I want to refer back to where I was when we were talking about the cancellation of an important program for 125,000 Saskatchewan citizens, and that was the negotiations that went on between the province, between that government, the Premier's government, and chiropractors to reach a contract. And he said . . . The Premier just said when he was standing up and led us to believe that it was negotiations between the department and chiropractors.

Well I want to tell him it had gone far beyond that, and he wasn't telling the whole story when he said it was the department officials and the chiropractors doing the negotiation. Because I have here a press release that takes it considerably past the bureaucrats and staff. Here's the press release about the contract:

The province and the Chiropractors' Association of Saskatchewan or CAS have reached an agreement for provincial coverage of chiropractic services for Saskatchewan residents.

The three-year agreement includes a cap on a number of insured annual treatments a patient is eligible to receive, deregulation of the patient copayment, and increase of 2.5 per cent each year in fees paid to chiropractic services.

Under the treatment-capping provision, patients are eligible for up to 16 treatments per year with the government paying 100 per cent of its share of the fee, 17-40 treatments will be paid at 66 per cent, and there will be no coverage beyond 40 treatments.

Patients will continue to pay a copayment at a rate to be set by the chiropractor. Patients receiving provincial low-income benefits are eligible for up to 40 treatments paid at 100 per cent of the insured fee and continue to have no patient copayment.

Now it goes on, and here's the important part, in a quote, "I am pleased that we have reached a deal with the Chiropractors' Association of Saskatchewan," McMorris said." That would be the minister, not staff in the department, but the minister who was appointed by the Premier. So this negotiation wasn't happening with staff in the department. It had already reached

the political level at the minister's office and had been signed off. This is a press release we have.

And I go on to quote:

And McMorris said, "This agreement is one of the most generous in the country for residents who use chiropractic services, while allowing us to exercise some fiscal responsibility through the treatment cap and full payment.

So the deal was negotiated in full light of what was becoming a tough budget. And everyone knew that the chiropractors in this agreement were giving up — the Minister of Finance will know the number — about 1.5 million. I believe that's the number that they had negotiated and were giving up in this deal. And they did it in good faith. My question to the Premier is this: after your minister agreed to this deal — not the staff but your minister — who was it, who was it who called the minister's office and told the minister to rip up the deal?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, we need to clarify that this press release was never issued. This is a draft release that officials were working — the same officials who were working with the association — drafted in the event that the decision move forward. I just said quite forthrightly to the member, the government decided not to move forward with the deal. Part of it was budgetary considerations, and you know, Mr. Chair, we made that case. So it was a draft press release.

But you know, here's a document, a government document that's not a draft, that's not a draft at all. And it goes to the representation of things. He's talking about the chiropractic deal. Here is a deal from a letter signed by the current Leader of the Opposition to the then premier of the province of Saskatchewan. It says, "Pursuant to your request, attached you will find a briefing note which summarizes the findings and recommendations resulting from the comprehensive financial management review completed by CAC of SaskWater Corp's SPUDCO division."

Not a draft at all, Mr. Chair, but a letter to the premier of the province of Saskatchewan. And in it, in it the minister — the then minister, the current member — quite rightly points this out. He says — this is now the current Leader of the Opposition — saying, "There are lapses in obtaining the requisite legislative authorities necessary to permit SaskWater Corp. to proceed in certain areas of businesses they have undertaken." Lapses in requisite legislative authority.

The then minister, now Leader of the Opposition, who's talking about this arrangement, this deal and draft documents, wrote in not a draft but a letter to the then Premier Roy Romanow saying that there was no legislative authority for the decisions they were making. There was also, it goes on to say, there was also at least one instance in which the information provided to cabinet was not reflective of the transaction ultimately consummated.

Mr. Chair, I don't recall in 1998 — after July 30, 1998 — that member bringing this information to the public, that member wanting to fully disclose not a draft document but the reality

that legislative requirements had not been in place for the deal and that, and I quote, there is "... at least one instance in which the information provided cabinet was not reflective of the transaction ultimately consummated."

Mr. Chair, the document by the member goes on to say, "CIC recommends that any future investment requirements for Storco's be considered by agencies with the specific mandate and experience to provide such investment but only on the basis of private sector participation for a minimum of 51 per cent by the way of real equity risk and return." That never happened, Mr. Deputy Chair. And we'll get into more of this, I guess, about the claims of the hon. member. And the hon. member will ask questions about this particular issue. I will say very directly again. It was a draft press release prepared by officials who are negotiating with the association. It was never released because, Mr. Chair, the deal had to be ratified by the Government of Saskatchewan.

And we made another decision in the budget process, not an easy one but a decision we made while we reallocated, invested in the surgical wait times, in investment in mental health, Mr. Chairman, in keeping our commitment with respect to funding, increasing funding in things like the Cancer Agency. Mr. Chairman, the last budget was about decisions. Some of them were more difficult than others. But, Mr. Chair, this release was never issued. It was a draft, and it was always subject to the ratification of the elected Government of Saskatchewan.

[17:30]

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a couple of questions about the cancellation of the kidney transplant program. And my understanding is that this occurred in 2008, and I wonder ... [inaudible interjection] ... 2009, in July of 2009. I wonder if the Premier can give an outline of ... I think we've gone through this many times in question period and the minister, I mean, obviously has done his best to defend the decision to cancel the program or to shut it down for a period of time.

But can the Premier give an outline of the restart of the program? When will that occur and what date can the public expect the kidney transplant program to be back in operating in the province?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a very serious issue, serious matter facing patients and family members of those who are patients and who are in need of and waiting for a kidney transplant. The hon. member has highlighted the discontinuation or the temporary discontinuation of the program because of a situation involving the doctors involved there. The government is working very hard to get the program back up and running.

Mr. Chair, since the program discontinued, 12 have moved to Edmonton for care. We know of a number of others who are our very top priority, who already have a live donor, who are ready and waiting. I believe that since the matter has been raised in

the Assembly, we have two more who are at least booked — I believe is the number — who are ready to proceed with their transplant.

It'll be extra-provincially though, Mr. Chair. We need to make sure we have the right complement obviously of doctors. That's been the recommendation of those who are involved in the front line of this from the very beginning, and the Ministry of Health and the region are working aggressively to make sure that's in place. We don't want to have people to have to travel outside the province for these transplants. We want them here in the province of Saskatchewan. And we're working very hard to make sure that it's up and running in a timely fashion.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The issue here is the start time of when we think the program will be back operating. I think the program at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon was probably one of the better and more successful programs in Canada while it was up and operating. And many people are baffled how it comes about that a program that is working well would be shut down under this administration, when all the promises made during the Premier's years in opposition that he would make the health care system better.

But my question to the Premier: there was a commitment made that it would be up and operating in three months. That's a month ago. We're talking about a very short period of time. And I just want to ask the Premier, are we still in line and in place to have the program up and operating as promised on July 1st?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, the health region believes the target that's been set by the minister of three to four months is very aggressive. Having said that, all the parties are working very hard to achieve this within the time frame that has been announced by the minister.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I guess because time is of the essence, and I know when the young woman from Moose Jaw, Ms. Simms was here in the building and did her dialysis in room 255, we were told three or four months at that time. And for those of us not on that kind of a waiting list, time goes by. But for people — 106 families — who are waiting, every week means a lot and in some cases a lifetime.

We're now a month out from where we were when these commitments were made, and I would hope the Premier isn't using the same language — three or four months — because this will resonate with the public because the words should be now two or three months. And I don't want to quibble over this, Mr. Premier, but the fact of the matter is, families watching and reading this dialogue will want to know that we haven't wasted a month and that we're a month closer to getting the centre up and operating.

And I ask again: is July 1st still the date that we expect to have the theatres up and operating and have the transplants starting

for kidneys?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, the timeline the minister has already announced is what this government and the health region are working very hard to achieve. In the meantime, we are also working very hard to make sure that those who can, who are medically ready, and especially those who have a live donor who are ready for a transplant can have the transplant done.

I think not very long ago that number would have been about six individuals waiting. We're down to about two now. Two is too many. Two is absolutely too many. But we're working very hard in a combination of the interim measure of out-of-province referral with the efforts of the ministry and the region to get this program up and running. We're trying to achieve the long-term result as well.

I would say to the member this as well, Mr. Chair, that he highlights the program that was here in a favourable light, the program that was operating, and it should be because of the work that was being done by the doctors. But let's not forget that that system was reliant, in fact, that system had to be discontinued when one surgeon became ill. And I don't think that's the long-term solution. We need a longer term solution that isn't dependent on the health of one particular doctor. And that's what is informing the actions of the ministry and of the region, and we're working very hard towards that.

In the meantime I repeat, Mr. Chair, we're not waiting for the program. We're providing as quickly as possible with those who are waiting who have live donors, who are medically ready for the transplant with out-of-province alternatives, and we're making some significant progress in that regard.

The Chair: — Recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The Premier, I think, is making strong points, that we have to get it up and operating. But what the people waiting for the transplants are most worried about is getting their transplants done and the need to get the theatres operating because we have, as taxpayers, invested in the hospital. The investment has been made. The patients are ready. They have donors. And the argument, I think, on behalf of the patients is they would want it up and operating as soon as there is a surgeon who's ready to do the work. And I'm sure the Premier agrees that what we don't want is that red tape get in the way of getting on with getting the surgeries done.

My question to the Premier is, on out-of-province surgeries — and I believe the process is that a certain level of patients who are able to make the trip and have a live donor can go to Edmonton — can the Premier indicate how many of these transplants have been done to date and whether or not that waiting list is shortening because we're getting the surgeries done in Edmonton, or are they finding other ways to find surgery?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well as I mentioned,

there are 12 procedures that have been done in Edmonton, and nine of those are cadaveric. Three of them were from live donors. Mr. Chair, I can also tell members of the committee that four of six currently ready, medically ready and with live donors, have been booked. The procedure's not done yet but have been booked. I can also tell members of the committee that we're working with Winnipeg as well now to try to make sure we're providing this in as timely as a way possible, Mr. Chairman. Our actions around this are similar to the actions we've taken around the surgical wait times initiative, Mr. Chair.

You know, for a very long time in this province, for years, we have had far too long a wait for people especially for . . . you know, as they say, hips and knees but for orthopedic surgeries in this province — not limited to that but those procedures in particular. We've assigned extra resources in the budget to deal with that.

The good news, Mr. Chair, is that we can keep up with the current demand for these surgeries with the capacity in the system. The challenge is this large group that we have . . . this cohort, this group of people that have been waiting for a long time, we need to direct resources specifically at them. We need to keep our options open with respect to using regional operating theatres if we have to, perhaps engaging private clinics and surgeons, surgeons that are involved in those private clinics.

We hope members opposite will support that. Members opposite have been voicing concerns quite rightly about the kidney transplant situation, about the need to get patients their kidney transplants obviously. I hope they will also work with the government as we move to solve the wait times initiative and use all of the options within the public health care system, including the potential of private clinics to add to the resources of the province and the regional operating theatres.

We know that these surgeries are important, but the transplant issue is right now at the top of the government's priority list. And so to summarize, nine are cadaveric of the twelve in Edmonton; three were from live donors. We've had six current patients ready. Four of them have been booked. And we're working very hard, including expanding our talks, including now Winnipeg, to try to get people the transplant surgeries they deserve in our health care system, as a part of our health care system in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you very much for that, Mr. Chairman, to the Premier. The reason that I'm interested in the number of surgeries that have been done in Edmonton is that in the committee — and I would ask you if you could check with your minister but — in the *Hansard* of committee, it was indicated that 21 surgeries had been done. And we had been told 12 and I just want to make sure. And it could be just a . . . Mistakes like this get made, and I'm not casting any accusations at the minister. But I just want for the record whether the number is as was stated in committee, 21 or as stated here, 12.

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, we'll double-check with officials

and make sure we provide the member with the specific answer to the question.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — While the issue is very serious, and the minister is well aware of it and the Premier now, the issue of the patients who are on the waiting lists and are of a complex nature. Is there a process at this point in time where they can go to a different centre to get complex cases done? Or are those cases, and there are a number of them as I understand, are they just in need of waiting until the centre reopens?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The requirement for us to involve other jurisdictions on complex cases is not new. It wasn't new when the program was up and running in the province. But the member is right, some on the list will be those more complex cases. The ministry is specifically working with Edmonton to make some more progress with respect to these complex cases.

[17:45]

And I would also say this, Mr. Chair: one of the challenges of developing the new system, of getting it back up and running but getting it up and running in a much more sustainable way, is hopefully to increase the capacity to do these complex cases in the province. We have been moving those patients out now for some time, even when the program was up and running here. We would hope that when we have a new . . . when the new program is up and running, that at least we're beginning to build capacity to deal with these. In the meantime, we're working with other centres to try to address this specific issue the member has raised.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, the one area that there's a growing concern when we travel around the province of Saskatchewan, the obvious question many people are asking is that before the last election there were two big health issues that the public was most concerned about. One was doctor vacancies, and the other was waiting lists. And as the Premier will know, it was a very big debate going into the last election. Commitments were made, and I think both parties spoke to the issue.

But the doctor vacancy is I think still a troubling issue, especially in rural Saskatchewan, has increased by 20 per cent. And the members from Saskatoon who may not have as much issue with this problem, but in rural Saskatchewan especially, we hear it in many centres that doctor vacancies, which have actually increased by 20 per cent since the election in '07, is still a very big issue.

My question to the Premier is, has he had an opportunity other than announce programs, and I think there's been two or three of them, but does he have any more confidence that his most recent announcement will actually bring the doctor vacancies down, or will it stay at the level, or in fact what people worry most about, actually get worse under his administration? Where

are we at and can you give us an update?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well Mr. Chair, I'm happy to engage in this discussion with members opposite, with the Leader of the Opposition, with the New Democratic Party, because he's right. There was a couple of big issues going into the next election on health care. One was doctors, absolutely. One was the surgical wait times for people, absolutely. And the other was nurses. The member conveniently forgot to mention nurses because I think because the government's record was woeful in this regard.

Mr. Chairman, the other matter the member didn't raise, there was another health care issue in Saskatoon and that is that because of the neglect of members opposite, ministers of Health and others, the Academic Health Sciences centre was actually under probation, Mr. Chairman. That's where the system was . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member's right, the medical college. I misspoke. The medical college, Mr. Chair.

This was because of, I believe, a fundamental neglect of health care. I think the New Democratic Party felt, well health care is, quote unquote, our political issue and so neglect of these issues will somehow pass for public policy. And so we inherited a situation where there was a shortage of nurses; SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] would tell you, I think, 1,000.

Now we identified 800 as a plan to get to. When we announced that our government in office would work towards 800 new nurses, members opposite said it couldn't be done. It couldn't be done. They laughed at it. I think the current Health critic was one who laughed at that. Well we're already, we're two and a half years through and we're closing in on 600 more nurses today in the province of Saskatchewan.

The member talks about doctors. You bet there was a doctor shortage then, during the election and when we took over, Mr. Chair. I was involved, many members on this side of the House were involved in local health care recruitment and retention committees while that member was in the cabinet. We were trying to get more doctors into southwest Saskatchewan, into communities around the province.

Mr. Chairman, I'll tell you there's more work to be done in this regard, but here's the results after two and a half years of our government. There are 164 more, more doctors practising today than when the NDP were in office, 72 more GPs [general practitioner], 92 more specialists, Mr. Chair. Since we came into office there are now, we've increased the training seats at the medical school to 84, Mr. Chair. Residencies are up to 108, I think from a number of 60 when we took office.

The best chance we have to recruit doctors in the province is if we train them here and keep them here. And then, better yet, if they do their residency here and we can keep them here from that. But in order to do that, we've got to fund the training seats at the College of Medicine, and then we've got to fund the residency positions. Mr. Chairman, there are more vacancies in the province. You know why that is? Because regions are now advertising for more doctors to a greater extent than they have.

The bottom line is this — and I invite a debate with any

members opposite, those chirping from their seats or the Leader of the Opposition — because the fact of the matter is there are 164 more doctors in the province practicing today than there was when we took office. There's more work to be done. We have to do better. That's why there's a physician recruitment initiative and agency established by the Ministry of Health which will be properly resourced. That's why we continue to fund seats at the College of Medicine. That's why we continue to fund new residencies in the province. That's why we continue to work towards the goal they said was impossible, of 800 new nurses, Mr. Chairman.

Because we understand, perhaps unlike members at least at the end of their term, that the system, that the issue of doctor recruitment, of nurse recruitment needs more than press releases. It needs objectives, goals set, and then a plan to get there and resources to deliver on the plan. That's what exists today in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, again the spin is good. I don't blame the Premier for spinning the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . yes, spin. No, if you travel Saskatchewan, and I'm sure the Premier does, he will know that the issue of doctors and the lack of doctors, they're not cheering.

If you went, if you went and gave that speech anywhere in southwest Saskatchewan, you'd get booted out of the hall because they're concerned about health care. Yes, believe me, if you gave a speech about how great health care is under your management, they don't agree. The Facebook in southwest Saskatchewan that was set up a few months ago to save health care is a lot of people who are concerned. And in the Premier's own area, in the Cypress Hills Health Region, the waiting lists have gone from 148 to 305. That's from their website . . . not today, but at the end of '09. The waiting list is up by 100 per cent. And when you can come here and cheer that there are so many doctors in southwest Saskatchewan in the Premier's own health region, and the waiting lists have doubled, well keep at it. Keep cheering about it because . . . But it is shocking to the public because they simply don't understand.

And again to the Premier, the promise was made and the commitment was that he would make it better. And the people in Moose Jaw do not know why the Union Hospital hasn't been dealt with that issue. They have a hard time understanding why the 13 nursing homes promised haven't been delivered on. There was a commitment made to build a free-standing children's hospital in Saskatoon that the members say we are going to build. But for three years now, we have not had any action. And someone's looking around to see where it can be built.

But we have seen things in Saskatoon go the other way — Station 20 for example. And I understand certain members on that side of the Assembly . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Pardon? Oh, the member wants to yell from his . . .

[Interjections]

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I would remind members that we were having a good debate for awhile,

and then all of a sudden they have to start wanting to join in from the floor. I would ask . . . Order. Order. I would ask members to be respectable of the people that or the person that has the floor. And the person that has the floor right now is the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you for that ruling, Mr. Chairman. To the Minister of Advanced Education, we were talking about the children's hospital. And the fact of the matter is, it hasn't been built in the first two and a half, going on three years of this government's mandate. And the promise was to build a free-standing children's hospital in Saskatoon. And people are waiting for that to take place.

But on the issue of waiting lists, can the Premier explain why, in his own health district, his own health region, the waiting list has gone from 148 to 305 — 100 per cent increase in the waiting list in his own health region.

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. You know, you know there's a lot of work to be done in health care in the province. We inherited a situation that was completely neglected by members opposite. That member that just asked a question closed 52 hospitals.

That member opposite that just asked the question ignored the plight of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. Members in the back row will know that their government ignored the need for nurses in the province notwithstanding that they had a former SUN president in their caucus and in their government.

Members opposite will know about the doctor shortage. And so the member then says, well why would you stand up and answer the question the way you did it? Spin, he said. Mr. Chairman, I'll tell you, the fact of the record is, and I'll slow it down for the member, the fact of the matter is that notwithstanding that more work needs to be done, in two and a half years there are 164 more doctors practising today in Saskatchewan than there were under the NDP: 72 GPs and 92 specialists. There are 570 more nurses practising at work today, delivering health care for Saskatchewan people, than ever were under the NDP.

And you know, the member talks about southwest Saskatchewan. I was just there. I was across the southwest and in Rosetown, Elrose, and in Cypress Hills. And you know, Mr. Chairman, the communities there, they have a health care concern. You bet they do.

They understand they need doctors in those communities, and they understand that in Maple Creek they need a new health care facility. They understand that. They understand that the government needs to continue to move forward with the nurse practitioner support we provided, which is so important in that Beechy area.

Here's what else they understand, Mr. Chairman, because they told us as much. Community leaders will tell you down there they understand that there's a lot of catch-up to do because of members opposite for 16 years ignoring the . . . I was in a hospital in Maple Creek, Mr. Chairman. That's not a new

situation. The need for a new centre which has now been approved by our government, that was not a new situation. There has been a need for that centre in Maple Creek for a very, very long time.

It took the election. It took the defeat of that government and the election of this side to do that project and countless others like it across the province, to do more than issue press releases about doctors but actually to make sure they're practicing, to recruit more nurses in the province of Saskatchewan. And in two and a half years, with this Minister of Health, I'll put his record up in two and a half years over what they did in 16 any day of the week, Mr. Chairman.

I would also say this to the member. He asks a question about wait-lists which are still too long in the province. I ask him this. It's now 18 months from the next election. And so now we need to hear, if what we're doing is not enough— and fair enough, that's part of the debate — I think we need to hear what members opposite would do. I think we need to hear why members opposite would oppose, within a public system, a single-payer system. We need to find out why that former free-enterprising capitalist from Alberta would oppose the use of private clinics to come into the province and deliver, within a public system, on surgeries for Saskatchewan.

We need a lot of orthopedic surgeries in the province. Well the member is kind of smiling. He's kind of grinning. Maybe he wants to get up in the next question and tell this House and tell the people of the province why he would object, why he would object to the use of private clinics who will come in, in the public system, operating in operating theatres to reduce the wait-list.

[18:00]

Because you can't suck and blow at the same time. You can't decry the wait-list, Mr. Chairman, and then not offer any alternative, especially if your record is closing 52 hospitals, not having an adequate complement of nurses, not dealing with the doctor situation, almost losing our medical college where Dr. Roger Pierson, a medical professor, said of that government, to recover from a decade of very serious cuts that have happened to the college, Mr. Chairman, is no small feat. That's the record of members opposite, and the people of rural Saskatchewan know it.

And I would challenge . . . I would make this offer to the member opposite. If he wants to campaign on rural Saskatchewan in the Cypress Hills constituency on the government's record, on his when he was the MLA, and that member's record as the MLA fighting for health care, I think he's going to find out he'd come out on the wrong side of that contest, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — This Premier would know the term suck and blow, that's for sure. He's the guy that does it every day. He talks to *The Globe and Mail* and says he's going to get rid of the debt in the province of Saskatchewan, and his own document says he's going to double it. That's sucking and blowing, Mr. Premier. You know how to do that. There's no

doubt about that.

I haven't heard that term used by Premiers Blakeney or Romanow. It's a fine expression for the Premier of the province. Even Grant Devine I don't remember using those terms. But when it comes to sucking and blowing, that boy knows how to do it. There's no doubt about that. He's done it many, many times. Anybody who can say in the Southwest where the waiting lists have doubled, that's a great record; that's sucking and blowing, Mr. Premier. You'd know what the heck that means. Any premier who cancels the children's hospital, that's sucking and blowing. Anyone who de-insures chiropractic services in this province, contrary to his promise, that's sucking and blowing.

I could go on and on about your term that you used, but the fact . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well you used it. Yes, you used it. You know why I like it? Because it fits you so well. That's why.

[Interjections]

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order, order. Order. Order. I would ask the member to direct his remarks through the Chair.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you for that, Mr. Chair. And I want the Premier to know that when it comes to sucking and blowing, he's the master at it. And that's why I like that term, and I think that we're going to use that a lot more. And thank you very much for laying it out, and thank you, Mr. Chair, for allowing it to be used because I like it. I think that's a great term to be used because there are many, many examples. There are many . . .

The Chair: — I would ask the member not to include the Chair in his debate.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I will try not to refer to you in the future, Mr. Chair. I thought I was supposed to. But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Premier, is when you talk about doubling the waiting list in the Cypress Hills health region and spin that as a positive thing . . . I almost said, Mr. Chair. But I want to say to the Premier that this is a very, very important issue.

And when you talk about cancelling 13 nursing homes in the province when you promised to deliver on them, that's sucking and blowing, Mr. Premier. That's a good description of that member from Swift Current. And so we want to talk about other things too. And I know that it speaks to character when we talk about the issue of spinning a waiting list that is increased by 100 per cent. You got to be pretty good at spin to sell that one.

But when it comes to understanding where this Premier's coming on health care, he can celebrate, and they can cheer and laugh and think they're doing a great job on health care, but that's not what I'm hearing. I'm hearing that when it comes to chiropractic services, when it comes to waiting lists, when it comes to the cancellation of the kidney program, all of these areas, they are very, very disappointed in this Premier including the cancellation of the promise to have a health ombudsman. Do you remember that promise? Yes, we were going to do that. That was going to be one of the first things we would do.

And when it comes to sucking and blowing, boy, Mr. Chair, this Premier knows that term. He was going to do all of these wonderful things. The fact of the matter is there's still 20 per cent more doctor vacancies than when he became Premier. That's a fact. There's no children's hospital. That's a fact. There is no kidney transplant program that was in place when he became Premier.

Now I wonder if the Premier could tell me, on the waiting list — which is where we started — how do you manage to double the number of people on the waiting list in your own health region, in your own district? How do you manage that? How hard do you have to work every day as Premier to double that list?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Chairman, the reason that the member's struggling with respect to his connection with Saskatchewan people is that they don't believe him. They don't believe him.

We know, Mr. Chairman, the record of the government. The last general election that he . . . I think it was the last general election that he contested, 1999, the first election that I ran in. The NDP promised in their campaign platform . . . He would have signed off on it. I think he was one of the masters of strategy behind the campaign. And he signed off on a platform that promised Saskatchewan people the reduction of wait times by 30 per cent. They said, just elect us one more time — we're tired and we're old, but we've got it left in us — just elect us one more time, he said to the people in Regina Elphinstone, and we will reduce your wait-list by 30 per cent.

What happened, Mr. Chairman? Well what happened under the NDP after they continued to ignore the need for more nurses and the need for more doctors, after they continued to rationalize health care in rural Saskatchewan, is that wait times actually increased by 60 per cent. That's his record. That's his record. He promised a 30 per cent reduction, Mr. Chair. That's what he promised. The net result of his last time in government was a 60 per cent increase.

Now you might say, Mr. Chair, and those watching might say, well but really you're the government. You're the opposing party, so is there anything that others have said about the NDP record in health care or even about their current tactics in opposition that might be from the NDP itself?

And the answer is, yes there is, Mr. Chair. Yes there is. Here is a recent quote from Lewis Draper, the former NDP MLA and physician from southwest Saskatchewan, a former NDP MLA and physician. Here's what he said, and I quote, "It is sheer hypocrisy for Judy Junor to carp about health care. She and the present leader of the NDP were both part of the cabal . . ."

Not my words but a former NDP MLA. I don't think cabal is very good, by the way. I'm thinking cabal is probably not a good description of a group of people. But it's not us saying it, Mr. Chair. It's Lewis Draper, a former colleague of that member because he's been here a long time, and so you could pretty much pick any rural New Democratic member back to, well, when I was in about grade 8 and he was a colleague of the

member opposite. Well maybe not any more. The member for Kindersley points out, maybe not any more. He goes on to say, so let's repeat. He says:

She and the present leader of the NDP [That's him right there; the man with all the answers, the present leader of the NDP] were both part of the cabal that spent 15 years shredding rural Saskatchewan service centres, SaskTel, SaskPower, rural highways depots along with 52 hospitals, firing 600 nurses and leaving 52 rural doctors no place to work in. Dozens [of other doctors] left the province. That caused overcrowding in our cities and we all suffer.

That's not the Sask Party. That's a former New Democratic MLA and, Mr. Chairman, that's why those guys are sitting over there now, and they will sit on that side of House for years to come, Mr. Chair.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chair, the Premier likes to reminisce about the 1990s and periods that he can recall. That would be about the period of time he was making videos. He was a movie star. Now you remember that period. We'll flip that up on YouTube tonight. But it's the video of that Premier mocking Ukrainian people, and people will remember that. Oh, it's funny. They think that's funny.

The Chair: — I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to . . . We are discussing Executive Council estimates, and we are to stick with that and ask questions along them lines.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chair, I was referring to the comments made by the Premier about a member, Lewis Draper, who he enjoyed reading a letter about. I want to talk about something the Premier was doing about that same time, that was as a movie actor. And I understand why SCN is being cut, Mr. Chair, because he never made his career, his movie acting on SCN. He's a little bitter about that because this little movie he was doing at that time.

And, Mr. Chair, I know why members don't want to hear about that period, but we didn't want to hear about Lewis Draper either. But we want to talk about his movie career because it was an interesting one. He was making a video, a rap . . .

The Chair: — I would ask the member to make his remarks relevant to the Executive Council estimates that we're discussing right now.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The Leader of the Sask Party, the Premier, has a great memory about things the New Democratic Party was doing. But when it comes to remembering what he was doing, he has selective amnesia. He just doesn't want to remember that. But I can tell you there were many people not impressed with that little period of time.

But the fact of the matter is that a Premier who can get up and brag about how well he's doing at reducing wait-lists, when in his own area it's increased by 100 per cent, that's a pretty credible spin doctor. He learned that while working for Brian Mulroney in Ottawa and Grant Devine here in Saskatchewan.

Yes, he laughs about it. But the truth of the matter is he had a great time down there. He was making videos, and he was a busy boy, Mr. Chair. He led a hectic life. He was busy at that time, doing important work. He was a movie actor. He did videos. He took certain quantities of liquid supplies from office to office. He was a busy man.

And I want to ask the Premier: how, when you spin your story about waiting lists, do you reconcile that with increasing waiting lists by 100 per cent in your own health region? How does that work?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, there are, I can report to members of the Assembly that the numbers — because the total numbers are small, the percentages are large — the total numbers are small and they fluctuate from region to region, especially rural regions like Cypress Hills. For surgeries performed in Cypress through July through December 2009, 98 per cent were performed in the first six months — 98 per cent were performed within six months. Of the 305 cases that are waiting for surgery, only 20 have waited six months.

Mr. Chairman, part of the reason for success — and we're not where we need to be yet in health care — part of the reason for success is that we have done what members opposite failed to do. We have put in place 570 nurses in two and a half years on our way to a goal of 800. We've actually, instead of just giving speeches about it in the legislature, Mr. Chairman, we've actually made sure there are more doctors practising.

[18:15]

And that's why, when that member goes to rural Saskatchewan . . . Well he shakes his head. This is the truth of the matter — 164 doctors practising. And that's why, if that member went to rural Saskatchewan and wanted to have an honest debate with our members from rural Saskatchewan — I'm from southwest Saskatchewan — he'd come out on the short end of that debate, Mr. Chairman, because the people in those regions in southwest Saskatchewan have had quite enough of the NDP's plan for their health care which has meant fewer doctors, not enough nurses, and hospitals that have been shut down by the members opposite, Mr. Chairman. That's the record of that government.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member, he does . . . He likes to talk about the past. My quote about Lewis Draper by the way, that he is so offended by, was from 2009. This was Mr. Draper's assessment of him and his current Health critic, that they really didn't have a leg to stand on in terms of their health care position. But you know what, Mr. Chairman? I think I know why he — notwithstanding the fact that Dr. Draper wants to talk about today — why he wants to talk about the past. He wants to talk about the past because of his record in government.

Mr. Chairman, one of the worst job creation records in all of Canada presided by members opposite. And he was one of the captains of industry that was the Economic Development minister. SPUDCO, one of the biggest train wrecks in the history of this province, that was not fully disclosed in a transparent way when he was the minister, though he knew the

truth about it. That's his record, Mr. Chairman. That's part of the reason why the past is a little hurtful to him.

But he especially wants to avoid the present and the future because the present Saskatchewan is a place that is a have province in Canada. The present Saskatchewan is a place that is creating record jobs across the country. The present Saskatchewan is a province that forecasters are saying will lead the country in economic growth, that's leading the country in building permits, that's leading the country in wholesale trade, that has the highest level of business optimism. We know that growing economy in terms of the growth will pay for a quality of life the likes of which we never had under them.

Mr. Chairman, we have seen that member's record when he was an Economic Development minister. We've seen his focus on the past. We've seen his focus on a past in our province where we were losing some of our best and brightest . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Order. I know that we're getting near the end of the debate and all people want a chance to join in, but I would remind members that the more time I interrupt, the less questions that will be answered or asked. So I would ask that members not holler from their seats and not interrupt the speaker that's on this floor. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, that's the Saskatchewan today and that's the Saskatchewan of the future, and this gentleman is a stranger to that Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan he left in the rear-view mirror was a place where people were leaving, where we weren't living up to our potential.

And I'll tell you what, Mr. Chairman. The people I talk to in this province have concerns about health care, to be sure. They have concerns around education. But here's a concern that I hear from people: that we never, ever, ever go back to the dark days when someone like that was sitting on the Executive Council with a negative, frankly, a negative outlook on the future of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chair.

Well I hear members opposite say it's a trust thing. That's unbelievable. I actually have seen some surveys, both of our own and a public survey where, Mr. Chairman, the people of the province are weighing in even today on the issue of trust, Mr. Chairman. I think it's about a 30-point deficit they have to overcome as a party. The hon. member's got about 40 more points to make up, Mr. Chairman, and if he doesn't start connecting with the new Saskatchewan, I'm worried about him. I'm worried that they're going to get fed up and dump him before we have a chance to have an election, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chair, I wasn't finished reading the editorial from *The StarPhoenix*. And the Premier raises the issue of SPUDCO and all those wonderful things. Well I've got to finish, I've got to finish reading the editorial. This editorial, Mr. Chair, is titled, "Cause for jailing." "Cause for jailing". And it referred to a period of time when the now Premier was working for the Devine government. Here's what it says: "It's unfortunate Saskatchewan's public accounts committee doesn't

have the power to throw people in jail."

And it goes on to say:

Is it too much to ask that government employees be paid by the department in which they work? Or that government agencies not pay for advertising services they don't receive. Or that cabinet ministers not be given rivers of free liquor when the rest of us are asked to pay?

That would be referring to the Premier's job of taking rivers of liquor around to ministers' offices. Then it goes on to say:

These cases are despicable, not just for their scale but for their intent. They were concocted, at great effort, to deceive the people of Saskatchewan.

That's what you were doing, Mr. Premier. You were part of that. You were part of what was called, ". . . or that cabinet ministers not be given rivers of free liquor when the rest of us are asked to pay." That's what the good Premier was up to in those days.

And, Mr. Chair, we can go on and many more things about what the Premier was doing at that time: "That makes them fraud and that's why the perpetrators, as well as those . . . watched and did nothing, [and] deserve to be behind bars."

Deserve to be behind bars. That's pretty strong language for the Premier to have to deal with. And what the Finance minister has to understand, that this is who his boss is. This is the editorial that was being talked about at that time. About during that period when the Premier is now talking about what our government was doing.

And it's true that we had a hard time after the Devine era. And maybe I can just go back and talk for a few moments about the Devine government. Because it was known as the most corrupt government, the most corrupt government in the history of Canada. And while we were sitting here in opposition, the Premier was working in the department . . .

The Chair: — I would ask the member to, on his preamble, to start to relate his preamble to the question, to the question. I gave you plenty of time. Relate it back to what we're discussing.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chair, I want to say that during that period when the Premier was a member of the Devine government, he worked here in this building. His job, as stated in the editorial and I want to refer to it. "Is it too much to ask that government employees [that would] be . . ." He would be one of them that is referred to in this editorial. ". . . be paid by the department in which they work? Or that the government agency not pay for advertising services they didn't receive. "

And you were there during that period. I think you were one of the bureaucrats working in the building who was scheming on how to pay for advertising, political advertising, political advertising paid for by tax. But any of you, you'll know about that. And then it goes on to say, "Or that cabinet ministers not be given rivers of free liquor when the rest of us are asked to pay?"

Now I can get the letters. Have you got the letters that the member from Swift Current signed, what he signed asking for the booze to be sent over to the Legislative Building and referred to in this article of cabinet ministers not being given rivers of free liquor when the rest of us are asked to pay?

So, Mr. Premier, you can talk about mistakes made in the past by NDP governments, and I'll talk to you about mistakes that your government made when you were a part of the Devine administration. Now when we defeated the Devine government in 1991, the public will remember in horror the deficit, the deficit that was left by that member and his government that was the highest per capita debt of any province in Canada—the highest per capita debt, even higher than Newfoundland. And there were very, very tough decisions that had to be made.

And the Premier will know that history because he was part of it although he had flown the coop. He headed down to Swift Current to open up the guitar museum. One of my buddies said, the Premier of the province, the Premier of the province is such a bad salesman he can't even sell country western music in Swift Current. That's how bad it is. And the museum went broke under his design.

Mr. Finance Minister, you will know this, and you'll know that you're under a lot of pressure when it comes to doing up the finances of the province because the fact of the matter is, is that the instructions you get and that led us to the design and the failure of the budget in '09 came from that individual, from the Premier. And it's no wonder that at the end of the day the economy didn't grow by 2 per cent. It didn't grow by 1 per cent. It didn't grow by half a per cent in '09. It didn't shrink by 2 per cent or by 3; it shrank by 6.3 per cent.

And that is because . . . And I don't blame the Minister of Finance, and I know we've asked him lots of tough questions about that. But the fact of the matter is, it's the Premier's job to oversee. And he even made comment, the Premier made comment that how he phoned on a weekend when he was busy doing other things and asked the Minister of Finance to transfer tens of millions of dollars.

That's sort of how it works in the way he runs his private business and the way he runs government. And I say this editorial is not going to be well-received by the people of Saskatchewan, but it's going to be repeated. And I say to the Premier, the question I want to ask you is, how is it that the waiting lists in the Swift Current Health Region have doubled? How did you manage that?

The Premier hasn't answered it, and I need to get an answer because many people are asking us, how is that you doubled the waiting list? You said you got more doctors, this is your answer. Now listen to this carefully. There's a doubling of the waiting list in the health region because we have more doctors. Now does that strike you as a little bit ridiculous? We have more nurses, we have more doctors, and that's how the waiting list doubled. My question to the Premier: how did you manage to double the waiting list in the Swift Current Health Region?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Chair, I don't care, I don't

care what anyone says. I'm glad he's back in the province of Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we've talked a lot about the health care record of the Government of Saskatchewan, about new health care facilities in rural southwest Saskatchewan. We've talked about finally making investments we need to at the University of Saskatchewan in terms of the Academic Health Sciences centre, making sure that our College of Medicine is never at risk like it was under the NDP.

We've talked about, Mr. Chair, our health care record when it comes to nurses, when it comes to doctors, Mr. Chairman, and you know, our wait times initiative. And we know we're at the early stages of our wait times initiative, and again we had a chance for a debate here about what the NDP believe with respect to wait times and whether or not we should be using the private sector surgeons in the public system or not, but they didn't get into that.

Mr. Chairman, we're nearing the end of estimates. And I note, now this is the member's first effort and we had, you know, a good exchange, and perhaps on some issues. But I notice that the issues of First Nations were not raised in estimates, neither social services, neither housing, neither labour, nothing on Bill 80. Not a question on Bill 80 from the Leader of the Opposition. Nothing on education, and nothing on agriculture, which is less of a surprise, which is less of a surprise.

But, Mr. Chairman, we're glad the hon. member's joined the influx from Alberta. I'm personally happy he's back. I hope he hangs on to his job over there, notwithstanding approval ratings because things can turn around. And that could happen for the honourable member, and we wish him well.

In fact I would say, we wish the Leader of the Opposition better than his own NDP wish him. I would like to, for example, read a quote from John Conway. John Conway is a well-known New Democratic supporter. And John Conway had this to say. He had this to say. And I don't agree with this, by the way. This is too strong a language. But I don't agree with what John Conway has to say. But here's what he says. "The NDP has sought 'renewal' by resurrecting . . ." I don't even want to say that part.

I'll just keep going:

Not only that, but having learned of the dirty tricks of the Lingenfelter campaign [and I didn't say that], the party membership still elected him. So the party membership decided to elect a guy whose campaign team submitted over a thousand forged memberships with ten thousand dollars in cash?

The quote continues. This is John Conway now, a New Democrat supporter: "More than that, after losing the election Lingenfelter will go . . . back to being a highly paid oil executive in Calgary."

Mr. Chairman, I don't think that's going to happen because the oil industry is not very excited about his plan to nationalize the oil business in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman, well, the members are all upset. It's John Conway that said it. It's their friend in the New Democratic party. This is a quote from the *prairie dog*.

[18:30]

I would also want to end this session as we began. The member was up on his feet early in his first question period in the fall. And I congratulated him on his job, and I noted that I thanked him for the advice that he'd given me in the past, offers to advice. That leader went out into the scrum and said, I didn't give that member any advice at all. But I've got a letter from when he was vice-president of Nexen where he says, call if you ever need any advice. And that's handwritten by the Leader of the Opposition.

So I know at the time he said that his best buddy, the member for Kindersley, that was the guy he had provided advice to, but not me. I want to let the record show that he did make the offer. I appreciate it. But given his record in government and given the great state of the province of Saskatchewan and our bright prospects for future, as to his advice, we say, thank you, no.

The Chair: — Is subvote (EX01), central management . . . Time's been . . . We will report progress then. The clock has been called. So I'll invite a member to rise and report progress and ask for leave to sit again. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of committee.

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.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the House do now adjourn for committees this evening.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 18:37.]

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Premier of Saskatchewan
President of the Executive Council

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

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for Uranium
Development Partnership
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Research Council

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Minister of Enterprise
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for Trade

Hon. June Draude
Minister Responsible for Crown Investments
Corporation
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Minister Responsible for Information Technology Office
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
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